

Behind the Scenes 2019-2020



Supporting Creative Independence

www.beaconfilms.org.uk/annualreport

Beacon Films annual report to the CIC regulator.
A community interest company limited by guarantee #7740648

Beacon Films is a training and production company of filmmakers with learning disabilities, autism and additional needs.

We support our project members to:

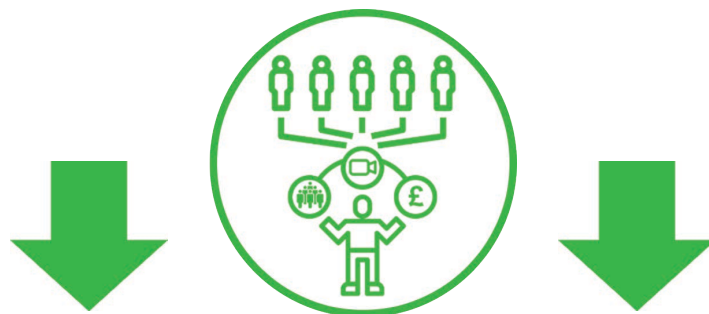
1] Discover filmmaking talents



2] Develop professional abilities



3] Offer skills to their community



4] Showcase creative work



“It’s a starting place for me to get where I want to be in life as a video editor; **realise my dreams and achieve my career aspirations.**”



*Chris Bradburn, Great North Museum Placement Filmmaker
and Beacon Films Member*

“College introduced me to the social group. The social group linked me to Beacon Films. Beacon Films has introduced me to ROAD, and they put me in touch with Keeping Connected. Keeping Connected has linked me to MAIN. **It’s been like a chain reaction!**”

Paul Lycett, Beacon Films Member and Self-Led Group Volunteer

“We loved working with Beacon Films to support their film-makers to create the work. A very different experience to the usual planetarium experience! **The quality of the narrative and the visuals was outstanding** and we’d love to add the film to our planetarium offer.”

Catherine Johns, Chief Executive, Kielder Observatory

“It’s important that Beacon Films continues during lockdown, because **it gives people a purpose of something to do ... and not feel isolated.**”

Zosia Feher, Beacon Films Member and Board Member

“**These projects have been such a positive experience for Isaac during lockdown.** He’s been in the house (literally only going in the back yard and nowhere else) for 3 months now and is really missing his friends. It’s been so good for him to have these online meetings to look forward to and activities to focus on in between.”

Johanna Smith, parent of Beacon Films Member



“It’s been great working together towards more inclusive governance... It feels like a big step towards making sure the focus of strategic decision making in our work is firstly, firmly and authentically rooted in the lived experience of our members.”

Robert Laycock, Chair

“I’m proud that we adapted to online workshops from the beginning of the Covid outbreak, and made the workshops safe and accessible to everyone.”

Zosia Feher, Board Member

“The proudest achievement for me was Hyperdrive Hannah because I was chosen to be the main role. I also enjoyed experimenting with techniques when making the props.”

Jules Fraser, Board Member

During 2019-2020, Beacon Films CIC:

- ... supported **43** filmmakers (/ “project members”)
- ... to produce **12** films
- ... that were **premiered** at the Great North Museum, in November 2019
- ... had at least **10,000** online engagements*
- ... and were selected for **12** international festivals and public cinema screenings

*An ‘engagement’ is where someone interacts with the online content



Outcomes for project members

We supported **50** film-related volunteering and work experience placements, including through our self-led groups.

We supported **5** paid crew placements, including a long-term placement in partnership with Great North Museum.

During the year, there was an increase in the proportion of project members **who reported positive wellbeing**, tracked through ONS wellbeing measures.

72% of project members **said the project was helping their wellbeing**.

During the year, there was an increase in the number of project members who reported feeling **positive about participating in their community**.

87% of these project members **said the project helped them feel more positive about this**.

84% of project member ranked **the extent to which Beacon Films was helping them with their volunteering skills** as 7/10 or above.



Discovering Filmmaking Talents

Most of our members join us through our BFI Film Academy, which provides an introduction to filmmaking. We have been running this each year since 2012.

Our Film Academy is part of a national scheme to support young people aged 16-19 to discover filmmaking skills. We focus on supporting the filmmaking aspirations of filmmakers with learning disabilities, autism and additional needs.

This year's Film Academy led to the creation of the zany heist flick: 'Triple Crossed'.

Here is some feedback from the young people that took part:

"I feel **more confident** to pursue other film-making opportunities."

"I enjoyed acting and filming days and would **like to be invited to other projects.**"

"I **enjoyed** making friends and [learning] new skills."



Developing Professional Abilities

Viewfinder is our flagship film talent development programme. Project members hone their creative skills and then apply these to group or individual volunteering and work placements.

