



(A Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

Charity number 1161284

Trustee Report and Financial Statements  
Year ending 31 March 2021

New Note Projects  
P.O. Box 5420  
Brighton  
BN50 8HS

The Trustees of New Note Projects present their Annual Report for the period from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

## 1. Governance and Structure:

New Note Projects (NNP) is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). Our constitution is a 'Foundation' model whose only voting members are its charity trustees.

New Note Projects was constituted on 14 April 2015 when the Charity Commission produced a unique charitable number: 1161284

The Trustees have had regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit when considering the activities to be undertaken. These are detailed in this report.

New Note Projects was overseen by six trustees during the period 1 April 2012 - 31 March 2021

Chairperson – Bridget Taylor

Trustee - Dan Blomfield

Trustee – Marcus O'Dair

Trustee – Helen Marsden

Trustee – Becky Thomas

Trustee – Sarah Erskine

The day-to-day operations were overseen by Founder and Chief Executive Molly Mathieson.

## 2: New Note Projects aims and objectives.

NNP uses music to help people strengthen their recoveries from addiction. It was set up to combat drug and alcohol-related problems within Brighton and Hove in a unique and creative way. Brighton and Hove ranks the fourth highest of 152 local authorities for the proportion of adults who are drinking at increasing or higher risk levels. (*Brighton and Hove City Council 2019*)

Since 2010, there have been savage cuts to drug and alcohol services. Dame Carol Black's 'Review of Drugs' commissioned by Sajid Javid (then Home Secretary) and published in September 2020 paints a bleak picture of addiction services in the UK. The report claims "we have the highest number of rough sleepers dying on our streets from drug poisoning since records began.... Treatment services have been curtailed by local government funding cuts. Spending on treatment has reduced significantly because Local Government budgets have been squeezed and central Government funding and oversight has fallen away. There is significant local variation, with some Local Authorities having reduced treatment expenditure by 40%. A prolonged shortage of funding has resulted in a loss of skills, expertise and capacity from this sector."

Across the country, vulnerable people with addiction issues are being increasingly marginalised. Since the pandemic started in March 2020, there has been a steady rise in the number of people trying to access statutory services for drugs and alcohol addiction. In August 2020, the Office for National Statistics stated that alcohol-specific deaths were up 20% on the previous year and the highest annual death toll since records began in 2001.

New Note Projects has two music-based initiatives.

- New Note Orchestra (*See section 3*)
- New Note Strummers (*See section 4*)

Both programmes reach people who have experienced addiction issues. Many of the people accessing our services have also experienced rough sleeping, poor mental health social isolation, deprivation and prison.

## PUTTING OUR AIMS AND OBJECTIVES INTO PRACTICE

### 3. Operations summary: New Note Orchestra

During the period of this report, we experienced three local and national COVID-19 lockdowns. For the majority of this period, we delivered our operations online. At the beginning of the pandemic, it became clear that many of the people we were supporting were experiencing a digital divide. Some didn't have broadband and were accessing the online world through an old handset. We managed to find engineers who were willing to enter people's homes to set up broadband and install telephone lines. Alongside this, we secured funds to equip our participants with new computers and technical support alongside our usual commitment to making music.

We are well aware that isolation kills vulnerable people. Many of our participants have spent long periods of their lives socially isolated. Some are at risk of suicide and have made multiple attempts in the past. Loneliness is as bad for health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day and is likely to increase your risk of death by 29% (Holt-Lunstad, 2010, 2015). We knew that our work was critical at this time, as well as making sure that we stayed connected and engaged with our participants.

New Note Orchestra was launched in 2015 as the first of its kind in the world. Its aims are:

- To produce new and original music of high artistic value
- To help people in recovery from drugs and alcohol addiction to stay sober by meeting regularly to compose and play music
- To reduce the stigma around alcoholism and addiction in our communities by putting on public performances.

On March 17 2020, the board and senior management decided to stop holding community-based sessions as the UK headed into its first lockdown. Founder Molly Mathieson, Music Director Conall Gleeson and five orchestra members began testing various platforms to try

and migrate music-making online. It was impossible to achieve due to internet latency issues.



