

acta Community Theatre Ltd

Report of the trustees
for the year ended 31st March 2013



The trustees, who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act, submit their annual report and the audited financial statements for the year ended 31st March 2013.

The trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charity.

Reference & Administrative Information

Charity name: acta Community Theatre Ltd

Charity number: 800174

Company registration number: 2157661

Registered office:-

acta centre

Gladstone Street

Bedminster

Bristol

BS3 3AY

Council of Management:-

Graeme Riley Chair

Colin Clothier Treasurer

Alice Hunt

Rita Rich

Stephen Fenton

Senior management team:-

Neil Beddow, Artistic Director

Helen Tomlin, Executive Director

Auditors:-

Dick Maule FCA, 10 - 12 Picton Street, Bristol BS6 5QA

Bankers:-

CAF Bank, 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent ME19 4JQ



Public Benefit

All of our work exists for the benefit of the public. We are committed to engaging people who would not normally get involved, to create their own original theatre and arts. We provide a wide range of arts opportunities to increase self-confidence and self-worth, bringing people together to share their stories and celebrate their communities.

The Company continues to deliver high quality community arts and theatre projects, delivering ten different projects and programmes of work this year, with close to a thousand local people, including the creation and performance of 19 original new shows, performing to well over 3,000 people, and more than 750 participatory workshops.

We review our aims & objectives on an ongoing basis throughout the year, to ensure that our activities are developed in accordance with our stated charitable purposes. We have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing our aims & objectives and in planning our future activities; (*see page 6 for aims & objectives*). We continue to develop our programme across the City in line with our core values of:

- **Participation**
- **Access**
- **Quality**
- **Diversity**



Review of activities

This first year of the new business plan demonstrates how the Company is moving in some exciting new directions. Following a period of organisational development over the summer months, the Company launched a new website and fundraising strategy in the Autumn term, as well as starting three pilot contracts for the proposed acta Foundation workplace learning scheme.

A review of our main projects this year follows below:-

1) Community Theatre

<http://www.acta-bristol.com/touring-community-theatre/>

1.1 *Goblin Silver*

Building on the success of *Mother Iceheart* in 2010 & 11, our high-quality community-touring show this year brought together two groups of experienced acta performers to create a new family show to tour Bristol neighbourhoods for the festive season. Once again, **acta** toured to both Upper Horfield and Withywood, as well as performing for a week at the acta centre in December.

The headlines from the audience analysis were as follows:-

- 4 out of every 5 audience members were not regular theatre-goers
- 85% rated the show excellent
- 38% had never seen an acta show before

"Our family had a fantastic night out. Thank you very much. We will come again."

"We came to see Mother Iceheart and now Goblin Silver. I look forward to more. The effects and music were brilliant as well as everyone who took part."



1.2 Malcolm X Elders

The group developed further their latest show, *We Have Overcome*, based on personal stories of growing up in the Caribbean and moving to England in the sixties, which was delivered as part of our *My Generation* intergenerational project, funded by Baring Foundation, creating opportunities for older people to tour original community theatre to schools.

Following a successful preview at the Coast international festival of community theatre last year, the show performed at the acta centre and the Malcolm X Centre, and then toured to four Bristol schools.

"It was interesting and fun to watch because they made their lives into a play."

"It reminded me of my family, because they are from Jamaica and Grenada."

Towards the end of the year, the group secured Arts Council England support for a new project, *Ticky Picky Boom Boom*, which will draw on memories of childhood folk tales to create a show to tour to primary school aged children.

1.3 COAST, Community Oriented Arts & Social Transformation

<http://www.acta-bristol.com/coast-bristol-festival-26-29-march-2012/>

Following the successful international festival in March 12, the two year international cooperation project, supported by EU Culture Fund, this year focused on learning through a series of secondments between acta and our partners in Germany, Poland and Holland. All four partners met up in Berlin in October, and in Poland in March, where the COAST book and dvd were launched in March 13.



1.4 Bristol Refugee Rights

On 28 February, an invited audience at the acta centre enjoyed a workshop performance by a new community theatre group set up with Bristol Refugee Rights (BRR). The group will develop their show, *Listen To Our Story*, to perform again in Summer 13. Audience members agreed that it deserved to be seen across the City.

"I just wanted to say thanks for last night. It was truly wonderful for me to see the results of all your hard work. It is a great project and I am really grateful for all energy you have all put into it."

