

# Comber Brass

Northern Ireland · Charity number 108370

## Details

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**Status** Received

**Registered** 2022-01-18

**Register** [View on the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland register](#)

## Contact

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**Address** Comber Brass  
C/O The Gospel Hall  
2A Cherryvalley Drive  
Comber  
Co. Down  
BT23 5bs  
BT23 5BS

**Phone** 07974699524

**Email** [info@comberbrass.band](mailto:info@comberbrass.band)

**Website** <https://www.comberbrass.band/>

## Activities

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**Purposes:** The purpose of Comber Brass is the advancement of the musical arts and culture in Northern Ireland, particularly in the North Down area, by: ~affording the opportunity for anyone to make music as part of a brass band; ~developing musicianship and ensemble playing within the band; ~providing the general public with exposure to the brass band repertoire and promoting their appreciation of it; ~participating through musical performance in the traditions and culture of the local community.

**What the charity does:** The advancement of the arts, culture, heritage or science

**How the charity works:** Arts,Cultural,Education/training,Youth development

**Who the charity helps:** Children (5-13 year olds),General public,Men,Women,Youth (14-25 year olds)

## Finances

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Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-12-31	£31,073	£17,393	£0	0

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## Trustees

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Name	Role	Appointed
Andrew Lawrie		
Jane Smyth		
Karen Gardner		
Lana Moore		
Lawrence Baalham		
Libby Young		
Matthew Lawrie		
Maurice Baalham		

**Comber Brass**

Northern Ireland - Charity number 108370

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# Accounts

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## **Financial Accounts**

### **COMBER BRASS**

1st January 2025 – 31st December 2025

NIC No. 108370

Principal Address:

Gospel Hall, 2A Cherryvalley Drive,  
Comber, Co. Down. N. Ireland. BT23 5BS



## COMBER BRASS - NIC 108370



### Statement of Receipts & Payments for the year ending 31st December 2025

<i>Consolidated Accounts</i>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
<b><u>Receipts</u></b>		
Musical Services	£8,435	£5,835
CSB Membership Subscriptions	£3,516	£3,432
Youth Band Membership Subscriptions	£840	£780
Personal Donations	£8,023	£6,458
Grants / Funding Awards	£7,830	£10,000
Easy Fundraising	£104	£142
Corporate Donations	£500	£0
Gift Aid Receipts	£1,621	£321
Whit Friday 2024 Member receipts	£0	£3,304
Interest Received	£205	£139
<b><i>Total Receipts</i></b>	<b><u>£31,074</u></b>	<b><u>£30,412</u></b>
<b><u>Payments</u></b>		
Instrument Purchases	£786	£15,704
Gifts / donations made	£612	£371
Whit Friday 2024 Expenditure	£0	£7,267
Whit Friday 2025 Expenditure	£0	£150
Hiring Charges	£345	£200
Conducting fees	£5,255	£3,660
Youth Workshop	£733	£0
Insurance	£507	£247
Contesting & Registration Fees	£495	£229
Miscellaneous	£0	£167
Instrument Maintenance	£0	£40
Office & Stationary	£5,177	£181
Rent	£1,200	£1,350
Sheet Music	£212	£927
Uniforms	£1,939	£476
Web Hosting / Muzodo	£132	£132
Bank/Finance Charges	£1	£1
<b><i>Total Payments</i></b>	<b><u>£17,393</u></b>	<b><u>£31,101</u></b>
<b><i>Net Receipts/Payments</i></b>	<b><u>£13,681</u></b>	<b><u>-£690</u></b>



## COMBER BRASS - NIC 108370



### Combined Account Reconciliation for the year ending 31st December 2025

	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
<b><u>Opening Balances</u></b>		
Current A/C	£2,197	£4,975
Old Current A/C	£6	£6
Reserve A/C	£10,278	£5,154
Special Fund A/C (Whit Friday 2026)	£443	£3,479
Cash & cheques on hand	£0	£0
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>£12,924</u></b>	<b><u>£13,614</u></b>
<b><u>Closing Balances</u></b>		
Current A/C	£4,544	£2,197
Old Current A/C	£6	£6
Reserve A/C	£18,208	£10,278
Special Fund A/C (Whit Friday 2026)	£3,848	£443
Cash & cheques on hand	£0	£0
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>£26,605</u></b>	<b><u>£12,924</u></b>
<b><i>Net Total balances</i></b>	<b><u>£13,681</u></b>	<b><u>-£690</u></b>
<b><i>Net Receipts/Payments</i></b>	<b><u>£13,681</u></b>	<b><u>-£690</u></b>
<b><i>Accounting variance</i></b>	<b><u>£0</u></b>	<b><u>£0</u></b>



## COMBER BRASS - NIC 108370



### Statement of Assets & Liabilities for the year ending 31st December 2025

	2025	2024
<b><u>Bank &amp; Cash Deposits</u></b>		
Current A/C	£4,544	£2,197
Old Current A/C	£6	£6
Reserve A/C	£18,208	£10,278
Special Fund A/C (Whit Friday Marches)	£3,848	£443
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>£26,605</u></b>	<b><u>£12,924</u></b>
<b><u>Property</u></b>		
Instrument inventory	£53,700	£56,000
Music library	£5,400	£5,300
Office equipment	£5,000	£150
Miscellaneous	£1,200	£1,350
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>£65,300</u></b>	<b><u>£62,800</u></b>
<b><u>Other Assets</u></b>		
Cash & cheques on hand	£0	£0
Invoices outstanding	£2,500	£5,000
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>£2,500</u></b>	<b><u>£5,000</u></b>
<b><u>Liabilities</u></b>		
Invoices yet to be paid	£0	£0
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>£0</u></b>	<b><u>£0</u></b>

Approved by the trustees on 5th January 2026 and signed on their behalf.

