

Bristol Community Arts

Annual Report 2020- 2021

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Registered Charity No 293837
Company Registered in England by Guarantee No 01796488
Registered office: 160 Gloucester Road, Bishopston, Bristol BS7
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Introduction

The Charity is based at premises where the office is registered on the Gloucester Road, on a busy main street on the north side of inner-city Bristol. The facilities consist of office space, storage rooms, meeting space and artists studio spaces.

Despite having sold the building last year, the new owners offered the Charity the option to rent the entire premises at a very favourable rent until such time as they are able to obtain planning permission. Their first application was refused. Whilst another planning application is being submitted, the Charity is likely to occupy the premises for another year.

Objectives and activities

The Charity's purposes as set out in the objects contained in the companies' articles of association are to:

- The promotion of social inclusion, for the benefit by preventing people from becoming socially excluded, relieving the needs of those people who are socially excluded and assisting them to integrate into society, in particular (but not exclusively) through the provision of education, training, leisure and volunteering opportunities and with a view to strengthening social cohesion.
- The advancement of the applied and visual arts, for the public benefit, by providing participatory arts workshops, classes and activities in community settings
- The promotion of sustainable development, for the public benefit, by the promotion of sustainable means of achieving social and economic growth and regeneration

In each case, within Bristol and the surrounding area, the trustees have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing our aims and objectives and in planning our future activities.

All members of the management committee give their time voluntarily and receive no benefits from the Charity. Any expenses reclaimed from the charity are recorded in the Charity's accounts documents.

This Year

As always, our focus remains the support of individuals, particularly education of adults and families in the community who would not otherwise have the confidence to access mainstream provision.

This year has been a particularly challenging year. The Covid pandemic has disrupted normal delivery of services. Staff, trustees and volunteers have all suffered from considerable ill health, the project manager came down with long Covid, one team member died, and the rest were also affected. Team morale was at an all time low. Despite the numerous Zoom meetings held, it was very difficult to keep people motivated and engaged.

Due to the need for compliance with government guidelines, the charity was not able to conduct most of its face-to-face services. The most vulnerable service users do not have access to digital forms of communication, neither do they have the familiarity to use them.

Under normal circumstances, the charity delivers a range of engagement activities for 'hard to reach' groups who do not feel comfortable accessing mainstream provision. The charity helps individuals develop a sense of self worth and emotional resilience which helps promote better mental health. The above is achieved through the participation in visual arts activities.

We provide a safe, nurturing space where beneficiaries can express themselves and challenge some of their preconceived ideas about barriers to progress. The issues addressed often enable participants to consider entering employment, education or further training. The charity also ran a vibrant volunteer programme alongside university students, people with learning difficulties and those from BAME backgrounds, including refugees.

Despite the restrictions, this year we decided to go ahead hosting a remote marketing intern, working in partnership with the University of the West of England.

Pre-pandemic, the Charity was negotiating with Bristol City Council to bid for a piece of land nearby that would have enabled the Board to build affordable, supported housing for vulnerable people. The rentals would have provided the Charity with a stable income (removing the need for constant fund raising) and offering on site life skills and intergenerational mentoring. Due to the pandemic, this scheme was put on hold indefinitely.

Since the Covid pandemic, the charity has had to cease most face-to-face activities. Responding to the changing needs of users, the van has been used to pick up food donations and deliver groceries to some of the more vulnerable beneficiaries. We have also continued to undertake outreach work, delivering food to the homeless project run by the Church next door. Other beneficiaries have benefitted from regular visits to their homes to have food parcels delivered to families in need, especially those with young children in deprived areas

Last year the board aimed to extend its geographical reach by becoming more mobile. Communities in outer estates are some of the most deprived and often struggle with accessing provision as public transport is expensive and not as frequent as needed. In order to reach a greater number of deserving beneficiaries, the board decided to invest in the purchase of a transit van. Based on the successful model of mobile libraries and play buses, the intention is to load the van with all the necessary equipment such as sewing machines, fabrics, paints, mosaics and other art materials used to deliver participatory arts sessions in parks, schools, colleges and community & youth centres in and around Bristol. A gazebo, camping table and seating was also purchased to enable art tutors to deliver in public spaces such as parks and celebratory events, the charity is asked to participate in.

Education Provision

At the core of Bristol Community Arts objectives is the provision of engaging, inclusive, empowering, affordable, diverse learning and education. Sessions are open to all. People on low incomes are asked to make a small donation, those who can afford it (the salaried) are asked to pay below market fees for participation.

Each indoor session is designed to be small, which allows individuals the opportunity to receive all the help and support they need. Where participants have designated Key workers due to disability or learning difficulties, they are also permitted to attend the sessions. There is also a functional skills tutor who supports the practical learning with supplementary numeracy and literacy sessions.