*Warner, a musician in the New Note Orchestra, using his iPad to make music.*

This meant that it was not feasible to play in time as an ensemble. Molly Mathieson applied to Brighton and Hove City Council and the Arts Council to invest in New Note in order to equip all the musicians with broadband, hardware and bespoke training. Founder Molly Mathieson decided to invest in GarageBand, an app which effectively gives you your own music creation studio with a complete sound library of instruments. Together with bespoke training from Drake Music and Chiltern Music Therapy, Molly Mathieson and Music Director Conall Gleeson upskilled the musicians in digital music-making.

The board took the difficult decision to not actively recruit new participants, instead New Note would support those who were accessing their services at the start of the national lockdown. This

meant that numbers were very static for this period.

We developed a new online meditation class, run by a mindfulness teacher every week. This was open to both the New Note Orchestra musicians and the Strummers. This was really effective during the first lockdown, as it gave people a safe space to reduce anxiety, stress and increase well-being.

- The 'average' number of people attending an NNO session over this period was 10
- NNO's retention rate for this period was 53% (**Retention rate:** *Percentage of people who attended in the previous year that are still attending in the current year*).
- NNO opened and closed the American-based Creative High Inspiration Series - an international online conference to honour the stories of artists who have faced addiction and demonstrate how the creative arts are a pathway for transformation.
- NNO, alongside Music Director Conall Gleeson, recorded a studio album 'Kind Rebellion' which is yet to be released.
- NNO collaborated with film maker Angus Cameron to produce two music videos: The Tree and The Wood. Both were released on YouTube and Facebook.
- These New Note Orchestra videos have received over 1000 views
- NNO created a brand new composition for Brighton Museum, to accompany an online exhibition of some of its best-loved artworks.
- During this period, New Note developed the musicians' digital skills.



*New Note Orchestra came together to produce a unique recording for the Brighton Museum in July 2020, when restrictions on the national lockdown were lifted.*

### **Case study:**

Tricia has been in recovery for about four years and usually plays handbells and the djembe with New Note. She's the first to admit that she wasn't that comfortable using a computer before lockdown started but now she's in a different place altogether. "I wasn't very computer-oriented, I used to send emails and attachments on my phone, now I can do them on my computer and iPad so being with the orchestra has made me feel more confident about using the internet in general, and especially making music," she says.

"I made up a song using rock guitar and drums and keyboards," says Tricia. "It's really helped my mental health. I felt less isolated (during the pandemic) and more connected with people. I saw all my friends at New Note twice a week and it has given me a new sense of purpose as well. Music in general helps reduce the stigma about being in recovery."

### **Impact**

New Note Orchestra participants were asked to complete a survey in February 2021 to discover the impact that the GarageBand training and online sessions had on enabling digital music production and upskilling them in general digital literacy (using the UK government's [Essential Digital Skills](#) framework), and maintaining mental wellbeing.

- 83% said learning digital skills through New Note supported their mental health, helped to reduce loneliness and helped them to stay connected to friends, peers, and the recovery community during lockdown.
- 92% said that the digital training received gave them something positive to focus on during lockdown.



- 100% said that the GarageBand training that New Note provided helped to improve digital music production skills.
- 67% said that New Note helped to improve basic computer skills.
- 50% said that the training helped them to improve online transacting skills (online banking, filling out forms online, downloading content, signing up to services such as Amazon, Netflix etc.)
- 67% said the training helped to improve their ability to handle information and content (find, manage, and store digital information and files, creating new folders).
- 58% said the training helped to improve awareness of online security (e.g. knowing how to manage passwords, keeping personal information secure, keeping device systems up to date).

#### 4: Operations summary - New Note Strummers

In January 2017, the New Note Strummers group was launched. New Note Strummers is a weekly guitar group for people who are in recovery from addiction. This group attracts clients who are particularly vulnerable, including those in the early stages of recovery, have experience of street homelessness and those who have significant mental health issues. Many of the members have been socially excluded for long periods of time including prison. With a National Lottery grant, Founder Molly Mathieson trialled a successful pilot between Jan-April 2017 and Strummers became a regular weekly group for people in recovery from addiction. The National Lottery has continued to financially support the group.