Lawrence Baalham  
Chairperson

Maurice Baalham  
Treasurer



## COMBER BRASS - NIC 108370



### Notes to the Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2025

- 1 All band funds are unrestricted, no endowment or restricted funds are held.
- 2 The Reserve A/C and Special A/C are deposit only savings accounts.
- 3 Gift Aid receipts is in respect of qualifying donations that were made in the year ending 31st December 2024.
- 4 Receipts of Grants / Funding Awards amounts to 3 awards from the ACNI, £2270 under their 'Small Capital Grant Programme', £2400 under their 'New Small Grants Programme' and £3778 under their 'Travel Awards for Bands Programme'
- 5 Expenditure on Office and Stationary includes 3 x iPad Pro tablets funded by a personal donation, together with a laptop, audio and video recording equipment grant funded by ACNI.
- 6 Uniform expenditure largely relates to new outdoor weatherproof branded jackets purchased for both senior and youth band members.
- 7 The instrument inventory valuation is based on the current RRP of comparable instruments and a 'sum of years' depreciation calculation.
- 8 Outstanding invoices refer to musical services provided by the band over the Christmas 2025 period but which were not settled in this reporting period.

**Comber Brass**

Northern Ireland - Charity number 108370

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# Accounts

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## **Financial Accounts**

### **COMBER BRASS**

1st January 2024 – 31st December 2024

NIC No. 108370

Principal Address:

Gospel Hall, 2A Cherryvalley Drive,  
Comber, Co. Down. N. Ireland. BT23 5BS



## COMBER BRASS - NIC 108370



### Statement of Receipts & Payments for the year ending 31st December 2024

<i>Consolidated Accounts</i>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
<b><u>Receipts</u></b>		
Musical Services	£5,835	£2,930
CSB Membership Subscriptions	£3,432	£3,450
Youth Band Membership Subscriptions	£780	£1,375
Personal Donations	£6,458	£1,326
Grants / Funding Awards	£10,000	£338
Easy Fundraising	£142	£224
Corporate Donations	£0	£900
Gift Aid Receipts	£321	£1,162
Whit Friday 2024 Member receipts	£3,304	£2,006
Interest Received	£139	£84
<b><i>Total Receipts</i></b>	<b><u>£30,412</u></b>	<b><u>£13,795</u></b>
<b><u>Payments</u></b>		
Instrument Purchases	£15,704	£1,405
Gifts / donations made	£371	£30
Whit Friday 2024 Expenditure	£7,267	£0
Whit Friday 2025 Expenditure	£150	£0
Hiring Charges	£200	£0
Conducting fees	£3,660	£2,770
Insurance	£247	£343
Contesting & Registration Fees	£229	£409
Miscellaneous	£167	£195
Instrument Maintenance	£40	£563
Office & Stationary	£181	£166
Rent	£1,350	£1,214
Sheet Music	£927	£308
Uniforms	£476	£225
Web Hosting / Muzodo	£132	£84
Bank/Finance Charges	£1	£32
<b><i>Total Payments</i></b>	<b><u>£31,101</u></b>	<b><u>£7,744</u></b>
<b><i>Net Receipts/Payments</i></b>	<b><u>-£690</u></b>	<b><u>£6,051</u></b>



## COMBER BRASS - NIC 108370



### Combined Account Reconciliation for the year ending 31st December 2024

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
<b><u>Opening Balances</u></b>		
Current A/C	£4,975	£5,782
Old Current A/C	£6	£887
Youth Band A/C	£0	£795
Reserve A/C	£5,154	£100
Special Fund A/C (Whit Friday 2024)	£3,479	£0
Cash & cheques on hand	£0	£0
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>£13,614</u></b>	<b><u>£7,563</u></b>
<b><u>Closing Balances</u></b>		
Current A/C	£2,197	£4,975
Old Current A/C	£6	£6
Reserve A/C	£10,278	£5,154
Special Fund A/C (Whit Friday 2024)	£443	£3,479
Cash & cheques on hand	£0	£0
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>£12,924</u></b>	<b><u>£13,614</u></b>
<b>Net Total balances</b>	<b><u>-£690</u></b>	<b><u>£6,051</u></b>
<b>Net Receipts/Payments</b>	<b><u>-£690</u></b>	<b><u>£6,051</u></b>
<b>Accounting variance</b>	<b><u>£0</u></b>	<b><u>£0</u></b>



## COMBER BRASS - NIC 108370



### Statement of Assets & Liabilities for the year ending 31st December 2024

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
<b><u>Bank &amp; Cash Deposits</u></b>		
Current A/C	£2,197	£4,975
Old Current A/C	£6	£6
Reserve A/C	£10,278	£5,154
Special Fund A/C (Whit Friday 2024)	£443	£3,479
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>£12,924</u></b>	<b><u>£13,614</u></b>
<b><u>Property</u></b>		
Instrument inventory	£56,000	£46,000
Music library	£5,300	£5,100
Office equipment	£150	£180
Miscellaneous	£1,350	£600
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>£62,800</u></b>	<b><u>£51,880</u></b>
<b><u>Other Assets</u></b>		
Cash & cheques on hand	£0	£0
Invoices outstanding	£5,000	£3,620
Awards/grants yet to be paid	£0	£10,000
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>£5,000</u></b>	<b><u>£13,620</u></b>
<b><u>Liabilities</u></b>		
Invoices yet to be paid	£0	£0
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>£0</u></b>	<b><u>£0</u></b>

Approved by the trustees on 29th January 2025 and signed on their behalf.

