

EastSide Arts

Company Limited by Guarantee

Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report)

Year ended 31 March 2023

The trustees, who are also the directors for the purposes of company law, present their report and the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2023.

Reference and administrative details

Registered charity name	EastSide Arts
Charity registration number	107782
Company registration number	NI628773
Principal office and registered office	Avalon House 278-280 Newtonards Road Belfast BT4 1HE Antrim

The trustees

D Alderdice	(Resigned 2 December 2022)
F Bell	
R Davison	
M Turtle	
S Brannigan	(Resigned 26 April 2022)
E McCracken	(Appointed 4 July 2023)
J McGrath	(Appointed 4 July 2023)
M Neill	(Appointed 4 July 2023)
J Sialianskaia	(Appointed 4 July 2023)

Company secretary Tony Wilson

Auditor Finegan Gibson Ltd
Chartered accountants & statutory auditor
Causeway Tower
9 James Street South
Belfast
BT2 8DN

Solicitors Hewitt and Gilpin
Thomas House
14-16 James Street South
Belfast
BT2 7GA

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Structure, governance and management

Governing Document

EastSide Arts is a company limited by guarantee and is a charity recognised by the Charity Commission for NI. It is a not for profit organisation.

The company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the company and is governed under its Articles of Association.

Appointment of trustees

The Chairperson and the trustees recommend new trustees as needed. New trustees are recruited on the relevance of their skills, and their potential to be able to make a helpful contribution to the governance of the charity. As part of this process they are made aware of a trustee's legal obligations under charity and company law, the content of the Memorandum and Articles of Association, the decision-making processes, the business plan and recent financial performance of the charity.

Once the potential new trustee has agreed to be considered for appointment they can be co-opted by the directors until formal voting by members occurs at the next Annual General Meeting.

Trustee induction and training

A trustee induction process is in place for all group companies.

Organisation structure and how charity makes decisions

EastSide Arts is governed by the board of directors. The company is managed on a day to day basis by a senior management team.

The board of directors meets quarterly, and is appointed by the members at the AGM.

A senior management team manages the day to day activities of the company, and reports on company performance to all board meetings.

Arrangements for setting pay and remuneration of key management personnel

The directors consider the board of directors, who are the charity's trustees, and the senior management team comprise the key management personnel of the charity in charge of directing and controlling, running and operating the charity on a day to day basis. All directors give of their time freely and no director received remuneration in the year. Details of directors' expenses and related party transactions are disclosed in note 13 to the accounts.

The pay of the senior staff is set by reference to NICVA guidance and utilisation of NJC pay scales. In view of the nature of the charity, the directors benchmark against pay levels in other similar sized charities run on a voluntary basis when appointing new members of key management.

Relationships with related parties

None of our trustees receive remuneration or other benefit from their work with the charity.

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Risk management

The company aims to mitigate the major risks it faces by implementation of the following procedures:-

- Significant external risks to funding have led to the development of a strategic plan which clearly identifies funding requirements going forward; and
- Internal control risks are minimised by the implementation of procedures for authorisation of all transactions with a financial implication.

Directors

The directors serving during the year were as follows:-

D Alderdice
F Bell
R Davison
M Turtle
S Brannigan

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Objectives and activities

EastSide Arts seeks to inspire EastSide residents and visitors by celebrating east Belfast, nurturing creative talent and delivering excellent programmes and events.

Historically east Belfast has been underfunded in cultural provision and as a result, there has often been an underlying uncertainty about engagement with the arts in east Belfast. EastSide Arts works within this context to challenge barriers to participation and demonstrate that the arts and creativity are for everyone, bringing regeneration to the east of the city through creative engagement.

In terms of external strategic context, the company works within the strategic service delivery and funding context of the Programme for Government and Belfast Agenda. We are a key partner in delivering the strategic objectives of our core funders, the Arts Council Northern Ireland (ACNI), our principal funder, and Belfast City Council, specifically the Belfast Agenda and 10-year Cultural Strategy, A City Imagining.

Within the overall Programme for Government, EastSide Arts is most strategically aligned with Outcome 5: We are an innovative, creative society, where people can fulfil their potential; and Outcome 9: We are a shared, welcoming and confident society that respects diversity.

Within Belfast City Council's Belfast Agenda we are most strategically aligned with Outcome 5: Belfast is a vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable city; and Outcome 2: Belfast is a welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive city for all.

EastSide Arts is proud to be part of the cultural landscape of Belfast, contributing to the growth and development of the Arts Sector in Northern Ireland.

The company employed 3 full time members of staff during the course of the year, and managed a team of volunteers.

Charitable Purpose

The purpose of EastSide Arts, as expressed in its objects is to: advance education, to promote the arts, heritage and culture and to promote the benefit of the people of East Belfast and its environs of Greater Belfast without distinction of age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnic identity, political or religious opinion, by associating the statutory authorities, community and voluntary organisations and the inhabitants and in particular:

- a) to encourage appreciation for and active participation in community based visual and performing arts including music, visual art, comedy, theatre, film and literature.
- b) to encourage appreciation of the arts and stimulate the artistic creativity of people in the area of benefit and to produce performances and exhibitions of works of cultural and educational value including entertainments and exhibitions
- c) to advance any other exclusively charitable purpose as the directors may, from time to time, decide in accordance with the law of charity.