The New Note Strummers migrated online very effectively during the pandemic. Jon Rattenbury, the Strummers' guitar tutor, would sing and play through a song and everyone joined in at home over Zoom. We changed the format to include a lot more one to one tutoring.

From 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021, the New Note Strummers achieved the following:

- The 'average' number of people attending Strummers during this period was 7
- This periods retention rate was 45%

*(**Retention rate:** Percentage of people who attended in the previous year that are still attending in the current year)*

#### **Impact**

In anonymous feedback, we found that during this period:

- 66.7% said that our online Strummer sessions helped them to feel less isolated.
- 100% said that the sessions supported their recoveries from addiction.
- Anonymous feedback included: "The sessions gave me something to look forward to and to stay sober for" and "really helped with structure, connection and mental health. Brought some fun and joy also!"

## 5: New developments

The COVID-19 infection rate remained high in Brighton throughout 2021, especially during the summer period. As an organisation, we decided to not put on any public-facing events until 2022 due to the uncertainty and risks involved.

At the time of writing this report (September 2021) we are developing a 3-5 year strategy.

## 6. Review of financial position

The New Note Projects accounts are independently examined by registered accountant Chris Tyler FCA, DChA, FCIE.

**Total income:** £100,360.13

**Expenditure:** £70,340

Staffing costs: £48,847

Operating Costs: £7,400

Investments £14,093

Staffing costs include:

Chief Exec, Project Managers, Music Director, Guitar Tutor, Sound Technicians , Directors, Producers, freelancers for Comms and Marketing.

Investments break down into the following:

Musical equipment: £1, 386.18

*Computer support* £2,764.83

*Computer hardware* £9,706.43

### **Reserves policy:**

Our reserves policy is to hold sufficient funds to source the core operating capacity of the charity for four months. This means the charity can meet ongoing liabilities, sufficient to ensure that all delivery commitments can be met and to protect the long-term future of the operations. Our reserves at March 31<sup>st</sup> 2021 were £22,952

### **Assets:**

The charity has assets in the form of musical instruments. Our total assets at 31 March 2020 were £11,750

## SPLIT OF INCOME & EXPENDITURE

	UNRESTRICTED	RESTRICTED	TOTAL
<b>INCOME</b>			
LOTTERY	-	9,750	9,750
ARTS COUNCIL	-	39,423	39,423
HENRY SMITH	-	10,000	10,000
BHCC	-	4,500	4,500
SSE	2,000	-	2,000
RAYNE FOUNDATION	-	8,000	8,000
MARTIN GEDDES	1,000	-	1,000
BARRINGFOUNDATION	12,000	-	12,000
MIND	-	11,060	11,060
LEIGH TRUST	-	2,500	2,500
JUST GIVING	127	-	127
	<b>15,127</b>	<b>85,233</b>	<b>100,360</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
STAFF COSTS	-	48,847	48,847
OPERATING COSTS	1,107	6,293	7,400
INVESTMENTS	-	14,093	14,093
	<b>1,107</b>	<b>69,233</b>	<b>70,340</b>
<b>RECEIPTS LESS PAYMENTS</b>	<b>14,020</b>	<b>16,000</b>	<b>30,020</b>
<b>BANK BALANCES B/FWD</b>	<b>8,932</b>	<b>18,291</b>	<b>27,223</b>
<b>BANK BALANCES C/FWD</b>	<b>22,952</b>	<b>34,291</b>	<b>57,243</b>
<b>RESTRICTED FUND BALANCES YEAR</b>			
RAYNE FOUNDATION		8,000	
ARTS COUNCIL		8,000	
		<b>16,000</b>	
<b>RESTRICTED FUND BALANCES B/FWD</b>			
ARTS COUNCIL		9,291	
BARRINGFOUNDATION		5,000	
LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS		2,000	
MARTIN GEDDES		2,000	
		<b>18,291</b>	



**INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES  
OF NEW NOTE PROJECTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity (“the Trust”) for the year ended 31 March 2021

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 (“the Act”).

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust’s accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in any material respect:

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

.....  
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Date.....