Lawrence Baalham  
Chairperson

Maurice Baalham  
Treasurer



## COMBER BRASS - NIC 108370



### Notes to the Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2024

- 1 All band funds are unrestricted, no endowment or restricted funds are held.
- 2 The Reserve A/C and Special A/C (Whit Fri 2024) are deposit only savings accounts.
- 3 The instrument inventory valuation is based on the current RRP of comparable instruments and a 'sum of years' depreciation calculation.
- 4 Gift Aid receipts is in respect of donations that were made in the year ending 31st December 2023.
- 5 Outstanding invoices refer to musical services provided by the band over the Christmas 2024 period but which were not settled in this reporting period.
- 6 Whit Friday 2024 expenses exceeded member receipts (including those made in 2023) by £1957. This was offset by various personal donations of £1181 and by contest prize monies of £225, leaving a balance of £551 that was met from band funds.
- 7 The Special Fund A/C was credited in year with a transfer of £1190 from the Current A/C resulting in a positive balance of £443 at year end after all Whit Friday 2024 expenses had been deducted.
- 8 Instrument purchases were primarily funded by a grant of £10,000 awarded by ACNI in 2023.
- 9 Gifts included the purchase of engraved trophies presented to long serving members.

**Comber Brass**

Northern Ireland - Charity number 108370

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# Annual report

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**Trustees' Annual Report**

**COMBER BRASS**

**1<sup>st</sup> January 2024 – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024**

NIC No. 108370

Principal Address:

Gospel Hall, 2A Cherryvalley Drive,  
Comber, Co. Down. N. Ireland. BT23 5BS



## **Annual Report of the Trustees of Comber Brass - 2024**

### **1. Introduction**

This report is prepared in compliance with the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 in respect of “Comber Brass”, Northern Ireland Charity No. 108370 and in respect of the financial year 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024.

### **2. Structure, governance & management**

Comber Brass is an unincorporated association, governed by an amended constitution adopted on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2021. The charity is run entirely by its members on a voluntary basis and is managed by a committee of trustees, which includes a Chairperson, Treasurer and a Secretary, who are elected each year by the membership at the Annual General Meeting. The Committee meets regularly throughout the year to effectively manage its business and presents end of year reports to the full membership at the AGM.

### **3. Purpose of the charity**

The purpose of Comber Brass is the advancement of the musical arts and culture in Northern Ireland, particularly in the North Down area, by:

- a) affording the opportunity for anyone to make music as part of a brass band;
- b) developing musicianship and ensemble playing within the band;
- c) providing the general public with exposure to the brass band repertoire and promoting their appreciation of it;
- d) participating through musical performance in the traditions and culture of the local community.

### **4. Public benefit**

The direct benefit flowing from our purpose is the contribution the band makes to society in having a rich diversity of music to experience from different cultures and origins, and also the benefit derived by those who are provided with an opportunity to make and perform music, particularly as a member of a larger group. These benefits are wide-ranging, universally recognised and well documented in academic research. They include, but are



not limited to, cultural expression and enrichment, emotional and mental wellbeing, cognitive development, socialisation and improved physical health.

The beneficiaries of our purpose are the general public of Northern Ireland and of North Down in particular, both as individuals who are afforded the opportunity to play in a brass band and as audience participants to the public performances that it delivers.

The trustees consider that there is no harm flowing from the purpose of the charity.

A private benefit gained from our purpose is the engagement of professional Musical Directors to conduct the weekly rehearsals and band performances, to develop musicianship and ensemble playing within the band, and to assist in the planning and delivery of the band's annual programme of engagements. This private benefit is wholly incidental and necessary to the delivery of the stated purpose of the band.

The trustees of Comber Brass confirm that they have complied with their duty under section 4(6) of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 to have regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, and that the public benefit requirement has informed the activities of Comber Brass in the year to 31 December 2024.

#### **5. Summary of main activities to promote our purpose for the public benefit**

Comber Brass is a community brass band whose membership is open to anyone who wishes to make music with the band, regardless of ability or age. The band rehearses in the Gospel Hall at Cherryvalley Drive, Comber under the direction and instruction of experienced and qualified Musical Directors, the senior band for 2 hours on a Wednesday evening and the Youth Band for 1 hour on a Tuesday evening during term time.

Comber Brass regularly participates in the regional festivals, solo and ensemble competitions that are organised by the Brass Band League of Northern Ireland and the North of Ireland Bands Association. The band fulfils several engagements annually on behalf of local councils to perform in public parks and also holds its own concert performances to entertain the general public and to promote their appreciation of this genre of music.

Comber Brass is also regularly engaged to provide music at annual religious services, civic ceremonies, festivals, and other local community and charitable events, particularly in the Comber area.



## **6. Main achievements in this reporting year**

The main achievements in delivering the public benefit in this reporting year are summarised below with reference to the 4 objectives that comprise the band's purpose and the delivery of the public benefit.

