

Alternative Medicine Theatre Annual Report

1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023

The Alternative Medicine Theatre provides opportunities in all aspects of theatrical arts through performing and putting on productions in a friendly, encouraging, social and safe environment. The organisation was established to put on an annual pantomime in the local theatre, promoting interest in local dramatics.

2022 – 2023 was the first year in two years that the charity was able to undertake any of its usual activities, due to the COVID pandemic. The pandemic and the associated public health restrictions had meant that the charity was unable to safely develop, rehearse and produce a pantomime that could be performed to a public audience.

With the relaxation of restrictions by summer 2022, the Alternative Medicine Theatre decided to recommence activities, to advance involvement with and awareness of the arts, and promote awareness off and raise funding for health charities.

This allowed the Alternative Medicine Theatre to deliver the direct benefits to its beneficiaries, specifically its members and the public across Mid and East Antrim Borough Council.

The direct benefits include:

- Providing opportunities to engage in amateur dramatics,
- Educating and developing skills in the arts
- Providing opportunities for the general public to engage in the arts in their local area
- Increased awareness of the arts in the local area
- improved mental health and wellbeing of both participants and audience member
- the promotion of social interaction across the community, by coming together to participate in or enjoy amateur dramatics.
- Providing funding to a nominated, local charity by way of a donation made from the ticket sales to productions.

In planning activities for the year, the Alternative Medicine Theatre Trustees gave careful consideration to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit to ensure that the activities would help to achieve the charity's purposes and provide a benefit to the beneficiaries.

The charity re-engaged its membership of 40 members across Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, and welcomed five new members under the age of 18. The charity undertook twice weekly rehearsals for four months, providing a significant opportunity for members to develop their skills in drama and music. Spending a week in the Braid Arts Centre provided members with the benefit of experiencing a working, professional theatre and enhancing their understanding of the arts in Northern Ireland.

From 1st – 3rd December 2022, the Alternative Medicine Theatre gave four performances of 'Once Upon a Time in PantoLand' to a combined audience of over 1,000 people. The positive feedback received demonstrates how the charity delivered public benefit by increasing awareness of and engagement with the arts in the Mid and East Antrim Council area.

Feedback received included:

"Went to see this with my family it was Fab!!! Such good fun my boys really enjoyed it. Thank you" – CL, audience member.

"The show was fantastic – well done to all involved" – CB, audience member.

The pantomime production raised £5,033.80 for the charity, from which The Alternative Medicine Theatre made donations to a range of other charitable and public sector organisations delivering public benefit.

The Alternative Medicine Theatre elected to donate money to Neuroendocrine Cancer UK, a charity supporting those with a rare form of cancer across the UK. Awareness of NCUK was also raised by Alternative Medicine Theatre through social media, marketing communications and announcements made during the performances.

Other donations were made to a local school and a local sporting whose facilities were made available to the Alternative Medicine Theatre, which are delivering further public benefits by supporting the continuing of their work.

The Trustees of the Alternative Medicine Theatre continued to exhibit prudent management of the charity's financial position and the charity remained financially healthy in this financial year, with no debts and no funds materially in deficit.

The Trustees believe that no harm has arisen from the purposes or activities of the charity during this year.

The Trustees remain content that while there is some private benefit to suppliers who supply critical equipment and consumable products that are required to achieve the purpose (such as suppliers of set, costumes and equipment), these benefits are incidental and necessary to ensure the benefit is provided to our beneficiaries.

Overall, 2022 – 2023 marked the return to normal operations for The Alternative Medicine Theatre, with the charity maximising the benefits it brings to members and the public across Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, particularly through providing opportunities to engage in amateur dramatics, Educating and developing skills in the arts, providing opportunities for the general public to engage in the arts and raising awareness of and funds for health-related matters.

Alternative Medicine Theatre trustees