

downshire brass



DOWNSHIRE BRASS

Annual Report & Statement of Accounts

For the financial year February 1st 2023 to January 31st 2024





Downshire Brass Charity no. 108009

Date registered. 17/05/2021

Trustee's report for Charity Commission February 2023 - January 2024

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

In **January** the band held its AGM, 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 band were represented by several members of our beginner's group, youth band members and senior band members at the annual NIBA Solos and Ensembles

In **March** the band competed in the annual Brass in Concert Contest in Fivemiletown where we were placed third in our section

In **April** our 10 piece ensemble played at Down Racecourse Downpatrick we travelled to the Strule Arts Centre, Omagh to participate in the BB League (NI) Spring Festival where we were placed fourth in our section.

In **May**, the full band played at the annual Big Lunch charity fundraiser event in Templepatrick, our 10 piece ensemble returned to Royal Hillsborough to play at the Farmers Market

In **June** we held our junior and youth band end of year Concert (supported by Senior Band Members) and family BBQ.



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In **July** we returned to Hillsborough Castle to play to members of the public

In **August** our 10 piece ensemble played at the Moira Farmers Market and our full band were honoured to play at a private family event to celebrate the 100th Birthday of our Honorary President. We also returned to Larne to play at the Antrim Coast Half Marathon as participants awaited the start of the race

In **September** the full band played at the Slipways, Titanic Museum, Belfast as part of the Belfast Maritime Mile Festival

In **October** our 10 piece ensemble played at the George Best Belfast Airport to welcome participants from around the world attending the One Young World Summit in Belfast. Later in the month the band travelled to Armagh to compete in the North of Ireland Band Association, contest playing the set piece "A King's Lie". The band were delighted to win the contest which meant that the band qualified to represent Northern Ireland at the 2025 European championships in Stavanger, Norway.

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. Our 10 piece ensemble continued to bring Christmas cheer by playing Christmas Carols at the Carryduff Christmas Market

December began with our annual Christmas Concert with in Malone Presbyterian Church, we also played carols at Royal Hillsborough and Dundonald Christmas Markets and in Malone Presbyterian Church, Belvoir Methodist Church, St Johns Parish Church Tyrella, Killowen Parish Church, Coleraine and Moneyreagh Community Church. Highlight of the year was again performing the showing of The Snowman with two sold out performances on one day.

Public Benefit Statement

We advance the knowledge of music among the members through rehearsal and public performance of widely varied musical repertoire. We promote the musical and social benefits including wellbeing of our organisation through attendance at regular rehearsals and through the running of various social events which aren't directly music related. Our benefits can be demonstrated through rehearsal attendance and through performances at various events such as competitions and public concerts. 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
04 October 2024

Charity Trustees

Robert Mercer
Roger Doherty
Gerard McCartney
Gary Dodsworth
Deirdre McIvor
Chris Rollins
Ryan Parks





Public Benefits

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 learner's class.

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.

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. The senior band consists of a membership of 30 players, the junior band consists of approximately 12 students and the learner's class 12 students.

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 YouTube where there are individual and group recordings, allowing the band to be heard and seen.

There is no history of harm throughout our 34 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



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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 not 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 played many times in England, Wales and Scotland and in Germany and in 2025 we can add Norway to our list.

Band accounts can be inserted below