### **(a) Affording the opportunity for anyone to make music as part of a brass band.**

Comber Brass continued to function without disruption as a community banding organisation throughout 2024, remaining in good financial standing and open to new members joining. The Senior band carried out a full programme of 48 rehearsals and 26 performances throughout the year, retaining a strong membership of 36 regular players. The Youth Band continued with its weekly rehearsals during school terms and had several opportunities to perform in public and for family & friends during the year.

The good governance of Comber Brass was upheld by the committee for 2024, elected in accordance with the Constitution at the AGM held on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024. It met formally on 4 occasions during the year, the business being conducted to a previously circulated agenda and a minute recorded of its deliberations and actions agreed. Members of the committee also met on various occasions for informal briefings and updates.

As well as routine band administration and normal event planning activities, the work of the Committee included:

- a) organisational planning to compete in the Whit Friday Marches 2024 in Manchester;
- b) installation of a band hall PC and extended use of its Google Workspace account for key document cloud storage and facilitating remote access for members;
- c) establishing a formal Sub-Committee to manage the Youth Band, allocation of a budget and refresher training in 'Safeguarding' for key staff;
- d) establishing a Music Sub-Committee to support the Musical Director in the selection of library music and in acquiring new repertoire.

### **(b) Developing musicianship and ensemble playing within the band.**

There was good attendance throughout the year, with an average of 27 members attending the Senior Band rehearsals on Wednesday evenings. This helped to facilitate productive rehearsals under the baton of the Musical Director, with the band continuing to be challenged with new repertoire and to further improve all aspects of its playing.

During 2024 the Senior Band only entered one local competition delivering a very creditable performance in the BBNI 'Brass In Concert' contest, but also enjoyed considerable success when it again competed in the Whit Friday Marches in Manchester, picking up several top 3 placings in their Section, including a 1<sup>st</sup> at Dobcross to win the 'Coffee Cup' trophy. Further



details as shown, for the Whit Friday Contests overall placings amongst all bands competing at any level (including Championship) are shown.

The Youth Band again enjoyed success in the BBNI Solo & Ensemble competition held in February, both as an ensemble by winning the Youth Band section, and by gaining 1<sup>st</sup> place in the Under 12 yrs solo, and 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the Under 10 yrs solo competitions.

Competition	Date	Grade Entered	Placing
BBNI Solos & Ensemble 2024	10 Feb '24	Under 10 solos	2 <sup>nd</sup> (6 entries)
BBNI Solos & Ensemble 2024	10 Feb '24	Under 12 solos	1 <sup>st</sup> (8 entries)
BBNI Solos & Ensemble 2024	10 Feb '24	Youth Band	1 <sup>st</sup> (1 entry)
BBNI Brass In Concert 2024	2 Mar '24	2 <sup>nd</sup> Section	3 <sup>rd</sup> (5 entries)
Denshaw (Whit Friday Contests)	24 May '24	3 <sup>rd</sup> Section	19 <sup>th</sup> (78 entries)
Dobcross (Whit Friday Contests)	24 May '24	3 <sup>rd</sup> Section	20 <sup>th</sup> (70 entries)
Friezland (Whit Friday Contests)	24 May '24	3 <sup>rd</sup> Section	3 <sup>rd</sup> (42 entries)
Greenfield (Whit Friday Contests)	24 May '24	3 <sup>rd</sup> Section	35 <sup>th</sup> (62 entries)
Uppermill (Whit Friday Contests)	24 May '24	3 <sup>rd</sup> Section	31 <sup>st</sup> (52 entries)

Supporting this objective and assisted by a grant from Arts Council for Northern Ireland, the band made a significant investment in new instruments during the year with the purchase of an Eb bass, a baritone and a flugel horn. Subject to available funding, this is a longer term goal to continually improve the overall quality of the band's inventory by replacing older worn-out instruments, and to increase the availability of suitable instruments that could help support any requirements of the Youth Band.

**(c) Providing the general public with exposure to the brass band repertoire and promoting their appreciation of it.** *(where the band performance was the primary activity at the event)*

The band enjoyed several opportunities to perform for the general public during 2024 with some notable highlights. The year began with a special 'Family & Friends' night at which both the Youth Band and Senior Band delivered separate performances, following which the band acknowledged the contribution made by several long serving members with a presentation of awards made by the Mayor of Ards & North Down.



The band also celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in July with an outdoor public concert at Lower Crescent, Comber and later in September, teamed up with their friends from Laganvale Metal Technology Band to deliver a joint concert at Rosetta, Belfast.

Event	Date
CSB Parents, Family & Friends Night – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Presbyterian Church, Comber	24 Feb 2024
Summer BBQ - Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, Comber	15 Jun 2024
Park Life 2024 – Moat Park, Dundonald	7 Jul 2024
75 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary ‘Music in the Park’ Concert – Lower Crescent, Comber	14 Jul 2024
Summer Festival – The Harbour, Donaghadee	28 Jul 2024
Summer Parks Concert - Lady Dixon Park, Belfast	18 Aug 2024
‘Brass in Partnership’ – St Andrews Presbyterian Church, Rosetta	14 Sep 2024
Youth Band Parents & Family Concert - Gospel Hall, Comber	10 Dec 2024

**(d) Participating through musical performance in the traditions and culture of the local community.** *(where the band performance was a supporting activity at the event)*

The band performed in support of several cultural and traditional events during 2024, including local festivals, church services, and Christmas festivities. A particular highlight for the band was again the Hillsborough Garden Party, attended this year by the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh, with Prince Edward personally taking time to congratulate the band and the Musical Director on their entertaining performance, but politely declining (in good humour) an invitation to conduct. The band again finished off the year with a very busy programme supporting the Ulster Folk Museum with their Christmas events.

