

THE ACTORS' WORKSHOP BRISTOL
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31st AUGUST 2024

Charity Number 1206353

THE ACTORS' WORKSHOP BRISTOL
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
PERIOD ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

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THE ACTORS' WORKSHOP BRISTOL
REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION
PERIOD ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

Status

The Actors' Workshop Bristol is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and has been granted charitable status by the Charity Commission registration number 1206353.

Trustees

Bryn Holding (appointed 22 November 2024)
Anne Odeke (appointed 2 January 2024)
Stephen Loach (appointed 2 January 2024)
Sian Fisher (2 January 2024)

Registered Address

The Works
Chatterton Street Studio
Bristol
BS1 6PR

Bankers

Virgin Money (Clydesdale Bank)
St James Street Branch

Independent Examiner

Joshua Kingston BSc, ACA
Burton Sweet Limited
The Clock Tower
5 Farleigh Court
Old Weston Road
Flax Bourton
Bristol BS48 1UR

THE ACTORS' WORKSHOP BRISTOL

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT

PERIOD ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

The trustees present their report and the unaudited financial statements for the period ended 31 August 2024.

Structure, Governance and Management

The Actors' Workshop Bristol is a charitable incorporated organisation registered with the charity commission on 2 January 2024 and governed by its constitution dated 23rd August 2023.

Appointment of charity trustees

1. Apart from the first charity trustees, every trustee must be appointed for a term of three years by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity trustees.
2. In selecting individuals for appointment as charity trustees, the charity trustees must have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the CIO.

Objectives

The charity's objective is:

- to advance the education of the public, particularly young people, in the knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the performing arts (including, drama, signing and dance and the study and practice of speech training) in particular, but not exclusively, by the provision of courses, tuition, workshops, classes, rehearsals, performances, and by supporting them for entry to any occupation, trade or profession on leaving any educational establishment.
- to advance public appreciation of the performing arts, including drama, music, dance and signing by the production of plays, and by teaching and training artists to enable them to produce works of a high standard.

Public benefit

In shaping the objectives for the year and planning activities, the trustees have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, including the guidance 'public benefit: running a charity (PB2)'.

Activities

The Actors' Workshop Bristol is a unique, independent and nationally recognised centre of excellence for actor training, with an unrivalled record for getting students into BA and MA courses at accredited UK drama schools. Taught exclusively by experienced professional actors, our courses and classes are priced as competitively as possible so that everyone with the talent, drive and determination to train can access them.

A recent study conducted by The Sutton Trust reported that six out of ten young people who are interested in pursuing a career in performing arts come from a family background of higher education or a professional background. The research further showed that those who come from less privileged backgrounds are underrepresented in the performing arts industry, with financial barriers being a significant factor. The Actors' Workshop Bristol seeks to redress this balance by offering bursaries/ discount whenever needed – even if this need arises in the middle of the training year.

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In tandem with our rigorous training, student welfare and support are hallmarks of our work. We get to know all our students personally and care passionately about helping them make the best of every step of their creative journey. Currently, this includes paying for auditions/transport to auditions, funding access to psychotherapy when needed, supporting students who are young carers and embedding life skills lessons in our curriculum on a weekly basis.

Foundation Course in Acting

At the heart of our work is our part-time Foundation Course in Acting, which provides rigorous professional training in all the core skills required to pursue the craft at degree level. Though our stunning success rate of around 90% every year speaks for itself, our constantly evolving curriculum is designed not just to teach the professional skills needed to succeed at audition but to develop each student's creativity and understanding as an artist.

The course runs from September until June, culminating in a professional showcase at a local theatre, with an option to take part in a further Shakespeare production or theatre-in-education project in July. All students audition for UK conservatoires during the course; each year most are offered places on highly competitive BA/MA courses at top drama schools. Expert careers advice, audition preparation (including screen acting and self-taping) and exposure to professional practitioners from across the industry enable students to explore the best range of options available and to tailor their preferences for higher education to maximise success.

With a minimum of 12.5 contact hours per week on average, this course has hugely successful outcomes and is competitively priced to allow students to work part-time alongside it. All classes are taught by trained, experienced professional actors and the year group is split into training groups of no more than 18 students. Our cohort of 34 students on this course for the academic year 2023- 24 amassed 45 places on BA/MA Acting courses at accredited UK conservatoires.

