

Annual Report & Report on Public Benefit

Hilltop Highland Dancers Dergina

Registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland NIC 107696

First Constituted as an Unincorporated Community Association: 21 May 2019

Constitution updated: 21 January 2021

Registered Office Address

C/O 15 Tireluran Road, Aghnacloy, Co. Tyrone, BT69 6DB.

Saturday 22nd June 2024

TRUSTEES

Mrs Wendy Beatty

Mrs Gillian Kelly

Mrs Leanne Law

Mrs Alma Marshall

Mr Ivan Duff

Mrs Beverley Hylands

Mr Leslie Hawe

PURPOSES

3.1 The Association is established to promote the benefit of the inhabitants of the Mid Ulster District council area and its surrounding rural environs (hereinafter called the "area of benefit") without distinction of age, gender, sexuality, nationality, ethnic origin, political or religious opinion, by associating the statutory authorities, voluntary organisations and the inhabitants in a common effort to advance the Ulster Scots dance, Ulster Scots culture and heritage, health, wellbeing and education by providing or assisting in the provision of facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation or other leisure-time occupation, with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants and in particular:

- a. To Provide Highland dance tuition to children and young people in the local area, encouraging children to get active and express themselves creatively, developing skills in self-discipline and exploring and becoming aware of their own unique culture.
- b. To provide opportunities for members of the group to participate in events demonstrating the skills they have learned and therein promote the Ulster Scots Culture.
- c.

BENEFICIARIES

The charity's beneficiaries are primarily the inhabitants of Dungannon and its surrounding environs within the Dungannon and South Tyrone area of Mid Ulster District Council.

ACTIVITIES

2023 was another busy year for The Hilltop Team with dancers continuing to meet weekly at their classes in Dergina as well as demonstrating their skills at numerous events and displays and competing across the country.

The king's Coronation was a highlight for the dancers who again participated in many events as they marked this historic moment in our lifetimes.

Excitement was high in the group when our teacher Miss Kathryn Stewart was chosen to choreograph the Highland Dance aspect of the Belfast Tattoo and some of our advanced dancers were privileged to be part of this memorable event. It was back to Belfast again for a group of our dancers as they performed at the NI festival of remembrance in the waterfront. The dancers were also delighted to represent Hilltop as they performed at The Grand Orange Lodge awards in Lisburn. In between all these prestigious events the dancers continued traveling the length and breadth of the country to competitions.

The group also continued to meet weekly for classes thanks to the generous ongoing funding of The Ulster Scots Agency.

The Hilltop team again excelled whilst hosting the now annual Platinum Competition with over 90 participants from dance schools regionally.

Our competition and indeed weekly classes simply could not exist were it not for the small army of volunteers who give up their free time behind the scenes to support the group and it is thanks to these volunteers that we owe a great deal of thanks.

Alongside our volunteers are the committee who meet regularly to oversee the administrative side of the group and who endeavour to secure funding regularly to finance the group and therefore keep costs to families to a minim at a time when costs are soaring for everyone.

The new year of 2024 brought some delightful news that one of our dancers had achieved her associate teacher's exam and could now take over the reigns of the beginner's class. Miss Sarah Hylands began her journey at our first class on 5th November 2016 and very quickly aspired to becoming a highland dancing teacher and so we as a group are proud to have watched Sarah achieve her dream in a relatively short space of time.

Although it is easy to list the achievements of the advanced dancers who participate in all sorts of events, the group also recognises the number of beginner dancers who will all now receive custom made choreography outfits thanks to the generous funding from MUDC and in so doing providing a means for all of our dancers to demonstrate their dancing to a wider audience despite their level.

Spring '24 brought the opportunity for every dancer from the youngest to the oldest to complete their exams and a celebration in recognition of this has been organised for later on in the year.

As Chairperson of the group I am proud of all of our achievements through another busy and challenging year and thank everyone who has in anyway contributed to our success.

ACHIEVEMENTS

HOW MAIN ACTIVITIES HAVE BENEFITED BENEFICIARIES

The overall aims of our annual activities are to provide direct benefits which flow from our purposes which include: preservation of Ulster Scots Culture and in particular Highland Dance. This in turn improves dance skills and promotes good / community relations, education, training, health and well-being outcomes, and reduced levels of social isolation, stress and anxiety, through the promotion of dance and Ulster Scots, culture, arts, heritage, recreation, education and training.

We did this by the Committee meeting regularly to run the charity behind the scenes, help raise funds for the Group and running weekly dance classes.

The Committee holds regular meetings with the full membership to plan events and avail of information, and to provide support and facilities to ease social isolation.

The Group socializes and meets with other similar groups in the local area, the local district and beyond to network and share information.

Guest Speakers give talks and information sessions on dance and related topics for the benefit of all the members.

The charity's beneficiaries are primarily the inhabitants of Dungannon and its surrounding environs within the Dungannon and South Tyrone area of Mid Ulster District Council.

These benefits are demonstrated through feedback from beneficiaries and attendees at our meetings, events, classes, and cultural activities using: surveys, verbal feedback, and evaluation of our activities.

A private benefit to Trustees may arise from our ongoing services and programmes of dance tuition, music, arts, cultural, educational, leisure and recreational activities: information, training, events, and networking visits. Through this, Trustees gain services, dance tuition, cultural awareness, information, skills, and experience which are transferable to other settings, and which may benefit their own community group or area. Our own Trustees receive information, tuition, services and activities in the same way as other beneficiaries, and are assigned support, information and services in the same ways as other beneficiaries.

These benefits are incidental and necessary to ensure the benefit is provided to our beneficiaries.

In providing a local point of social contact and activities for the community benefit there is no possibility of harm outweighing the benefit - there is no harm arising from any of the purposes.

FINANCIAL REVIEW AT END OF YEAR

FINANCIAL POSITION AT END OF YEAR: Despite cuts to funding programmes, the organisation remains in a strong financial position.

OUTSTANDING DEBTS OR LIABILITIES: There were no debts or outstanding debts or liabilities.

FUNDS IN MATERIAL DEFICIT & STEPS TAKEN TO MITIGATE: There were no funds in material deficit.

FINANCIAL MITIGATION: The Trustees ensured the organisation's finances were managed prudently and on an ongoing basis.

FUNDS HELD BY THE CHARITY AS A CUSTODIAN TRUSTEE: None – Not applicable.

RESTRICTIONS ON WHO CAN BENEFIT

There are no restrictions on who can benefit.

We do not charge any fees.

There are no charges to access any events or services.

There are no restrictions based on personal characteristics.

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The direct benefits which flow from our purposes include improved: preservation of Ulster Scots Culture and in particular Highland Dance. This in turn improves dance skills and

promotes good / community relations, education, training, health and well-being outcomes, and reduced levels of social isolation, stress and anxiety, through the promotion of dance and Ulster Scots, culture, arts, heritage, recreation, education and training

PRIVATE BENEFIT

There is no private benefit to any individual.

HARM

No harm has flowed from any of our Purposes.

SERIOUS INCIDENT REPORTING

There are no serious incidents to report.

VULNERABLE BENEFICIARIES

Appropriate Policies, Procedures and Training are in place such as POCVA Policy & Procedures.

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The Trustees have complied with their duty to have due regard to the Charity Commission NI's Public Benefit Guidance when exercising any powers or duties to which the guidance is relevant.

Signed Chairperson: Wendy Beatty Wendy Beatty

Date: 22/6/24 .