Event	Date
Easter Church Service - Non Subscribing Presbyterian Church, Comber	14 Apr 2024
Comber Earlies Potato Festival (Senior band) – The Square, Comber	22 Jun 2024
Comber Earlies Potato Festival (Youth band) – The Square, Comber	22 Jun 2024
Hillsborough Castle & Gardens – Sec. of State Garden Party	10 Sep 2024
Harvest Church Service- Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, Comber	20 Oct 2024



Event	Date
Remembrance Sunday Parade – The Square, Comber	10 Nov 2024
Christmas Lights Switching - Bangor City Hall, Bangor	23 Nov 2024
Christmas Programme - Ulster Folk Museum, Cultra (over 4 weekends)	December 2024
Christmas Church Service - Ballyhemlin Presbyterian Church, Newtownards	15 Dec 2024


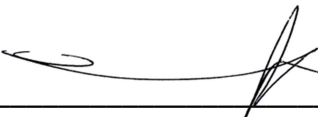

## **7. Financial Review**

The band's accounts for the year were prepared on a 'receipts and payments' basis as permitted by the relevant charity legislation and were approved at the AGM held on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2025. A copy of the accounts and the report of the Independent Examiner are available to view on the Charity Commissioner's web-site. At the end of the financial year, the total assets of the band less liabilities was £75,724 (excluding outstanding invoices not settled in this reporting period), an increase of £10,230 compared to the previous year, with £12,924 being held in cash accounts.

Comber Brass operates a reserves policy of maintaining a minimum cash balance that is sufficient to meet the estimated fixed costs of the band for the year ahead. The accounts show that the funds of Comber Brass at the end of the financial year were in sufficient surplus to allow the activities of the band to continue without disruption.

## **8. Report approval**

This report was approved by the trustees of Comber Brass and the following signatories are authorised to sign it on their behalf.

 _____	Lawrence Baalham (Chair)	Date: 5 <sup>th</sup> February 2025
 _____	William Gray (Secretary)	Date: 5 <sup>th</sup> February 2025
 _____	Maurice Baalham (Treasurer)	Date: 5 <sup>th</sup> February 2025



### **List of Trustees**

The charity trustees on the date the report was approved were as follows:

- Lawrence Baalham (Chair)
- William Gray (Secretary)
- Maurice Baalham (Treasurer)
- Jane Smyth
- Andrew Lawrie
- Libby Young
- Lana Moore
- Matthew Lawrie

The charity trustees during the year 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024 – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024 were as follows:

- Lawrence Baalham (Chair)
- William Gray (Secretary)
- Maurice Baalham (Treasurer)
- Ken Browne
- Denise Gilchrist
- Kirk Lindsay
- Andrew Lawrie
- David McCracken
- Jane Smyth
- Lana Moore

**Comber Brass**

Northern Ireland - Charity number 108370

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# Annual return

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## **Independent Examiner's Report to the Charity Trustees of Comber Brass**

I report on the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 Dec 2024, which are set out on pages 1-5.

### **Respective responsibilities of charity trustees and examiner**

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 65 of the Charities Act,
- follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Commission under section 65(9)(b) of the Charities Act,
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

### **Basis of Independent Examiner's report**

I have examined your charity accounts as required under section 65 of the Charities Act and my examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland under section 65(9)(b) of the Charities Act.

My examination included a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also included consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as charity trustees concerning any such matters.

My role is to state whether any material matters have come to my attention giving me cause to believe:

- (1) That accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 63 of the Charities Act.
- (2) That the accounts do not accord with those accounting records.
- (3) That the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act.
- (4) That there is further information needed for a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

### **Independent Examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination and have no concerns in respect of the matters (1) to (4) listed above and in connection with following the Directions of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland. I have found no matters that require drawing to your attention.

Signed:

Date:

22 JAN 25

Name: Colin Watson

Relevant professional qualification or body: UK Civil Servant

Address: 72 The Splres, Dromore. Co. Down BT25 IQE

**Comber Brass**

Northern Ireland - Charity number 108370

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# Accounts

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## **Financial Accounts**

### **COMBER BRASS**

1st January 2023 – 31st December 2023

NIC No. 108370

Principal Address:

Gospel Hall, 2A Cherryvalley Drive,  
Comber, Co. Down. N. Ireland. BT23 5BS



## COMBER BRASS - NIC 108370



### Statement of Receipts & Payments for the year ending 31st December 2023

<i>Consolidated Accounts</i>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b><u>Receipts</u></b>		
Musical Services	£2,930	£1,750
CSB Membership Subscriptions	£3,450	£2,535
Youth Band Membership Subscriptions	£1,375	£338
Personal Donations	£1,326	£2,222
Grants / Funding Awards	£338	£338
Easy Fundraising	£224	£181
Corporate Donations	£900	£250
Gift Aid Receipts	£1,162	£0
Whit Fri Member receipts	£2,006	£3,035
Interest Received	£84	£0
<b><i>Total Receipts</i></b>	<b><u>£13,795</u></b>	<b><u>£10,649</u></b>
<b><u>Payments</u></b>		
Instrument Purchases	£1,405	£2,485
Gifts / donations made	£30	£0
Conducting fees	£2,770	£3,060
Insurance	£343	£439
Contesting & Registration Fees	£409	£298
Miscellaneous	£195	£205
Instrument Maintenance	£563	£51
Office & Stationary	£166	£247
Rent	£1,214	£830
Sheet Music	£308	£97
Uniforms	£225	£0
Web Hosting / Muzodo	£84	£120
Bank/Finance Charges	£32	£10
Whit Friday Expenditure	£0	£4,384
<b><i>Total Payments</i></b>	<b><u>£7,744</u></b>	<b><u>£12,226</u></b>
<b><i>Net Receipts/Payments</i></b>	<b><u>£6,051</u></b>	<b><u>-£1,577</u></b>