“I don’t know where I’d be without Viewfinder, because it really means so much to me: **the professional aspect, the connecting with other people.**”

Juliet Fraser, Beacon Films Member and Board Member

Here are some other comments from Viewfinder members:

“**I’ve enjoyed using the camera** – I would like to learn more about the settings on the camera”

“There was sound disturbance from the Metro during the recording **so I had to tell the director.**”

“**I learnt editing.** Seemed hard, but with help... it was easy.”

“Today **I fixed a tripod** using an Allen key.”

Developing Abilities

Watch a documentary about Viewfinder at www.beaconfilms.org.uk/annualreport



Offering Skills, as a group:

Through a partnership with Great North Museum and Kielder Observatory, twenty of our filmmakers were commissioned to create a 9-minute 'full dome' immersive film: 'Hyperdrive Hannah's Cosmic Adventure'.

The film was premiered at the Great North Museum's planetarium in November 2019. It was previewed at the British Association of Planetaria Conference 2019, and went on to be incorporated into Kielder Observatory's planetarium schools offer.

"The great thing about working with Beacon Films is their high expectation and support for their participants to produce high quality work. The work is about real, transferable skills [and] producing professional outcomes that prepare people for employment."

Caroline McDonald, Museum Manager, Great North Museum

"It gets you out there, in the community." *Juliet Fraser*

"Partnership working is like working as a team" *Katelyn McKie*

We also supported 2 paid and 5 voluntary crew placements on films commissioned by **Leading Together for a Change** and **The Mighty Creatives**.



Offering Skills, as individuals:

This year, we have been focusing on how we can support our filmmakers' creative independence.

In April 2019, we ran an event at Star and Shadow Cinema called 'Skills Tap'.

Nine members showcased their filmmaking skills to people from local companies and organisations.

When evaluating the event, we decided it would be better if we worked with members on an individual basis to support them into volunteering and work opportunities.

Therefore, we ran a series of volunteer training workshops, with help from VODA. Six of the nine members who took part secured volunteering or paid work opportunities.



- Matthew was supported, alongside other members, to run a filmmaking workshop with Today From Us (part of the iWill volunteering initiative) and then **joined the group independently**.
- Paul was referred to ROAD and is continuing to engage with them throughout the coronavirus. We will be supporting him to create a film **about his autistic experience** for ROAD to use on their social media channels.
- Phil embarked on a paid placement through Beacon Films: **making a film for Skills for People** (Newcastle-based charity)
- Chris applied for and was successful in **becoming a filmmaker for Great North Museum** as part of a paid placement developed by Beacon Films and the museum.
- During the coronavirus lockdown, Adam (and Paul) **ran an online special effects workshop** for other project members.

“I had to organise it, plan when I could interview people, I also had to attend one of the meetings and film that. I had to plan it myself, talk to the people in question and find out when they would be free and when I could film them. I had to do the paperwork, getting permissions.”

Phil Coghill, Skills for People Filmmaking Placement



In addition, Beacon Films supported 6 volunteers to start and manage 'member-led groups', including the **Cinema Society**, the **Special Effects Group**, the **Vlogging Group** and the **Women Filmmakers Group**.

"It is to give filmmakers confidence and have the chance to be in charge of their own sessions."

Paul Lycett

When the coronavirus struck in March 2020, the cinema society moved online and increased the frequency of sessions to fortnightly. The volunteers who run the special effects group delivered online sessions. Another project member volunteered to run more virtual filmmaking workshops, leading to the film: 'Nonsense Soup'. The Vlogging and Women Filmmakers groups are paused until venue-based activity can resume.

Two members delivered a filmmaking workshop at the **Engage Conference 2019**.