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Strategic report

The following sections for achievements and performance and financial review form the strategic report of the charity.

Achievements and performance

Public benefit report

From our company objects flow our organisational purpose which is "to create an east Belfast that is a thriving cultural hub; where the arts are valued, creativity is for everyone and people are connected with each other and the wider world." The different elements within our purpose are further broken down into four Strategic Objectives as follows -

1. To improve equity of opportunity for people in east Belfast to engage with creative activities
2. To create a variety of meaningful, open and inclusive opportunities for people in east Belfast to explore creativity and connect with others
3. To celebrate the past, present and future of east Belfast;
4. To develop relationships that ensure the long-term stability of EastSide Arts and create investment in the arts in east Belfast

2022/23 Achievements and Performance in meeting Strategic Objectives:

Objective 1: To improve equity of opportunity for people in east Belfast to engage with creative activities

The Gert & Friends - From October 2022 - March 2023 we worked with 25 local people, members of the Gertrude Star Band, between the ages of 16 and 69, creating 9 brand new tracks co-written with Matt McGinn, Una McCann, Chip Bailey and Duke Special, which celebrated the culture and heritage of the band and protestant marching culture. A celebration showcase event took place in The MAC Belfast in March and was remounted in C.S. Lewis Square in July which was attended by 577 people. High levels of engagement across the project/with ESP and overwhelmingly positive feedback from the members involved highlighted the importance of the project to individual members: 'Just like to say a big thank you to all involved in the two shows we've put on these last few months...Myself I'm in the band going on 30 years and I must say it's the best thing I've ever been involved in. The women's choir, what can I say? Women, Mums, Wives, Aunties, Daughters and friends just brought in. Had the pleasure of doing this with my wife which was brilliant, she loved it. The friendships we've all made! Just let's hope one day we'll get the chance to do it all again somewhere.' - Andy, Band Member

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Attendance at Community Meetings - The staff team continued to develop our networks of contacts from a broad demographic of east Belfast representatives through monthly attendance at Race Relations Network meetings, Community Development Cafes, and the Dementia Friendly East Belfast Steering Committee, including taking on the role of Vice-Chair of the Race Relations Network. We made 4-5 new contacts including East Belfast GAA and Hosford Women's Group, developing our understanding of how and why people engage in east Belfast.

Shared Curatorship - We worked with an experienced live music curator and two performers and event organisers from the Queer community to programme a number of events in the EastSide Arts Festival to ensure that those with lived experience had input into the opportunities that were created for people to engage in arts and culture through the festival.

Objective 2: To create a variety of meaningful, open and inclusive opportunities for people in east Belfast to explore creativity and connect with others

The Artful Ageing programme was a 5-month creative programme for older people with social drop-ins for independent seniors, bespoke workshops for those in dementia specialist supported living facilities and public events programmed during the EastSide Arts Festival for both independent seniors and those in palliative / nursing care. Over the course of 5 months we engaged with 386 people. During the EastSide Arts Festival in August we ran the Silver Screenings at Strand Arts Centre and the very popular 'Soda Popz Lunchtime Bop' to cater for older citizens and those on a dementia journey, or with learning disabilities.

Creative Kids Our summer activity for children and families featured 2 bespoke events during the EastSide Arts Festival; FunKademy - a 4-day creative summer school for 166 x children aged 5-11 to try a variety of different artforms, have fun and meet other children from outside of their schools or community circles. The Festival Fun Day - a birthday themed family fun day featuring children's theatre, live music, information stalls, craft activities, storytelling tent and workshops was attended by ~500 people.

Creative Citizens Programme: In November 2022 we were awarded £317K from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation over a 48-month period to deliver the Creative Citizens community engagement programme. The first year of the programme is almost entirely research based and the final quarter of the reporting period was spent creating a Cultural Research and Engagement Tender.

EastSide Choir The choir reached maximum membership capacity at 35 members and during the reporting period, moved rehearsal space from Ballyhackamore Social Club to their permanent home in Short Strand Community Centre. At the end of their Spring Term, the choir performed in Marie Cure Hospice and Connswater Shopping Centre. They delivered 2 x summer performances in the EastSide Arts Festival and in December, they performed beside the Christmas Tree in Lanyon Station for our sponsor Translink, and held the now annual Winter Warmer in Banana Block on Thursday 8 December.

Creating Space - In collaboration with a new contact, Hosford Women's Group, we devised and delivered 'Creating Space', a 4-week reactive project to promote integration and cultural diversity by supporting Hosford's Women's Group to explore their creativity and share their stories through trauma-informed arts practice. We delivered 4 weeks of creative workshops, culminating in an exhibition in Skainos. All the artwork on display was available to purchase with proceeds reinvested into Hosford Women's Group.