More Context:

Many UK conservatoires have full-time foundation courses in Acting, funded at a cost of £9,250 through the student loan company and accredited by the schools' partner universities. These courses attract students who do not make it through the auditions onto a BA course and hope that, by doing a year's foundation course, they will get in the following year. Sadly, the success rate from these courses is pitiful (less than 10%). Despite being huge earners for the drama schools, these courses do not adequately serve their students for the following reasons:

1. Because these Level 4 courses need to meet higher education standards for assessment and reporting and must not conflict with the school's BA Acting degree, the curricula are too general and are not geared towards imparting the specific skills (at the specific time) needed to succeed at audition. Moreover, the assessments required to fulfil an academic qualification (usually a CerTHE) take precious time and are usually irrelevant to the audition process.
 2. Because of the high fees and low success rate, the cost/benefit ratio makes these courses an unwise bet – particularly given that they consume a year's worth of
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student funding and create significant extra student debt. Nonetheless, they hook in countless unwitting students, who undertake these courses specifically to get into a BA course at drama school.

3. Because the real objective of these courses is to make money for the school in exchange for a CertHE/diploma, once this has been achieved, students are left in the lurch – mostly no closer to their real goal of getting onto a BA Acting course.

In contrast, The Actors' Workshop Bristol follows a different model:

1. Although our work is completely geared to imparting the skills needed to succeed at audition, we do not have a written curriculum. Instead, our team of highly experienced tutors are responsive to the individual, bringing in relevant elements of the craft and building skills as needed by the current cohort. This means that time is used incredibly efficiently and with excellent results.
2. Our course has fewer hours, costs around a quarter of the price of a full-time CertHE and gets more than 80% of students into BA/MA courses at UK drama conservatoires every year. Because fees are low and time is used efficiently, students are able to work alongside the course, emerging without any student debt.
3. We follow through with each individual until they achieve what they want. If a student does not get into a BA/MA course of their choice, they have the option of returning and doing our course again, knowing that our responsive curriculum will support them at whatever point they are in their creative journey and take them to the next level.

There are a few part-time foundation courses in the UK (none in the Bristol area, except Bath Academy of Musical Theatre – which focuses on MT and is therefore a complementary entity rather than a competitor.) All these are much more expensive and lack our success rate.

We offer scholarships and bursaries for all courses and classes wherever needed to widen access and train those with the talent, drive and resilience required to succeed, regardless of background or income.

Onward journeys: Oxbridge takes roughly 24% of eligible applicants every year; UK drama schools take around 3%. There are currently just 300-400 places available on BA/MA Acting courses at UK Conservatoires. With over 10,000 applicants, the audition process is incredibly competitive. Our track record speaks for itself. We have established a reputation for excellence and a market niche that attracts students from all over the UK and beyond: Germany, USA, South Africa, Australia, Italy, France to name a few. Students move to Bristol every year to do our course; with two conservatoires in Bristol and another in Cardiff, there are clear options for onward progression in the area.

Our flexible model serves not only students aiming for BA Acting courses but also those who have done a degree and want to pursue professional training at MA Level: there is nothing

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around to cater for this need. We also train students every year who have done foundation courses elsewhere but have failed to get into drama school.

Industry Masterclasses

Complementing this offering and extending its' scope, we run a slate of one-day Masterclasses on Saturdays during term-time. Led by industry experts, these workshops are aimed both at our own students and at the wider public – professional actors (young and old) and teachers who want to extend their skills and deepen their practice. Our one-day workshops are well-attended and are a valuable source of CPD in Bristol for these groups. So far in the 2024-25 academic year, these included Agbo Play (street theatre from Sierra Leone) Physical Storytelling, Devising, Chekhov, Commedia dell' Arte, Breathwork for Actors and Acting for Camera with more planned later in the year. These masterclasses are popular and well-attended. They are significantly cheaper than similar classes run by our competitors (e.g. Bristol Old Vic Theatre School) and offer deep discounts for students and Equity members. In addition, we always offer further reductions/free places for those who cannot otherwise afford to attend.

Short Courses

Last year, we also introduced Short Courses: 3-hour sessions on a Wednesday evening. Short courses for 2024-25 include Playing Shakespeare, Stage Combat and Improvisation & Devising. All are taught by experienced, qualified industry specialists. As with the masterclasses, prices are below competitors with discounts and bursaries available.

Dance, Body Conditioning and Singing

We run weekly Dance, Body Conditioning and Singing classes for actors aged 18+ during term time. Taught personally by co-directors Jennifer Higham (dance/body con) and Clara Marullo (singing) these are very popular with our foundation students and also attract outsiders.

Teen Group

Our small, selective Teen Group, which meets for three hours on a Sunday afternoon and serves students aged 14-18, provides younger performers who have the drive and determination to learn their craft with dedicated professional training. Most of our Teen students go on to train further with us on our part-time Foundation Course, before doing a BA at drama school and entering the industry. The Teen Group, like all our other courses and classes, is taught by experienced professional actors and offers bursaries where needed to make sure it is accessible to ALL those with the talent and drive to benefit from the training.

Professional Screen Acting

This academic year, we have added an eight-month part-time course in Professional Screen Acting.