Alice Cutler, Wellcome Centre Coordinator, Bristol Refugee Rights Assisi Centre

Our partnership with BRR began at the Coast festival last year, when they organised a group visit to come to see the CAN show, *Down With The Dictator*. After the show, BRR approached acta to see if we would work with them to create a new show with Bristol-based refugees, to present their stories on the stage.



2) Youth Theatre

2.1 Go North

<http://www.acta-bristol.com/go-north-youth-theatres/>

This three year project to support our youth theatre network in North Bristol, with funds from Big Lottery Young People's Fund, came to an end in July 12, with a second showcase event at Oasis Academy Brightstowe (Shirehampton), and a second tour of the *Down on The Farm* show to primary schools, by Ace Invaders.

The programme engaged over 150 young people to create and perform their own original shows over the three years of the project. Through the regular weekly youth theatre sessions, *Go North* has raised aspirations, supported cultural attendances and secured a total of 56 youth arts awards.

2.2 Bedminster youth theatres

For details about our work with children and young people in Bedminster, please see *Get Together* project review below (3.1)



2.3 Young carers

<http://www.acta-bristol.com/young-carers/>

This was the first year of our support from Henry Smith Foundation for our service for young carers, which was also supported this year by Lloyds TSB Foundation and Garfield Weston.

Two youth theatre groups presented their annual productions as a double-bill on 7 & 8 June, *Circus Tricks* and *Witch's War*, and a weekly young carers youth theatre continued throughout the year, involving 12 young people from Bristol South, Central & East. Additionally, the project delivered two intensive "play in a week" projects at the acta centre, for young carers in B&NES in August, and from S Gloucestershire in February.

"I can do anything if I put my mind to it."

"It's great because I didn't know anyone when I got here but now I'm not afraid to mix with people."

"We know that everyone here is caring for someone, so you don't feel on the outside."

2.4 Phoenix, Young Adults

A new group for young adults aged 16-25 yrs from across Bristol began in September, both for young people who have progressed through acta youth theatres, and for young adults new to acta. The project has proved hugely successful, engaging over 20 people from right across the City, and the group have been set the challenge to create a new show to perform at the acta centre in December.



2.5 Avonmouth Gas Girls

<http://www.acta-bristol.com/gas-girls/>

As part of the research and development period for a new community theatre project in Avonmouth, acta delivered a short pilot project for local people at Avonmouth Community Centre in the Spring term, ending with a show to a local audience on 12 March.



3) Neighbourhoods

3.1 Get Together, Bedminster

<http://www.acta-bristol.com/get-together-bedminster/>

In the second year of our four year Big Lottery Reaching Communities project, local people came together to enjoy a wide range of different activities and to present an array of original community theatre productions, including:-

- Bedminster Kids presented their annual production at the acta centre on 22 May, and later in the year, a new group of children began to create the next show for the Get Together Festival.
- An afterschool group at Holy Cross Primary School presented *Smashing Time* on 1 June, a show based on memories collected from local people about the area 60 years on from the Coronation.
- The Artyzans community theatre group presented their first ever show, *Last Orders at The Phoenix*, on 2 July.
- The Bedminster youth theatre ("Emergency Exit") presented their annual production on 10/11 July.
- The community choir performed their very own concert at the acta centre on 18 July.

- Children from St Mary Redcliffe Primary School presented the *Four Corners* shows to a community audience of nearly 300 people in Redcliffe.
- An intergenerational project, "Tell Me a Story," created a new show, *The Magic Box of Stories*, which brought together older people from Monica Wills on West St, with children from Holy Cross Primary, to perform at the acta centre on 28 November and 5 December.
- A new Bedminster youth theatre group who started meeting in September, created a show in just two terms, *What If The Wicked Witch Won?*, performing on 5 March.
- An intergenerational cast of performers joined with the community choir to create and perform the 1963 show on 20 -22 March, to commemorate 50 years on from a most remarkable year.

*"Congratulations... for the 1963 show. I was very much inspired. acta's best show yet dare I say."
 "...It made me laugh, cry, celebrate life." 1963 audience members*

In addition to these fantastic original local productions, the programme offered other activities including Saturday morning family lantern-making workshops for the Bedminster Winter Lantern Parade (started in year 1 of Get Together, and this year taken on by local people to organise); a Redcliffe Olympics project for children and young people in August; and a range of outreach workshops to engage new local participants in regular activities.

