

downshire brass



DOWNSHIRE BRASS

Annual Report & Statement

For the financial year February 1st 2022 to January 31st 2023

Downshire Brass Charity no. 108009





Trustee's report for Charity Commission February 2022 - January 2023

Introduction

Downshire Brass are based in Belfast and are one of Northern Ireland's leading championship section brass bands. Formed more than 30 years ago from two of the oldest established brass bands in Ireland, Downshire enjoys considerable success as a contesting and concert brass band. The Band has a vibrant youth band and a number of smaller ensembles.

The Band strives to include something for everyone in a repertoire which ranges from traditional brass band marches, through 'big band' numbers, to the classics and popular music.

Downshire Brass, rehearse on Monday and Thursday evenings 8:00pm – 10:00pm, our Youth Band and learner classes rehearse on Monday evenings 6:30pm – 7:45pm at our band hall located at the BB Playing Fields, Belvoir Drive Belfast BT8 7DH

Downshire Brass is governed by its Constitution and is managed by a Band Committee elected at the band's Annual General Meeting (AGM). At the AGM there is also the election/re-election of Honorary Vice President/President

January due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic guidance our AGM was held on 31st January via zoom where we discussed the previous year's activities, heard reports from our Chair, Treasurer and Musical Director and held our Election of Officers for the incoming year.

In **February** the NIBA Solos and Ensemble were held with an online zoom session for youth section and a player/ensembles and adjudicator only basis for seniors with no audience permitted.

In **April** roads lead to the Strule Arts Centre, Omagh, where we competed in the Brass Band League, Spring Festival coming a creditable 2nd playing "Soul Trap", a new piece composed by one of our own players.

In **May**, we made a memory that will stay with us for a long time as we represented Northern Ireland at the European Brass Band Championship in the Symphony Hall, Birmingham playing Soul Trap and Variation for Brass Band

June started our summer season, playing on the quayside beside the SS Nomadic at the lighting of the Jubilee Beacon, our annual return to Templepatrick playing at the Jubilee Big Lunch ending with our end of year Summer Concert with guest soloist Misa Mead followed by a special occasion as our 10-piece ensemble playing at the wedding of Hannah and Ian and afterwards the full band playing at their reception.



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August our 10-piece took part in A Music Marathon at Kilbroney Parish Church Rostrevor and our full band played at the beginning of the 2022 Antrim Half Marathon

In **October** the band competed in the North of Ireland Band Association, contest in Armagh playing the set piece “Royal Parks”

November began with a Service of Remembrance at Malone Presbyterian Church. This was swiftly followed by our two annual engagements of bringing Santa into the Park Centre and the Kennedy Centre. We also took part in Belfast “Feeling Festive” to mark the beginning of the Belfast City Centre Christmas Season

December began with our annual Christmas Concert with Grosvenor Chorale in Malone Presbyterian Church, we also played at carol services in Belvoir Methodist Church and Killowen Parish Church, Coleraine. Highlight of the year was the showing of The Snowman – Two sold out performance on one day. We also undertook five carolling engagements at Let’s Go Hydro.

Public Benefit Statement

To promote the awareness, understanding and appreciation of brass band music by advancing the education of the public with its varied repertoire to those interested within the local community by participating in the playing of musical instruments. Offering those who are interested in becoming playing members the opportunity of learning to play a musical instrument through learner classes. To offer those who do not wish to become learners or playing members the opportunity to become associate non-playing members of the band and in so doing create a greater awareness of music in general. By undertaking concerts, social events and providing musical entertainment on behalf of churches, schools, charities, councils, local communities and public bodies in a common effort to advance education, with the object of improving the Conditions of life to a wide audience. As well as these public events which includes concerts and recitals, the benefits to study and play music as part of a band.

The benefits of developing musicians which flow from Downshire Brass largely depends on age. Downshire Brass has three groups a Senior band, a youth band and a learners class. Downshire brass has started a partnership with a local school to provide musical assistance and is negotiations with another school.

We provide an affordable extended music education for beginning musicians of any age. Downshire brass provides instruments and music lessons for our youth and learners bands for less than £1 per week which is better value than the education board prices.

The band family provides a healthy community support network for both new participants and existing participants, local schools, youth groups and organisations. Playing a musical instrument according to scientific papers has many health benefits. Reducing stress, enhancing creative thought/creative problem solving, Enhancing memory and focus, possibly relating to symptoms of old age and dementia.



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Benefiting sufferers from chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder (COPD) and other breathing-related conditions such as Asthma to learn helpful breathing techniques through instrumental performance. Music making can experience beneficial effects relating to health issues like depression and anxiety; making music enhances self-confidence, energy and self-esteem as well as general wellbeing and happiness. Downshire brass has started a partnership with a local school to provide musical assistance and is negotiations with another school.

The benefit that flows from banding promotes enjoyment, better understanding and general advancement of the arts and sciences of music. This benefits band members and the general public. Further exposure of the band can be found on Social media such as the website and Utube where there is individual and group recordings, allowing the band can be heard and seen from households. .

There is no history of harm throughout our 23 year history. We do our best to provide a safe space for people of any age to make music. Our community educators who lead rehearsals/lessons are vetted through ACCESS NI; Our Child Protection Policy and Equality Statement has been widely circulated throughout the band and participants; We have five Designated Child Protection Officers in the band who have been trained to deal with any issues or concerns that may arise; We have a band committee that meets on a regular basis and oversees all business in regards to all groups associated with Downshire Brass.

We also have in place Public Liability Insurance. As a band we do don't discriminate in any form, so every member of the public of Northern Ireland can be a beneficiary of our music.

We have had temporary members from other countries such as the USA, New Zealand, France as well as our friends in the South of Ireland. The band has had the opportunity to play overseas including England, Wales Scotland and Germany. Downshire brass has earned the right to represent Northern Ireland in Norway at the European brass band championships in 2025. Our increasing membership along with the friendship and camaraderie that we develop between members, other bands, friends & family and the public through our performances demonstrates the social benefits of playing in a band. There is no harm arising from our purposes. Our beneficiaries are our members and members of the general public who attend our performances. There is no private benefit flowing from any of our purposes.

Charity Purposes

The objectives of the Band shall be the advancement of the knowledge of music among the members and the promotion of both musical and social benefits for members and the public. In furtherance of the above objectives the Band may:

- co-operate with bodies and organisations that may contribute either directly or indirectly towards the administration and operations of the Band. raise funds and invite or receive contributions from any person or organisation by way of subscription, donation or otherwise.
- affiliate to other organisations with similar objectives.
- conduct such business as may be deemed necessary in their attainment.





- provision of a youth band for young members, to include, instruments, uniforms, music tuition regular practice facilities to enable them to deliver private and public musical engagements and where applicable take part in contests
- To foster good relationships and participation with other musical organisations across the region

Declaration

The Trustees and Band Committee declare that they have approved the Trustee's Report. Our accounts have been prepared in accordance with the band's constitution and have been scrutinised by a qualified person in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Commission



Robert Mercer
Chairman of Trustees
20 October 2023