Aimed at actors at the start of their careers, practical course offers industry-relevant training for actors who wish to acquire the technical knowledge and acting skills needed to excel in screen work. At the end of this course, participants make individual showreels and voice reels to industry specifications, with a celebratory screening at the end.

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Showcases

Our Foundation Course students perform an industry showcase at a major Bristol venue in early June every year. Aside from being a wonderful public celebration of their achievement, this is also an opportunity for drama conservatoires to observe our students' work; over the years, several students have been moved off waiting lists and offered places on BA/MA courses at UK drama schools as a result of their showcase performance.

Our Teen students also do a showcase for parents and friends at a local theatre every year – normally in April to avoid exam season.

Free CPD for Teachers

In order to help secondary school drama teachers deliver best practice in the practical components of their curriculum at GCSE and A Level, The Actors' Workshop Bristol offers a series of free workshops for teachers every year. This year, these are on Zoom so that they will be easily accessible to as many teachers as possible.

School and College Outreach

Regular drama workshops in secondary schools/FE colleges and student-facing talks about pathways into the profession.

Shakespeare Production

In July 2023 we produced and directed *Twelfth Night* and in July 2024, we did *Macbeth* at the Loco Klub, Temple Meads. Performed by graduating members of our Foundation Course, these imaginative, professional productions made Shakespeare accessible and inclusive without compromising the verse. Each year, the run includes a free matinee for schools and local residents.

Theatre-in-Education Project

In the summer term 2025, we are planning to take a short, devised performance and accompanying workshop, on the theme of global warming, into local primary schools. This free offering will expose children in Key Stage 2 to live theatre and encourage them to make their own short plays. An accompanying activity pack for teachers will support further in-school work.

Activities and achievements

After a long application process, The Actors' Workshop Bristol became a registered charity (CIO) on 2nd January 2024, with a wonderful, experienced Board of Trustees drawn both from our own industry and from the business world. Charitable status enabled us to accept donations, raise funds, mitigate our tax burden and offset business rates – all crucial if we are to continue to develop and extend our work and our community reach, whilst keeping all fees as low as possible and supporting those who need financial assistance to access our services.

Once again, our **Foundation Course** students did extremely well. Our cohort of 34 students amassed a total of 45 places on BA/MA courses at UK drama schools. This number included

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all of our scholarship/bursary students, one of whom was a care-leaver who had been told she would never amount to anything. This lovely young woman is now in her first year of a BA Acting course at the prestigious Rose Bruford Conservatoire. She is making us very proud!

Given that upwards of 10,000 applicants audition for only 300 places on BA/MA courses at UK drama schools, The Actors' Workshop Bristol once again demonstrably changed lives by enabling most of our cohort to access these very competitive and sought-after degree courses and thus a proven springboard into the profession.

As a result of their performances in our showcase at The Mount Without in June, two additional students were moved off the waiting list and accepted onto the BA Acting course at Bristol School of Acting.

Our small, selective **Teen Group** expanded to 17 students, of whom one had a full scholarship and another a half-fees bursary. One of our Teens is a Ukrainian refugee, who recently starred in a BBC Radio 4 drama. Since several of our Teen group were doing GCSE and A Level Drama, we offered them and their classmates free coaching on their performed exam pieces.

Our Teen Group showcase at the Bristol Improv Theatre in April 2024 included everything from Shakespeare to contemporary scenes. It was sold out and very well-received. Parents understand the value of a small group, where students are trained in their craft by seasoned professionals, and the potential for onward journeys this presents.

Masterclasses in everything from Clowning and Stand-Up Comedy to Shakespeare and Physical Theatre were well-attended, both by our own students and by members of the local community (at a discounted rate).

We also ran **Short Courses** (5 or 6 evening sessions each) in Playing Shakespeare, Screen Acting, Devising and Playwriting – all led by industry experts.

Free CPD workshops for secondary school Drama and English teachers in voice, movement, devising and contemporary text were very well received. Some comments below:

Inspiring, hugely academically and practically credible workshop which, from the perspective of a Head of English, generated immediately applicable strategies. I was particularly inspired also by the integrity evident in the drive to reach out to the disadvantaged.

Some great, concrete ideas to use with our students. I particularly loved the session on fire/water/earth states in the body. Huge thanks for giving up your time for these workshops and for being so welcoming and accommodating.

These sessions have been fantastic, thank you so much! Great to inform my teaching practice and to developing students in a way that is more purposeful for the industry, as well as challenging them and building both my and my students' confidence.

Once their course had finished in June, we additionally offered our Foundation Course students the opportunity to audition for our production of **Macbeth** at the Loco Klub in Bristol,

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directed by Jennifer Higham and Clara Marullo. Set in Viking Iceland, the production incorporated a clear environmental message relating to our interaction with the natural world, which sparked conversation both within the cast and with members of our audience.