A total of 695 local people of all ages have participated in project workshops over the first two years of the programme, 241 of whom have already demonstrated how the project has benefitted them.

3.2 Open Circle

<http://www.acta-bristol.com/open-circle-family-learning-groups/>

This has been the fourth and final year of Open Circle weekly participatory arts workshops with families in North and South Bristol, funded through the Big Lottery family learning fund.

Once again, the project was extended to involve new families through partnerships with new schools & other community organisations in North Bristol, and in South Bristol, developed further the two very popular family learning sessions for pre-school aged children and their parents at the **acta** centre.





Our Aims & Objectives

The charity is a charitable company limited by guarantee and was set up in 1985. It is governed by a memorandum and articles of association, which describe our objects as follows:-

- Instigate and supervise drama projects for youth & community groups
- Provide all sections of society with the opportunity to participate in theatre
- Supervise drama sessions with people who are encouraged to create & perform their own production
- Identify (in conjunction with others if necessary) areas and communities in which theatre activities are lacking and to remedy deficiencies identified as a result
- Design projects which emphasise the educational aspects of workshops and the personal and social development of individuals within a group
- Supervise projects which are designed to assist community development.



Reserves and Risk management

The trustees have continued to work closely with the SMT to manage the budget, to ensure the Company broke even on the year, and achieved a very small surplus of £1,846, so that the revised general funds accumulated surplus at the end of March 13 was £78,115.

The trustees have reviewed their policy on free reserves, taking advice from the auditor and consulting Charity Commission guidance, and agreed that the Company should aim to build up further its free reserves to three months' operating costs, circa £90,000.

The Company accounts are reviewed by the trustees on a quarterly basis to ensure annual targets will be met.

The trustees work closely with the Artistic Director to ensure that all possible areas of risk are considered in the management of the Company, and to develop all opportunities available. Each project is assessed before the charity makes a commitment to the work, and is then monitored on a monthly basis to ensure that any risks are minimised.

The Company has successfully worked to diversify its funding sources and activities over recent years, with a view to minimising the external risks to funding. It will continue to ensure a wide range of funding sources and activities in future years to keep these external risks to a minimum. The Company launched a new fundraising and income-generating strategy this year, supported by the Arts Council Catalyst scheme, and continues with core funding support from Bristol City Council for the 2012-15 period.

Internal risks are minimised by the implementation of procedures for authorisation of all transactions and projects, to ensure consistent quality of delivery for all operational aspects of the charitable company. These procedures are periodically reviewed to ensure that they still meet the needs of the charity.



Governance and internal control

Company and charity law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the surplus or deficit of the charity for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees have:

- selected suitable accounting policies and then applied them consistently;
- made judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- stated whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepared the financial statements on the going concern basis.

The trustees have overall responsibility for ensuring that the charity has appropriate systems of controls, financial and otherwise. They are also responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

There were no changes to the Trustees in this year, except for the resignation of Katie McKeogh, who continues to support the Company as an advisor on the new fundraising strategy.



Volunteers

The Company works with up to 2,000 participants each year, who volunteer their time to take part in our community and youth arts projects. Of these, there are about 20 students and other people who work to help facilitate and manage projects, who we term volunteers. There is a volunteer co-ordinator who works to ensure all volunteers are appropriately supervised. We are grateful for all the efforts of our volunteers involved in service provision over the year.





Employee involvement and employment of disabled people

Employees have been consulted on issues of concern to them through regular company meetings and e-bulletins, and have been kept informed on specific matters directly by the senior management team. There is regular communication between management members and employees, both through the senior management team and a system of staff reports to management.

The Artistic Director liaises with the trustees on the annual job review process for each employee.

The charity has implemented a number of detailed policies in relation to all aspects of personnel matters including:-

- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Volunteer policy
- Health & Safety policy

In accordance with the charity’s equality & diversity policy, the charity has long established fair employment practices in the recruitment, selection, retention and training of disabled people.

Full details of the above policies, and also:

- Business Plan
- Child Protection & Vulnerable Adults policies
- Education policy

are available from the **acta** centre.



Auditors

A resolution proposing that Dick Maule be re-appointed as auditor of the charity will be put to the AGM in Autumn 2013.

The Council of Management approved this report on

..... (Graeme Riley, Chair)