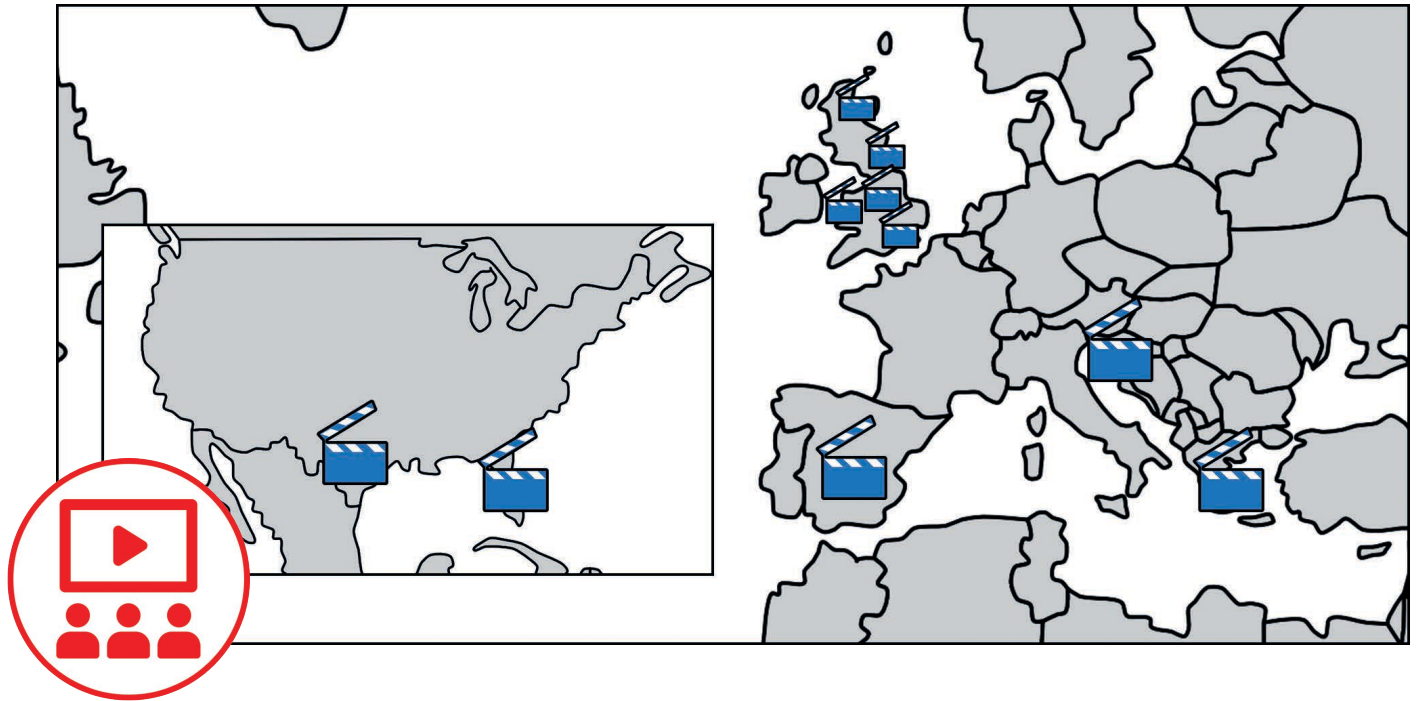
12 members volunteered as workshop leaders, presenters and ushers **at our 2019 premiere event** hosted by Great North Museum.

"I was introducing the film. People thought it was very good, and I was really proud of it."

Juliet Fraser

Offering Skills

Watch 'Nonsense Soup' at www.beaconfilms.org.uk/annualreport



Showcasing Creative Work

On 14th November 2020, 184 guests attended our **annual premiere** at Great North Museum Newcastle. Of those audience members surveyed (24):

- **100%** ranked the quality of the work as 7 out of 10 or above.
- **83%** 'strongly agreed' that the films 'increases awareness in communities of the potential of disabled people'

With over **130 film festival selections** across four continents to date, our filmmakers are dismantling misconceptions of disability by reaching global audiences with their incredible work, and unique perspective of the world.

During 2019-2020, films by our project members received **9 selections at 7 international film festivals** across the world.

Furthermore, 2018's BFI Film Academy production: 'Car-e-Oke' was selected for **3 public cinema screenings** at Home, Manchester, Genesis Cinema, London and Eden Court Theatre, Inverness.



Our Consultation with Stakeholders

We consult our **project members** through **regular surveys and evaluation sessions**, which enable people to decide and monitor personal goals and feedback on projects and progress.

A Project Design Group, made up of project members, meets every two months **to decide the programme of activity**, as well as **respond to interest from potential clients & partners**.

After applying for a television industry new talent scheme, our Project Design Group **decided to withdraw** from the process because they were being expected to make their 'disabilities' part of the creative idea. Group member: Adam Fay says: "I felt labelled; as if the broadcaster already had preconceived ideas about what ideas we would or should create before they approached us, and that our experiences... were being assumed."

After a thorough process, with the help of Inclusion North, two project members **will be appointed as company directors** by September 2020.

