

Our Annual Report and Financial Accounts 2020/21 - Summarising a year of change and challenge

(4 minute read)

Published: 27 August 2021

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This article is about our Annual Report and Financial Accounts for 2020/21, which can be accessed in full [here](#).

Annual Reports produced by charities are primarily a legal requirement in which the charity's finances, resources and activities are reported on. At Ellerman, our Annual Reports do just this, but they also offer an opportunity for the team and Board to come together and reflect on the previous 12 months and think about all that we have achieved and learned. This is important in any year, but felt profoundly necessary after a year of delivering our work amidst the Covid-19 pandemic.

This has been a year of change and challenge for so many of the stakeholders we work with. At Ellerman we have experienced this too, whilst also being in the extremely fortunate position of being able to deliver our work remotely, having a secure financial position, and having an engaged and motivated Board of Trustees and staff team. As proud signatories of the 'We stand with the sector' and 'Still standing with the sector' pledges, coordinated by London Funders on behalf of charitable funders, we have tried to be a supportive partner to our grantees and applicants. We have been inspired by the ways in which our existing and new grantees have delivered their work in such difficult circumstances, and it has meant a lot to us that between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021 we were able to make 64 new grants worth £5,682,408 for nationally significant work in the arts, social action and environment.

Continuing with the idea that 2020/21 was a year of change, longstanding readers of our Annual Report will notice that this one is rather different to previous years in terms of the design and content. We are grateful to our designer Katie Slee for bringing our work to life in a way that we hope is engaging and uplifting to you as the reader.

The Annual Report for 2020/21 includes five case studies that showcase the kinds of inspiring organisations that we support. The reality is that any one of our grantees could be featured as a case study, but we hope that the five chosen demonstrate well the ways in which we seek to deliver our aim to advance the wellbeing of people, society and our natural world through our grantmaking. We are very grateful to [Resourcing Racial Justice](#), [Surviving Economic Abuse](#), [Marine Conservation Society](#), [Scottish Ballet](#), and [Manchester Museum](#) for agreeing to be featured.

We have also included more data about the grants we have made, including our success rates based on the 251 applications we received in 2020/21, the average size and duration of our grants, and the kinds of work we supported. We hope to provide even more data and insights relating to our grantmaking in our next Annual Report.

In deciding what to share in this Annual Report, we reflected on the various strategic areas of work that we have been pursuing, including our work on: diversity, equity and inclusion; learning and transparency; and our new investment policy. Our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Accountability Plan aims to deliver greater equity and improved funding practices through developing and embedding a shared organisation-wide understanding of DEI, and applying this throughout our

operations, including: the management of our underlying endowment; our grantmaking; the recruitment, retention and progression of our staff and Trustees; our internal and external communications; and research into the derivation of our wealth.

We have committed to greater levels of learning and transparency too. We have delivered this in various ways including publishing our grants data to [360Giving](#), in addition to on our website, being more actively involved in external events and panels, and by sharing articles, blogs, research and organisational policies on our website and via Twitter. Our grantee perception report, which [nfpSynergy](#) delivered on our behalf, offered us valuable insights on how we can ensure our grantmaking processes and support are as effective as they can be for applicants and grantees, so that we can continue to be considered an approachable, human, flexible and professional funder.

Our new Investment Policy has been a significant achievement for us too. It presents a roadmap to doing good with 100% of our assets, and challenges us to ensure that our investment activity does not contradict what we hope to achieve through our grantmaking. There is still more for us to do and achieve in all three of these strategic areas, but we are pleased to have made further progress in these areas in 2020/21.

In 2020/21, we also made two changes to our Board. After 11 years of service, we said goodbye to Dr Brian Hurwitz MD. He was a real asset to our Board, and offered us a great deal in terms of expertise and passion in medicine, the arts, social policy, history and the condition of the planet.

Our Chair and specialist Trustee on environment, Hugh Raven, is due to step down from the Board in December 2021. To prepare for that, we launched an open recruitment exercise for a new specialist Trustee on environment in December 2020, and welcomed Jonny Hughes to the Board in March 2021. Our new Chair will be elected and announced later this year.

As much as we have valued the time to reflect and look back on 2020/21, we are also very much looking forward too. 2021 marks our 50th anniversary, and you can follow [our website](#) and [Twitter](#) for updates about how we are celebrating this milestone. So far, we have announced a special fund to support environmental work in the UK's Overseas Territories, and a request for proposals relating to researching our business and philanthropic history. Do keep an eye out for more work that we will be announcing later this year – we have two more activities planned that are linked to our commitment to the arts and social action.

Thank you for your interest in and support of our work. It means a great deal to us, especially after a year as difficult as 2020/21. We hope that you enjoy reading our Annual Report as much as we enjoyed compiling it.