## COMBER BRASS - NIC 108370



### Combined Account Reconciliation for the year ending 31st December 2023

	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b><u>Opening Balances</u></b>		
Current A/C	£5,782	£0
Old Current A/C	£887	£9,140
Youth Band A/C	£795	£0
Reserve A/C	£100	£0
Special Fund A/C (Whit Friday 2024)	£0	£0
Cash & cheques on hand	£0	£0
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>£7,563</u></b>	<b><u>£9,140</u></b>
<b><u>Closing Balances</u></b>		
Current A/C	£4,975	£5,782
Old Current A/C	£6	£887
Youth Band A/C (closed 14 Nov '23 )	£0	£795
Reserve A/C	£5,154	£100
Special Fund A/C (Whit Friday 2024)	£3,479	£0
Cash & cheques on hand	£0	£0
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>£13,614</u></b>	<b><u>£7,563</u></b>
<b>Net Total balances</b>	<b><u>£6,051</u></b>	<b><u>-£1,577</u></b>
<b>Net Receipts/Payments</b>	<b><u>£6,051</u></b>	<b><u>-£1,577</u></b>
<b>Accounting variance</b>	<b><u>£0</u></b>	<b><u>£0</u></b>



## COMBER BRASS - NIC 108370



### Statement of Assets & Liabilities for the year ending 31st December 2023

	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b><u>Bank &amp; Cash Deposits</u></b>		
Current A/C	£4,975	£5,782
Old Current A/C	£6	£887
Youth Band A/C (closed 14 Nov '23 )	£0	£795
Reserve A/C	£5,154	£100
Special Fund A/C (Whit Friday 2024)	£3,479	£0
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>£13,614</u></b>	<b><u>£7,563</u></b>
<b><u>Property</u></b>		
Instrument inventory	£46,000	£50,000
Music library	£5,100	£5,000
Office equipment	£180	£200
Miscellaneous	£600	£500
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>£51,880</u></b>	<b><u>£55,700</u></b>
<b><u>Other Assets</u></b>		
Cash & cheques on hand	£0	£0
Invoices outstanding	£3,620	£600
Awards/grants yet to be paid	£10,000	£338
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>£13,620</u></b>	<b><u>£938</u></b>
<b><u>Liabilities</u></b>		
Invoices yet to be paid	£0	£151
Miscellaneous	£0	£0
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>£0</u></b>	<b><u>£151</u></b>

Approved by the trustees on 31st January 2024 and signed on their behalf.

Lawrence Baalham  
Chairperson

Maurice Baalham  
Treasurer



## COMBER BRASS - NIC 108370



### Notes to the Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2023

- 1 All band funds are unrestricted, no endowment or restricted funds are held.
- 2 The Youth Band A/C, Reserve A/C and Special A/C (Whit Fri 2024) are deposit only savings accounts. Some further rationalisation of accounts to be undertaken as part of the transition to online banking.
- 3 Instrument Inventory and Music Library valuations are from full appraisals conducted in 2023 which update the qualified estimates shown in the 2022 accounts.
- 4 Gift Aid receipts is a cumulative claim for the previous years 2019-2022.
- 5 Outstanding invoices refer to musical services provided by the band over the Christmas period but which were not settled in this reporting period.
- 6 The ACNI 'Musical Instruments for Bands' award of £10,000 was announced in Dec 2023 but was not received in this reporting period.

**Comber Brass**

Northern Ireland - Charity number 108370

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# Annual report

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**Trustees' Annual Report**

**COMBER BRASS**

**1<sup>st</sup> January 2023 – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023**

NIC No. 108370

Principal Address:

Gospel Hall, 2A Cherryvalley Drive,  
Comber, Co. Down. N. Ireland. BT23 5BS



## **Annual Report of the Trustees of Comber Brass - 2023**

### **1. Introduction**

This report is prepared in compliance with the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 in respect of “Comber Brass”, Northern Ireland Charity No. 108370 and in respect of the financial year 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023.

### **2. Structure, governance & management**

Comber Brass is an unincorporated association, governed by an amended constitution adopted on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2021. The charity is run entirely by its members on a voluntary basis and is managed by a committee of trustees, which includes a Chairperson, Treasurer and a Secretary, who are elected each year by the membership at the Annual General Meeting. The Committee meets regularly throughout the year to effectively manage its business and presents end of year reports to the full membership at the AGM.

### **3. Purpose of the charity**

The purpose of Comber Brass is the advancement of the musical arts and culture in Northern Ireland, particularly in the North Down area, by:

- a) affording the opportunity for anyone to make music as part of a brass band;
- b) developing musicianship and ensemble playing within the band;
- c) providing the general public with exposure to the brass band repertoire and promoting their appreciation of it;
- d) participating through musical performance in the traditions and culture of the local community.