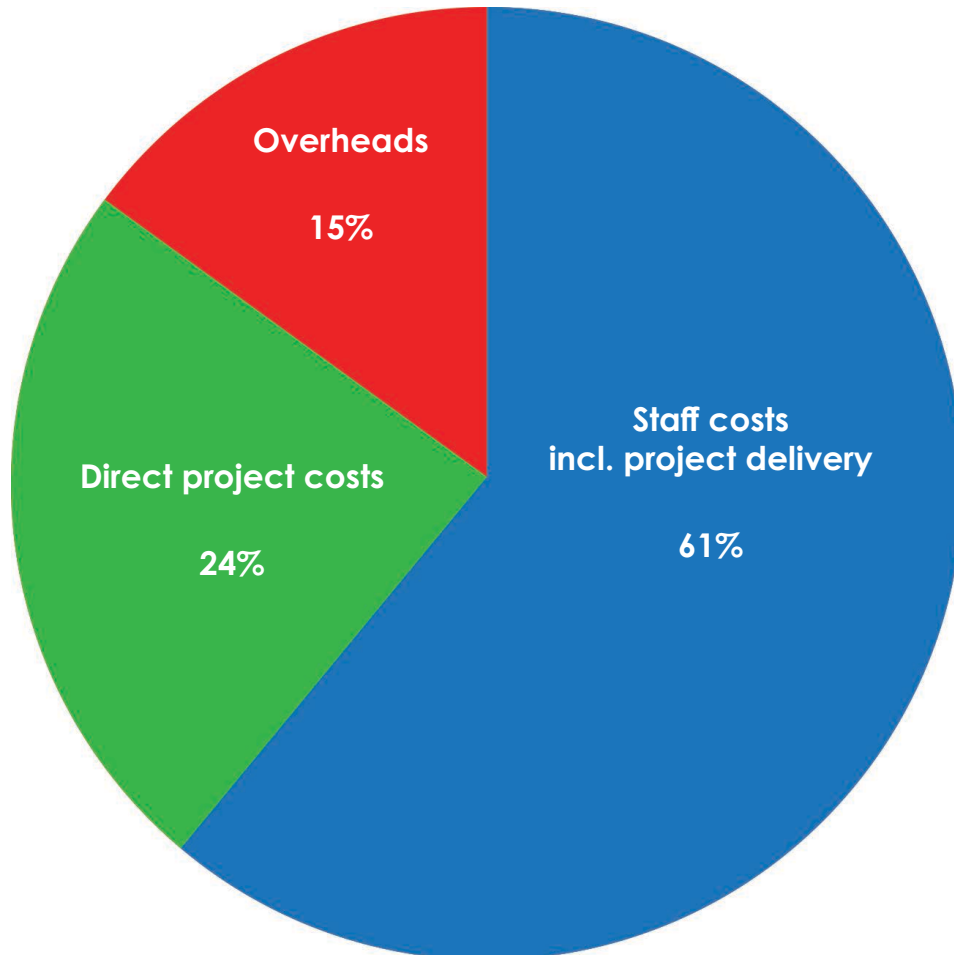
Our **board** currently includes five company directors. A majority are volunteer directors. The board meets every two months and management accounts are presented at each meeting to ensure financial oversight.

Finances



During 2019-2020, Beacon Films raised a total budget of: **£139,188**

Here is what we spent it on.



Financial Summary*	19/20	18/19
Sales Income	£28,024	£11,160
Grant Income	£111,164	£130,124
Other Income	£0	£115
Total Income	£139,188	£141,399
Expenditure	£129,586	£141,252
Surplus/Deficit	£9,602	£147
Reserves**	£29,975	£22,749

*Full financial statements, prepared by Bell Tindle Williamson Accountants are available to download from our website: www.beaconfilms.org.uk/annualreport

**Unrestricted reserves, generated from sales income.

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Beacon Films Staff & Freelancers:

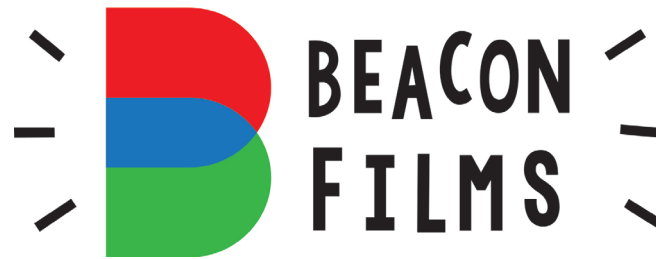
Development Director - Will Sadler
Creative Director - Andrew Coats
Head of Programme - Michelle Fox
Exhibition and Communications Officer - Midnight Memphis
Support Co-ordinator - Sarah Rose
Filmmaker (Great North Museum Placement) - Chris Bradburn
Filmmaker (Skills for People Commission) - Phil Coghill

Film Facilitators - Taryn Edmonds, Danielle Giddins, Robert Cairns & Robin Webb
Evaluation & Learning Associate - Emma Tilney
Musician Mentors - Simon Tarrant, Keith Hill
Sound Mentor - Andy Ludbrook
Design & Interactive Development - Chris Younger
External Evaluator - Chris Ford

Special thanks to our volunteer board members:
Robert Laycock (Chair), Anne Moran & Roxy McKenna

Project members: Juliet Fraser and Zosia Feher have joined our board in the 2020-2021 financial year

This Annual Report was completed with the support of members:
Phil Coghill, Zosia Feher, Juliet Fraser, Paul Lycett, Katelyn McKie and Rowan Simpson



We would like to thank the following organisations who have supported Beacon Films during the year:

Key funders:



Project funders:



Clients and Creative Partners:

