



Board of Trustees and Financial Annual Report 1st July 2024 – 30th June 2025

Creative Director's Report

1. Governance and Strategic Development

The Board of Trustees has been stable this year. Policies have been written and more will be added over time. So far the following Policies have been approved by the Trustees:

- Expenses claims
- Sponsorship
- Safeguarding
- Volunteer Management
- EDI (to be formally approved on 9 July 2025 Trustees meeting)

Following Manchester BSL Fest, some of the volunteers came forward, offering their help with organising future events. These volunteers formed the new Core Team set up in July 2025 which provided valuable support with day to day finances and budgeting, stage managing at BSL Fests, support with admin for Southampton BSL Fest and email enquiries, booking and managing interpreting teams for events, managing and developing the website and PR and Media.

The Creative Director returned to paid employment in September 2024 which impacted on the BSL Celebration programme for 2024-25 due to volunteer hours capacity. One BSL Fest was organised – Southampton – over 5 days in April 2024. The event was a great success but was too big to be comfortably organised by volunteers.

The BDA was unsuccessful in their bid for funding of future joint BDA / BSCLC projects. The BDA supported the BSL Art and Culture Night at Southampton BSL Fest by donating the cost of holding the event and took part in the BSL Inclusive Practices Reception and the BSL Party in the Square as a partner organisation.

The BDA wanted BSCLC to organise a BSL Fest at Leeds following their BSL Conference in July 2025. BSCLC did not have the resources (neither personnel, time nor funds) so cancelled the event in January 2025. However, in March, the BDA offered to organise and fund the event and that the BSCLC Team run it on the day. 3 weeks before the event, in the last week of June, the BDA handed the organising back to BSCLC and the team struggled to cover everything needing doing on top of their paid jobs.

The details of the Service Level Agreement with the BDA are not clear on exactly who does what, so this will be reviewed in 2025-26.

In March 2024, BSLC was approached by the CEO of Action Deafness with a proposal for partnership working which would involve Action Deafness paying a sum upfront, so that BSLC could pay for staff time, and Action Deafness seeking further funding for the events.

The Trustees and Core Team are taking this under consideration and will be discussing, and agreeing, on future strategy during 2025-26.

BSLC has grown too big to be run by volunteers so, either we scale back or secure funds to pay a staff member. The Trustees will consider carefully what model and staff structure best fits with how BSLC operates.

2. Funding

The events envisaged to make up the £3,260.25 short-fall from Manchester BSL Fest did not meet this objective. Selling merchandise at the Manchester Deaf Centre Christmas Fair only raised £154.34 and we were unable to sell enough tickets for the 'A Celebration of BSL' fundraiser in November 2024 to even break even on the cost of holding the event.

However, BSLC was awarded £2,000 from the Wesleyan Winter of Giving in January 2025 which helped greatly with our core costs.

Southampton BSL Fest was only £663.70 in deficit – we secured an additional £9,500.00 funding from sponsors, in addition to the £20,000 Awards for All grant, and a total income of £4,525.55 was brought in from stalls, ticket sales and merchandise sales.

However, we could have sold double the number of tickets to the evening events which would have covered the Manchester BSL Fest short-fall – we need to sell tickets to local mainstream hearing communities using the networks we build.

Awards for All was completely satisfied with the financial spreadsheet submitted following Southampton BSL Fest and closed the account without requesting any additional information from us, and said that BSLC is welcome to apply for A4A again for a similar event in a different area of England.

SignLive has continued to support BSLC events, donating £7,000 for Southampton BSL Fest and £2,000 towards Leeds which covered essential operating costs, including website and PLI renewals, and volunteers' expenses. SignLive has indicated that they are willing to continue to support BSLC provided BSLC gives SignLive access to potential customers across businesses and services.

BSLC signed up to SignLive's affiliation scheme whereby BSLC gains commission on SignLive contracts taken up by customers introduced to SignLive by BSLC, for example through business events like the BSL Inclusive Practices Reception at Southampton. The commission is paid for the lifetime of the contract. This could grow into a regular monthly income.