Sessions tend to be casual, warm and friendly. With a lot of encouragement and support, individuals come around to viewing learning in a more positive light, can see the rewards that learning brings, feel a sense of achievement and better able to explore the possibilities of future employment or further training. The board is keen to address the current lack of provision for learning among children from low-income families who have been kept from school due to the pandemic.

Funding and Organisation

The board aims to undertake at least two funding bids per year. The Charity currently receives rental income from artist studio spaces that are rented out to local artisans. Classes are taught by qualified, experienced tutors who work on a freelance basis.

Occasionally, the charity is approached by trainee teachers who offer their time and skills for free. This has not happened of late, which is not surprising given the Pandemic situation. Going forward, the board have decided to narrow the range of activities on offer. We are exploring the options for on-line delivery, as the pandemic has created a lot of uncertainty.

Art sessions: Courses & Workshops

Due to the restrictions imposed by the ever-present pandemic, the board sees little option than to consider outdoor delivery of activities. To this end, we have invested in purchasing a van and outdoor equipment to facilitate such delivery. We are also seeking to collaborate with other organisations such as The Vench in Lockleaze and Southmead Development Trust who have great outdoor facilities in areas of high deprivation.

Last year the Charity participated in the North Bristol Arts Trail, where we had 219 visitors over the course of three days. We used this event as an opportunity to engage further with the wider public and ran a consultation with them to gauge what they thought was relevant and necessary for the charity to deliver. This year the charity did not host any students on work placements from abroad but hopes to do so once again when conditions return to normal.

Achievements and performance

The charity has been considerably challenged by the disruptions caused by the Covid pandemic. Board members, staff and volunteers have all been subject to periodic incidents of ill health. Nevertheless, as a small charity, it has been able to adapt to changing circumstances and respond to changing needs by the delivery and distribution of food, home visits and regular phone calls to the most vulnerable.

During the accounting period, the board of trustees sought a change of name to better reflect its aims and objectives. In 2019 research was conducted to ask members of the public and service users were consulted about their views on the name North Bristol Community Project (the charity's name since 1984). Many responded that the name did not give much indication of what it did. Some also felt the charity might only be accessible to those in the north of Bristol. For this reason, a brainstorming session was undertaken. Bristol Community Arts was the favoured option. The strapline is: 'Creative activities to learn, grow & change'. Beneath which in small print will be the words 'all welcome, regardless of age or ability'.

For the purposes of rebranding, several freelancers have been hired, the include a logo designer, someone with social media expertise and a tech person to build the new website. To keep the building as Covid compliant as possible a cleaner has been hired to ensure all surfaces are disinfected on a regular basis, cutting down on the possible incidents of contamination.

The charity has had to engage with a new accountancy firm to undertake the relevant tasks necessary to be compliant. The team had struggled with the previous accountants, who did not fully understand the limitations of our accounting know how. A new system called Zero was introduced which has made some of the processes easier to tackle. In March 2021, the project manager stepped down due to stress and poor health. A bereavement of a close family member only added to the grief. An interim manager was agreed until the position could be widely advertised.

Interviews for new staff were conducted over the summer of 2021. A marketing intern was taken on in 'partnership' with the University of the West of England. Advertisements were placed in the local press and various internet posts to advertise for a new project manager and administrative coordinator.

In October 2021 both positions had been successfully filled. Unfortunately, ill health disabled one of the new recruits and a new substitute is yet to be identified. A previous project manager has agreed to fill the gap in the interim. There is no selection process for beneficiaries as they are any members of the general public.

A recent funding application was unsuccessful. The reasons stated being insufficient partnership working and service delivery over the past two years. The board has considered various options going forward, a possible merger, closure, different strategic modeling.

The Board is about to embark on the plan for delivery of activities with several key agencies with shared values and objectives. This will serve to address the barriers to successful funding bids as well as help the board decide which entity to donate assets to, should the charity cease to be.

Structure, governance and management

The management groups:

- The board of trustees
- The management committee
- The general membership

The board of trustees

The membership and other trustees vote in new board members at the Annual General Meeting. They are volunteers and hold the legal responsibility to ensure the accounts are kept correctly and for financial and policy decisions. They meet, usually about ten times a year.

The trustees can be removed, if there is a major disagreement, by the Membership calling an Extraordinary General Meeting and then electing or removing Trustees. Trustees who do not attend three consecutive meetings without good reason, shall have their continuing membership called into question.

The above information is available in more detail in Bristol Community Arts legal governing document – Articles of Association This year, the charity's previous name (North Bristol Community Project) was changed to better reflect what it does and where. The aims & objectives were also revisited and updated to cover the present landscape.

