

Alternative Medicine Theatre Annual Report

1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024

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.

2023 – 2024 was a highly successful year for the charity, operating without any of the restrictions previously in place due to the COVID pandemic. The Alternative Medicine Theatre undertook all of its regular 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 two 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.

The charity undertook a number of successful fundraising activities, which served to raise awareness of the charity, generate funds to support its work and raise awareness of the arts and the performances that would be given in the The Braid Arts Centre

From 30th November – 2nd December 2023, the Alternative Medicine Theatre gave four performances of 'The Wizard Of Oz' 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:

"Thank you all so much for such an enjoyable and entertaining evening. I loved it, my hubby did too and our grandchildren had a fantastic night of fun and laughter. You worked hard and you certainly did exceptionally well" – JH, audience member.

"This was such a great show. Well done to everyone involved" – EB, audience member.

The pantomime production raised £5,757.58 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 NI Kidney Patient Association, a charity supporting those with a kidney disease and their families. Awareness of NIKPA 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, voluntary health service 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, 2023 – 2024 was a highly successful and rewarding year 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