### **4. Public benefit**

The direct benefit flowing from our purpose is the contribution the band makes to society in having a rich diversity of music to experience from different cultures and origins, and also the benefit derived by those who are provided with an opportunity to make and perform music, particularly as a member of a larger group. These benefits are wide-ranging, universally recognised and well documented in academic research. They include, but are



not limited to, cultural expression and enrichment, emotional and mental wellbeing, cognitive development, socialisation and improved physical health.

The beneficiaries of our purpose are the general public of Northern Ireland and of North Down in particular, both as individuals who are afforded the opportunity to play in a brass band and as audience participants to the public performances that it delivers.

The trustees consider that there is no harm flowing from the purpose of the charity.

A private benefit gained from our purpose is the engagement of professional Musical Directors to conduct the weekly rehearsals and band performances, to develop musicianship and ensemble playing within the band, and to assist in the planning and delivery of the band's annual programme of engagements. This private benefit is wholly incidental and necessary to the delivery of the stated purpose of the band.

The trustees of Comber Brass confirm that they have complied with their duty under section 4(6) of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 to have regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, and that the public benefit requirement has informed the activities of Comber Brass in the year to 31 December 2023.

#### **5. Summary of main activities to promote our purpose for the public benefit**

Comber Brass is a community brass band whose membership is open to anyone who wishes to make music with the band, regardless of ability or age. The band rehearses in the Gospel Hall at Cherryvalley Drive, Comber under the direction and instruction of experienced and qualified Musical Directors, the senior band for 2 hours on a Wednesday evening and the Youth Band for 1 hour on a Tuesday evening during term time.

Comber Brass regularly participates in the regional festivals, solo and ensemble competitions that are organised by the Brass Band League of Northern Ireland and the North of Ireland Bands Association. The band fulfils several engagements annually on behalf of local councils to perform in public parks and also holds its own concert performances to entertain the general public and to promote their appreciation of this genre of music.

Comber Brass is also regularly engaged to provide music at annual religious services, civic ceremonies, festivals, and other local community and charitable events, particularly in the Comber area.



## **6. Main achievements in this reporting year**

The main achievements in delivering the public benefit in this reporting year are summarised below with reference to the 4 objectives that comprise the band's purpose and the delivery of the public benefit.

### **(a) Affording the opportunity for anyone to make music as part of a brass band.**

Comber Brass continued to function without disruption as a community banding organisation throughout 2023, and remains in good financial standing. It carried out a full programme of weekly rehearsals and performances, and remained open to new members joining. At year end, the senior band retained a strong membership of 35 regular players, whilst the Youth Band had a membership of 17 players.

The good governance of Comber Brass was upheld by the committee for 2023, elected in accordance with the Constitution at the AGM held on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2023. It met formally on 4 occasions during the year, the business being conducted to a previously circulated agenda and a minute recorded of its deliberations and actions agreed. Members of the committee also met on various occasions for informal briefings and updates.

In addition to routine band administration and normal event planning activities, the work of the Committee was particularly directed to the following:

- a) securing new rehearsal premises on a more suitable and affordable basis going forward;
- b) rollout of new processes for financial management and accounting;
- c) refreshing the band's web-site and adopting free to use hosting services;
- d) further development of the band's marketing and media functions;
- e) rationalisation of the band's extensive music library and compiling an electronic catalogue;
- f) Musical Director appointments to the Senior band and to the Youth Band;
- g) forward planning for participation in the Whit Friday Marches 2024.

### **(b) Developing musicianship and ensemble playing within the band.**

There was good attendance by members throughout the year, resulting in productive rehearsals under the baton of the Musical Director, with the band having several opportunities during 2023 to benchmark current standards through competitive performance.

The Youth Band enjoyed early success with its first participation in the BBNI Solo & Ensemble competition held in February, whilst in April the Senior Band finished disappointingly in last place in the BBNI Spring Festival.



A new Musical Director was appointed to the Senior Band in July and after the summer break, preparations began for the NIBA Championships held in October, the band finishing in a well-deserved 4<sup>th</sup> place in a competitive field of 6 bands.

Competition	Date	Grade Entered	Placing
BBNI Solos & Ensemble 2023	11 Feb 23	Under 10 solo	1 <sup>st</sup> (6 entries)
BBNI Solos & Ensemble 2023	11 Feb 23	Youth Band	1 <sup>st</sup> (1 entry)
BBNI Spring Festival 2023	2 Apr 23	2 <sup>nd</sup> Section	4 <sup>th</sup> (4 entries)
NIBA Brass Championships 2023	14 Oct 23	2 <sup>nd</sup> Section	4 <sup>th</sup> (6 entries)

To support this objective, a programme to service and repair instruments by a local technician continued throughout 2023, maintaining the inventory in good playable condition. Additionally, in March the Youth Band received a corporate donation from 'Action Renewables' to fund the purchase of new music stands and in December, the band received an award of £10,000 from the 'Arts Council Northern Ireland' to fund the purchase of a new Eb bass and a new baritone.

**(c) Providing the general public with exposure to the brass band repertoire and promoting their appreciation of it.** *(where the band performance was the primary activity at the event)*

There were several opportunities for the band to deliver concert performances for the general public during 2023, helped by the return of the Belfast City Council 'Music in the Parks' programme. The band's largest concert audience of the year was at Knockbreda Parish Church, for their joint performance with the 'Swing Gals'.