The usual method for recruitment and appointment of new charity trustees is through advertising in the local media, followed by interviews, attending a couple of meetings to see if the candidate is suitable. Posters on the outside of the building are also posted to attract the attention of local residents who may not access digital platforms. New trustees are elected to post during board meetings.

The management committee

The management Committee is made up of volunteers, experienced educators, community artists, youth workers and students. The project manager and administrator are responsible for the day to day running of the charity and make most of the minor decisions; however, they can be overruled by the board of trustees who make the strategic decisions, policy and financial decisions. Major decisions are made at monthly meetings which when relevant are open to all users and volunteers.

The general membership

The membership is able to elect trustees once a year at the Annual General Meeting. There are currently 141 members on the charity's list. Membership is open to all and the fee is currently £1 per year. This is under review.

Risk Assessment

1. **Inexperienced Trustees.** Trustees must be aware of their responsibilities. Sometimes replacing core trustees is difficult, so contingency plans and regular recruitment is essential.
2. **Key Workers.** The tasks performed should be documented so that deputies or understudies could be appointed to cover the loss of key workers. If the worker is involved in finance, ensure that the accounting system is understandable to any replacement.
3. **Fraud.** The risk assessment must be reconciled with the project's policy on fraud, and on cash handling. Other existing procedures must also be

considered, e.g., whistle blowing, funding reviews, cross checking. Two signatories must be used for each signed financial document.

4. **Litigation and Employment Practice.** The Voluntary Sector Legal Handbook, from the directory of Social Change and the web site www.sinclairtaylor.co.uk, are recommended in order to understand our responsibilities and identify any risk. An insurance policy is in place.
5. **Computers.** The loss of information along with back up procedures and disaster plan to be reviewed against existing practices.
6. **Loss of Trade.** An assessment of hazards (e.g., flood, fire, vandalism, etc.) that would impact on trade is required. An insurance policy is in place.
7. **New Projects.** The introduction of new projects and their impact on existing business and commitments. The new project proposal should go through the trustees and, if agreed, be vetted by two independent people who would look at resource and funding.

Financial review

Reserves Policy

Unrestricted funds are needed for the charity to cover gaps in funding so that the charity can continue to function. The board have reviewed the charities needs and believes it to be prudent to keep the following reserves:

- £12,000 in general emergency fund equivalent to three months running costs
- £3,000 redundancy fund to cover potential payments to employees

The trustees are presented with an overview of the state of the current finances at each meeting, so they can monitor the level of funds and act when required.

Balance Sheet

Bristol Community Arts

As at 31 March 2021

	Account	31 Mar 2021
Fixed Assets		
	Tangible Assets	
	Buildings	260,059.00
	Computer Equipment	1,031.62
	Less Accumulated Depreciation on Buildings	(73,392.33)
	Less Accumulated Depreciation on Computer Equipment	(324.96)
	Less Accumulated Depreciation on Office Equipment	(53.00)
	Motor Vehicles	16,156.83
	Office Equipment	504.91
	Plant and Machinery	264.98
	Total Tangible Assets	0.00
Total Fixed Assets		0.00
Current Assets		
	Cash at bank and in hand	
	NORTH BRISTOL COMMUNITY PR	174,487.43
	PayPal	36.14
	Total Cash at bank and in hand	0.00
	Prepayments	123.82
Total Current Assets		0.00
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year		
	Accounts Payable	342.05
	Deposits on Studio rental	(60.00)
	M Clavijo Loan	3,800.00
	NIC Payable	725.62
	PAYE / NICs Payable	3,691.88
	Pensions Payable	(1,543.63)

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Rounding	0.02
Suspense	(45.00)
VAT	8,871.48
Wages Payable - Payroll	(50,760.10)
Total Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	0.00
Net Current Assets (Liabilities)	0.00
Total Assets less Current Liabilities	0.00

Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	
R Gupta Loan	(5,069.29)
Total Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	0.00
Net Assets	0.00
Capital and Reserves	
Current Year Earnings	359,990.18
Retained Earnings	(96,048.77)
Revaluation Reserve	155,000.00
Total Capital and Reserves	0.00

Reference and administrative details

Bristol Community Arts Team (Formally North Bristol Community Project)

Chairperson: Daniel Robicheau

Treasurer: Annabel Fitzsimons

Trustee: Emma Crane

Trustee: Jose Campo

Trustee: Matt Lawrence

Accountants: Brockman Accountants

Project Manager: Rita Gupta

Administration: Mike Summers

Tutors: Becky Thompson

Volunteer: Natasha Carberry

There are no exemptions from disclosure

There are no funds held as custodian trustee on behalf of others