This production, which demanded a month of intensive full-time rehearsal followed by three performances, elevated every student's work. It also provided opportunities for them to explore and showcase unique talents – e.g. movement, singing, costuming, stage-management, stage combat - and extended their understanding of classical text. Not one student paid a penny to take part: The Actors' Workshop funded the whole production, with a donation of £1,000 from our landlords, Dandara Living.

We wanted to provide added benefit to local secondary schools and also to the community around our studio, which sits in the middle of a council estate. We therefore performed a special community matinee for which we offered free tickets to local residents and school parties. Some comments below:

Wow! What an incredible production. Our Year 10s were buzzing all the way back on the coach, which is not normally our experience after a trip to see a Shakespeare play. They loved chatting with the cast and hearing about pathways into acting. The connection between human actions and environmental catastrophe was intriguing and sparked lots of conversation too. Thank you.

-Charlie Scherp, Head of Drama, Downend School, Bristol.

Some general audience feedback:

Inspiring to see a company helping to provide opportunities to very talented young people at the start of their careers. Congratulations to all those involved.

It was a fantastic performance and very atmospheric venue – what a brilliant group of young actors!

Great to see underprivileged students with talent getting the opportunity to shine. You must be very proud supporting them like you have.

At the end of our academic year, Dandara Living took over direct responsibility for the lease on our current premises on Chatterton Street, BS1 6PR, allowing us to remain there for a further year at a greatly subsidised rent.

Over the spring and summer, we recruited a new foundation cohort of 34 students, including one student on a full bursary, two paying half fees and two returning students receiving a third off their fees for the screen acting course.

Financial Review

The total income generated in the year amounted to £74,560 which is mainly generated from student fees and a small amount of bank interest.

Total expenditure for the year amounted to £69,443 which is mainly made up of costs incurred directly from delivery of charitable activities.

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For its first period ended 31 August 2024 the income over expenditure resulted in a surplus of £5,117.

Reserves

The charity did not have holding reserves in January 2024, due to being newly registered. The trustees have now reviewed and approved a reserves policy in line with the guidance issued by the Charity Commission (submitted with this document) which will apply from 1 September 2024.

At the end of August 2024, the level of unrestricted reserves stood at £5,117.

Statement of trustees' responsibilities

The trustees are responsible for keeping sufficient accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the constitution. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees on Apr 16 2025

Bryn Holding
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Bryn Holding

Chair of Trustees

THE ACTORS' WORKSHOP BRISTOL
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT
PERIOD ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of The Actors' Workshop Bristol.

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of The Actors' Workshop Bristol (the Charity) for the period ended 31 August 2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Charity, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in respect of the Charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
- the accounts do not accord with those records; or
- the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Joshua Kingston

Josh Kingston ACA
Burton Sweet Limited
The Clock Tower
5 Farleigh Court
Old Weston Road
Flax Bourton
Bristol BS48 1UR

Date: Apr 16 2025

THE ACTORS' WORKSHOP BRISTOL
PERIOD ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £
RECEIPTS			
Charitable activities			
Student fees	74,508	-	74,508
	<u>74,508</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>74,508</u>
Investment income			
Bank and other interest	52	-	52
	<u>52</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>52</u>
TOTAL RECEIPTS	<u>74,560</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>74,560</u>
PAYMENTS			
Costs of charitable activities			
Direct costs			
Wages and salaries	52,185	-	52,185
Studio, theatre and show costs	2,218	-	2,218
Support costs			
Travel and subsistence	547	-	547
Printing, postage and stationery	318	-	318
Insurance	600	-	600
IT and subscriptions	520	-	520
Office costs	77	-	77
Premises expenses	73	-	73
Accountancy	762	-	762
Heat and light	167	-	167
Advertising	3,582	-	3,582
Rent and rates	7,919	-	7,919
Miscellaneous expenses	334	-	334
Bank and other charges	141	-	141
	<u>69,443</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>69,443</u>
TOTAL PAYMENTS	<u>69,443</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>69,443</u>
Transfers between funds	-	-	-
NET RECEIPTS/(PAYMENTS)	<u>5,117</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>5,117</u>

THE ACTORS' WORKSHOP BRISTOL
AS AT 31 AUGUST 2024
STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

	2024
	£
Current Assets	
Cash at bank and in hand	5,117
	5,117
Total Assets	<u>5,117</u>
Liabilities	
Accruals	
Accountancy	1,680
Total Liabilities	<u>1,680</u>
CASH RESERVES	
Unrestricted funds	
Brought forward	-
Net receipts/(payments) for the year	<u>5,117</u>
	5,117
Restricted funds	
Brought forward	-
Net receipts/(payments) for the year	<u>-</u>
	-
Total reserves	<u>5,117</u>

Signed on behalf of the Trustees on Apr 16 2025

Bryn Holding

 Bryn Holding
 Trustee