3. Southampton BSL Fest

Although this was a very successful event, it was challenging for the BSLC team to organise and run due to there being no local deaf organisation we could work in partnership with. A small Committee of local volunteers was formed who were a fantastic help with involving the local deaf community and introducing the Creative Director to local contacts, but they lacked the time and experience to reach out to the mainstream community effectively.

Highly successful partnerships were forged with the John Hansard Gallery and Mayflower Studios. The team had a steep learning curve on how to write copy, the quality of images required for in-house theatre marketing and arranging public posters.

Lessons learnt from Manchester were applied – everything for the BSL Party in the Square was set up and taken down by contractors on the same day, Control's communications role worked well and there were no unexpected additional costs. Performers were sent contracts and, as result, none of the stage performers pulled out at late notice.

The Core Team very effectively supported the organisation and running of the event, and the BSL Inclusion Reception was much slicker and better met the expectations of businesses and services. Afterwards, 4 potential new customers approached Signly and SignLive was in negotiations with 2 major customers in Southampton.

The events supported by hearing partners (BSL Art and Culture Night) and that were free, were very well attended. However, only half of the tickets available were sold. This was a missed opportunity to generate revenue.

Parents of children performing on stage mostly left straight afterwards. In future, a closer relationship needs to be cultivated so that the families become more involved and parents could potentially help to generate interest in the ticketed events.

The BSLC website has developed and advertised Southampton BSL Fest very well. The next step is to develop content on volunteers, funding and outcomes / legacy.

The following lessons were learnt and will be acted on next time:

- Performers' contracts to include clauses to submit visual / audio material 3 weeks beforehand, to do a video call with their allocated interpreter 2 weeks beforehand and to publicise their involvement in the Fest, and BSLC, on their usual channels.
- Start the stage programme with a big crowd-puller, such as Deaf Rave.
- Include a clause in the stallholders' contract that their fees will not be refunded if they cancel at short notice.
- Local Committee Members have an orientation session at the start and have ongoing training and support with their roles so that they can more effectively and confidently reach out to the mainstream community as well as the deaf community.
- Survey public attitudes to BSL before and after the BSL to gauge impact.

- Work with a deaf-led service provider that can take up and continue legacy work after the BSL Fest.
- Sell the BSL Fest events at community events throughout the year, including Deaf Awareness training and school sessions.

4. Numbers of attendees

Fest	Event	Number of attendees			Number volunteers		
		Deaf	Hearing	Total	Deaf	Hearing	Total
Soton	Committee meetings	0	0	0	5	3	8
	JHG DA Training	0	24	24	1	1	2
	Mayflower DA Training	0	8	8	1	1	2
	Volunteer Training	20	15	35	2	1	3
	School Visit	6	3	9	2	1	3
	Art Workshops	12	3	15	1	1	2
	Artist Commissioning	3	0	3	2	2	4
	'Deaf Vision' Exhibition*	400	700	1100			
	'One Letter' Digi Array*	400	1200	1600			
	Opening Event	15	3	18	4	0	4
	School Visits to JHG –						
	Crofton Anne Dale	1	14	15	2	1	3
	Oasis Academy	5	4	9	2	1	3
	BSL Drama Night	15	9	24	3	2	5
	BSL Inclusion Reception	2	30	32	8	3	11
	BSL Art & Culture Night	24	18	42	5	2	7
	BSL Rhymetime	18	9	27	3	1	4
	Crofton A Dale w/shop	0	10	10	2	1	3
	'Power in Our Hands'	20	13	33	4	2	6
	BSL Lesson – Cllrs	0	3	3	2	1	3
	BSL Open Pub	68	12	80	6	0	6
	Party in the Square**	500	2,500	3,000	28	14	42
	Space to Create w/shop	9	14	25	1	1	2
	BSL Tour with Digispace	15	1	16	1	1	2
	BSL Comedy Night	129	45	174	2	2	4
Total for Southampton BSL Fest		1,662	4,638	6,300	87	42	129
Cumulative total number of people BSL Celebration has reached							
Number of attendees in 2023-24		6,742	no. volunteers		143	Total	6,885
Number of attendees to date		13,042	no. volunteers		272	Total	13,314

*up to 2nd May 2025 – exhibition extended into June 2025**approximate numbers – includes guests, stall-holders, performers, interpreters, people attending specifically and people passing through or by and taking notice.

