



D'Arts Annual Report

April 2022 to April 2023



D'Arts has enjoyed another full year and a weekend festival. It is wonderful to be back to normal after the last two years of Covid restrictions.

Our monthly Saturday workshops have included a Spring visit to OrganicArts at West Town Farm, where we picked wild garlic and made pesto, walked the fields and made hangings with gathered items, wonderful joyous Dance workshops, designing and decorating plant pots for a plant stall at the festival, a collage workshop in the style of Matisse, Apple Pressing at West Town Farm with OrganicArts, an exciting Drama session and a couple of Christmas craft sessions making reindeers out of fir cones and snowmen out of socks. Our workshops have been well attended and our average numbers have increased from 12 to 18, with several new members joining us. This has been a post covid increase due in part to a decrease in some other services and a need for people to be out connecting with friends again and engaging in new activities. As always, our sessions are run by experienced art practitioners and supported by a team of enthusiastic volunteers and trustees. Lunch is served and afternoon tea with homemade cakes baked by Liz. There is a constant happy buzz of conversation and laughter. We continue to use Exeter Community Centre where we feel welcome, the spaces are good, and we are in a mainstream venue with lots of other sessions going on around us.



D'ArtsFest 2022 was a huge success after a gap of festivals. We had decided not to do one in 2019 to save up for the next one, we had D'ArtsFest 2020 all planned but had to cancel due to Covid and 2021 we were still under restrictions for large gatherings. It was fantastic to set up again in Easterbook field at West Town Farm on July 2nd and 3rd 2022. After a few early showers the weekend was as glorious as ever and a good time was had by all. Our main stage showcased many groups with disabilities including The Rockeries, Soundwaves, Turning Tides, Shine Music, Stepping Out, Get Changed Theatre, Brilliant and some old guy and Boo to a Goose Theatre.

The stage was shared with other musicians who entertained us such as Alley Katz, Mariners Away, acoustic sets from Bolyne and Mark Travis. We had Indian Dance, Taiko drumming, cardboard sculpture, hanging creatures craft and a Make yourself into a Rockstar activity. There were stalls, food, ice cream, and a bar serving the generously donated Avocet beer from Exeter Brewery as well as ciders and soft drinks.



We were fortunate in this financial year to still have some resources from the Mercers Company Grant, and some Just Giving payments from the sponsored walk undertaken in September 2021. D'Arts was part of a Lottery funded project called Inclusive Opportunities Devon which was a pilot project started before Covid lockdowns. Unfortunately, the full proposals did not develop, but we did benefit from some monies to be kept aside for D'ArtsFest as we were showcasing many other groups work. This gave us the foundation to fund the festival. We also received £300 from one of the Exeter Masonic Chapters who regularly support our work.

Our monthly sessions costs do not amount to a huge amount each year, averaging about £6,000, however all costs are increasing such as room rental, food etc. With the increase in participant numbers, we are obviously bringing in more money. We have not increased the cost for the Saturdays for many years and hope to manage to keep that at £10 which means the day is accessible to everyone. D'ArtsFest obviously has high costs due to all the equipment we need such as marquees, generators, portaloos etc so we raise separate monies for this.

D'Arts continues to flourish as a small charity and is well supported by hardworking trustees, volunteers, parents and members of the community. We have been in existence for 13 years and are proud of what we have achieved in keeping weekend creative activities alive for people with learning disabilities in and around Exeter.



Cardboard sculptured bees



Collages Matisse style