Big Kids' Society - We ran 12 x Big Kids' Society events (a fun, creative monthly social night held in 3

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x cafes in east Belfast, led by 4 x visual artists from our Big Kid's Collective) for 108 participants. Open to all ages, experiences and backgrounds, these events focus on creating a creative community, nurturing individual creativity, increasing accessible, open creative opportunities in east Belfast and offering a space for creativity outside of pub/social club environments.

It's so nice to be able to walk ten mins from my house and do something like this!

I loved the first event so much I've signed up to them all. It's my monthly treat to me, from me!

It's a treat to be able to do something like this together, without the kids!

This is a great way to try something new, and it's affordable too

Governance During the final quarter of the year we carried out a skills audit of the ESA Trustees as a first step in addressing the shortfall in current numbers. We then held an open recruitment exercise and received 14 applications. Following shortlisting, 7 applicants were invited to attend interview and 5 of them were recommended to and approved by the ESP Nominations Committee.

Diversity and Inclusion Training

Two training sessions took place in January 2022; Guide Dogs UK delivered training in how to assist blind and partially sighted people and NICRE delivered EDI training, attended by 29 staff, volunteers and trustees.

Street Art Project

We supported a street art project with a group of young men from Alternatives in Orangefield Park. Alternatives commissioned a piece of artwork for the side wall of Orangefield Pavilion which has been designed and developed in collaboration with the graffiti artist FGB around the theme of men's mental health. Partners include EastSide Greenways and Belfast City Council.

Objective 3: To celebrate the past, present and future of east Belfast;

EastSide Arts Festival

The annual festival launched on Friday 17 June took place from 4-14 August. The programme featured more than 80 events across 32 venues and we were delighted to get back into the community after the previous 2 years of reduced, digital and hybrid events. The theme of the 2022 festival was our 10th birthday. We attracted 10,000+ audience and 1,800 participants; we employed 280 artists and 6 freelance staff - our numbers were on a par to pre-pandemic levels. 30 volunteers gave approx. 300 hours of their time, 93% of comment card responses rated events as excellent and we saw an increase in both sales and attendance figures from the previous year.

'Three Pay Cheques Away' by Alice Malseed

We were awarded funding from the Arts Council NI Commissioning Programme to commission writer Alice Malseed to write a new piece of theatre addressing poverty and destitution in east Belfast. The project was devised in collaboration with the EastSide Partnership anti-poverty Scaffolding Project. Alice carried out interviews with people with lived experience in preparation for developing a script in the incoming financial year.

Objective 4: To develop relationships that ensure the long-term stability of EastSide Arts and create investment in the arts in east Belfast

Staffing Development

We were awarded funding from the Future Screens DfC Artwork Fund to recruit a full-time, Real Living Wage post for 3 years. The purpose of the grant is to create employment opportunities for

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individuals to work in a recognised arts organisation, which will in turn support organisational and sectoral growth. We created the post of Production and Admin Assistant and appointed Niki Browne to the post in July 2022.

Paul Hamlyn Foundation

In October 2022 we submitted a 2nd stage application to PHF for 4-year funding. The November panel granted us the full funding for which we had applied (£317K) and the 'Creative Citizens' project began in January 2023. Crucially this funding supports core costs which will play a large role in the sustainability and development of ESA in the coming years.

Artist Remuneration

We completed a comprehensive piece of work gathering information across artforms around what is considered to be 'fair' remuneration with the aim of helping to define a policy around rates of pay. Industry standards vary widely across artforms and union organisations and we are working towards creating a fair and equitable rate card for the following financial year.

Funding and Income Generation

This information is reflected in the annual accounts.

Financial review

The results for the year are set out in detail on pages 16 & 17. The company returned a surplus for the year of £71,036 (2022: deficit of £912).

At 31 March 2023, the total funds of the charity amounted to £151,290 (2022: £80,254), comprising restricted funds of £83,613 (2022: £10,104) and unrestricted funds of £67,677 (2022: £70,150).

The unrestricted funds are essential to provide sufficient funds to cover any unforeseen costs which may arise and fulfil the legal obligations of the charity in the event that current levels of income are not maintained.

Reserves policy and going concern

A policy has been implemented by the company in order to recognise the charity's requirements for reserves in light of the main risks to the organisation. It has established a policy whereby the unrestricted funds not committed should equate to between 25% and 50% of annual administration overheads. The aim is to provide sufficient funds to cover any unforeseen costs which may arise, as well as allowing for the payment of any liabilities which would arise should the company cease to operate. The company recognises that such targets may remain aspirational.

Trustees' responsibilities statement

The trustees, who are also directors for the purposes of company law, are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the charity trustees to prepare financial statements for each year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, for that period.

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In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the applicable Charities SORP;
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and 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 Companies Act 2006. 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.

Auditor

Each of the persons who is a trustee at the date of approval of this report confirms that:

- so far as they are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the charity's auditor is unaware; and
- they have taken all steps that they ought to have taken as a trustee to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's auditor is aware of that information.

The trustees' annual report and the strategic report were approved on 1 December 2023 and signed on behalf of the board of trustees by:

 Tony Wilson