5. Outcomes

These continue to develop from previous events, the 'ripple' effect.

5.1 Woking:

- The number of accessible performances and screenings at Woking Ambassadors was increased following consultation with the local deaf community after Woking BSL Fest.

5.2 Guildford:

- Two deaf Artists attended training on curating Art Exhibitions at the invitation of, and with support for BSL interpreters from, Daisy Chain who made contact with these Artists at Guildford BSL Fest.

5.3 Manchester

The Directors of Manchester Deaf Centre reported on the Lasting Impact Across Greater Manchester from Manchester BSL Fest having the following impacts during 2024-25:

- **Shone a spotlight** on Deaf and signing communities
- **Inspired new partnerships**, awareness, and momentum
- **Energised the region** around Deaf inclusion and BSL access
- **Sparked lasting change** in visibility, equity, and engagement
- Set the stage for **Greater Manchester** to lead the UK in BSL inclusion

5.4 Southampton

- The Councillor responsible for Adults and Health spoke to members of the local deaf community and contacted the local deaf club to set up a meeting to discuss their needs.
- Central Library is keen to host more BSL Storytimes.
- A local deaf Artist was asked to lead more mainstream family Art workshops.
- The Deaf Vision exhibition was extended due to popular demand.
- Mayflower Studios are open to hosting deaf / BSL performers in their programme.

6. What next?

An Away Day in July 2025 to carefully consider BSLC's strategy, with a period of 'house-keeping' afterwards to focus on getting Policies up to date and determining the future direction of BSLC.

BSLC is meeting with Manchester Deaf Centre in the summer of 2025 to jointly plan a small follow-up event in Manchester for April 2026. Depending on the outcome of negotiations with Action Deafness, we may be holding a BSL Fest in Worcester in October 2026.

Claire Cummings, Creative Director 22/07/202

1. Statement of Financial Activities

Statement of Financial Activities						
Annual Account for the period between		2025				2024
1 July 2024 to June 30 2025		Unrestricted	Restricted	Total		
		£	£	£		£
Income						
Donations		3,152		3,152		940
Charitable Activities		10,500		10,500		35,811
Other Income		<u>4,902</u>		<u>4,902</u>		<u>4,095</u>
	1	18,554	0	18,554		40,846
Expenditure						
Raising Fund		5,017		5,017		3,721
Charitable Activities		<u>27,325</u>		<u>27,325</u>		<u>22,691</u>
	2	32,342	0	32,342		26,411

2. Balance Sheet

Balance Sheet		2025		2024
		£		£
Fixed Assets				
Intangible Assets	3	1,000		814
Tangible Assets		<u>0</u>		<u>0</u>
Current Asserts				
Debtors		0		0
Bank & Cash In Hande		1,317		<u>16,747</u>
				17,561
Creditors		<u>660</u>		<u>0</u>
Total Assets less Current Liability		1,657		<u>17,561</u>
Creditors - Amount falling due after more than one year	4	4,976		(2,976)
Net Assets		(3,319)		<u>14,585</u>
Income Funds				
Restricted				20,000
Unrestricted Fund		-2522		<u>-3485</u>
		<u>797</u>		<u>14,585</u>

3. Notes

	Notes			
1	Turnover for each Festival			
	Southampton	£16,025.55		
	Award For All Lottery (received last year)	£20,000.00		
		£36,025.55		
2	Total Expenditure for each Festival			
	Southampton	£30,534.33		
3	Saleable Mugs and Artworks			
4	Interest Free Loan from Ms Cummings			

4. Audit Approval

Adrian Simpson

52 Grebe Close, Alton, Hampshire GU34 2LR
01420 85126 (v) • 07817 753620 (sms) • adrianfsimpson@btinternet.com (email)

Audit approval (1/7/2024-30/6/2025)

Dear Ms Cummings,

In my capacity as auditor for BSL Celebration, I can confirm that the annual accounts as presented to me for 1st July 2024 to 30th June 2025 are a fair and true reflection of the state of the finances of BSL Celebration.

Adrian Simpson

1st September 2025

Report prepared by Barry Avison, Chair; Kathleen Grehan, Treasurer and Claire Cummings, Creative Director. Approved by the Trustees on 17th September 2025