Event	Date
Knockbreda Parish Church - Mother's Union Concert	11 Mar 2023
Victoria Park, Belfast – Belfast City Council Summer Concerts	7 May 2023
St Mary's Youth Hall, Comber - Senior & Youth Band Concert	7 Jun 2023
Donaghadee Harbour - Summer Festival Concert	13 Aug 2023
Cherryvalley Gospel Hall, Comber – Youth Band Concert	13 Dec 2023

**(d) Participating through musical performance in the traditions and culture of the local community.** *(where the band performance was a supporting activity at the event)*

The band performed at a wide range of local cultural and traditional events during 2023, which included civic events, local festivals, church services, and at Christmas festivities. The highlight of these was the Hillsborough Garden Party, attended by King Charles III and



Queen Camilla, on what was their first visit to Northern Ireland since the Coronation earlier in the year. The band was also extensively engaged this year by the Ulster Folk Museum to support their programme of special Christmas events over the festive period.

Event	Date
Dedication of Comber War Memorial 100 Year Anniversary	14 Apr 2023
Hillsborough Castle & Gardens – Sec. of State Garden Party	24 May 2023
Sea Bangor Festival, Bangor Harbour	3 Jun 2023
Andrews Memorial School, Comber -junior brass workshop	7 Jun 2023
Comber Earlies Potato Festival – The Square, Comber	24 Jun 2023
'Tide And Turf' Portavogie Festival	2 Sep 2023
Remembrance Sunday Parade – The Square, Comber	12 Nov 2023
Bangor Indoor Christmas Market - High Street, Bangor	19 Nov 2023
Christmas Programme, Ulster Folk Museum, Cultra	2 Dec 2023
Christmas Programme, Ulster Folk Museum, Cultra	8 Dec 2023
Christmas Service - Ballycrochan Presbyterian Church, Bangor	9 Dec 2023
Strand Cinema, Belfast - Christmas Event	14 Dec 2023
Christmas Programme, Ulster Folk Museum, Cultra	15 Dec 2023
Christmas Service - Ballyhemlin Presbyterian Church, Newtownards	17 Dec 2023
Christmas Programme, Ulster Folk Museum, Cultra	19 Dec 2023
Christmas Programme, Ulster Folk Museum, Cultra	20 Dec 2023
Christmas Programme, Ulster Folk Museum, Cultra	21 Dec 2023
Christmas Programme, Ulster Folk Museum, Cultra	22 Dec 2023

## **7. Financial Review**


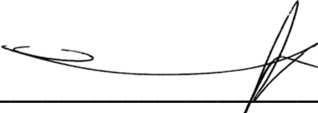

The band's accounts for the year were prepared on a 'receipts and payments' basis as permitted by the relevant charity legislation and were approved at the AGM held on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024. A copy of the accounts and the report of the Independent Examiner are available to view on the Charity Commissioner's web-site. At the end of the financial year, the total assets of the band less liabilities was £65,494 (excluding outstanding invoices & grants not yet received), an increase of £2,231 compared to the previous year, with £13,614 being held in cash accounts.



Comber Brass operates a reserves policy of maintaining a minimum cash balance that is sufficient to meet the estimated fixed costs of the band for the year ahead. The accounts show that the funds of Comber Brass at the end of the financial year were in sufficient surplus to allow the activities of the band to continue without disruption.

**8. Report approval**

This report was approved by the trustees of Comber Brass and the following signatories are authorised to sign it on their behalf.

 _____	Lawrence Baalham (Chair)	Date: 9 <sup>th</sup> February 2024
 _____	William Gray (Secretary)	Date: 9 <sup>th</sup> February 2024
 _____	Maurice Baalham (Treasurer)	Date: 9 <sup>th</sup> February 2024



### List of Trustees

The charity trustees on the date the report was approved were as follows:

- Lawrence Baalham (Chair)
- William Gray (Secretary)
- Maurice Baalham (Treasurer)
- Ken Browne
- Denise Gilchrist
- Kirk Lindsay
- Andrew Lawrie
- David McCracken
- Lana Moore
- Jane Smyth

The charity trustees during the year 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023 – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 were as follows:

- Lawrence Baalham (Chair)
- William Gray (Secretary)
- Maurice Baalham (Treasurer)
- Ken Browne
- Denise Gilchrist
- Kirk Lindsay
- Andrew Lawrie
- David McCracken
- Jane Smyth
- Judith Thompson

**Comber Brass**

Northern Ireland - Charity number 108370

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# Annual return

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**Independent Examiner's Report to the Charity Trustees of Comber Brass**

I report on the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 Dec 2023, which are set out on pages 1-3.

**Respective responsibilities of charity trustees and examiner**

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 65 of the Charities Act,
- follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Commission under section 65(9)(b) of the Charities Act,
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

**Basis of independent examiner's report**

I have examined your charity accounts as required under section 65 of the Charities Act and my examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland under section 65(9)(b) of the Charities Act.

My examination included a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also included consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as charity trustees concerning any such matters.

My role is to state whether any material matters have come to my attention giving me cause to believe:

- (1) That accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 63 of the Charities Act.
- (2) That the accounts do not accord with those accounting records.
- (3) That the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act.
- (4) That there is further information needed for a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

**Independent examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination and have no concerns in respect of the matters (1) to (4) listed above and in connection with following the Directions of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, I have found no matters that require drawing to your attention.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

24<sup>th</sup> January 2024

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Cecile WATSON

Relevant professional qualification or body: \_\_\_\_\_

UK CIVIL SERVICE

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

72 THE SPILS

Downside

BT25 1QE