

Dignity Boxes

Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts

1st October 2021 - 30th September 2022



Dignity Boxes

Scottish Charity Number SC048930

Dignity Boxes is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO)

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Trustees' Annual Report

The trustees have pleasure in presenting their report together with the financial statements and the independent examiners report for the period ended 30th September 2022.

Reference & Administrative Information

Charity Name:	Dignity Boxes		
Charity Number:	SC048930		
Address:	3 Clement Rise Dedridge Livingston West Lothian EH54 6JY		
Current Trustees (at date of signing report)	Isabel Dossier	Founder	
	Nick Fannin	Chair	(appointed as Trustee – 1/2/2022. Chair from 24/4/2022)
	Megan MacDougall	Secretary	
	Heather Darling	Treasurer	(appointed – 24/4/2022)
	Mark Wilkinson		(appointed – 1/2/2022)
	Norman Gill		
Other Trustees during year:	Liane Maitland		(resigned – 24/4/2022)
	Alison Punnett		(resigned – 30/1/2022)
	Alan Preston		(resigned – 30/1/2022)
Independent Examiner:	Margaret Birse Tangram Accounting 23 Clark Avenue Linlithgow EH49 7AP		

Structure, Governance & Management

Governing Document

Dignity Boxes is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation, governed by a constitution. It was registered with OSCR as a SCIO on 21st December 2018.

Appointment of Trustees

The Trustees of the charity form the board which meets approximately every 3 months. Trustees are the only members of the charity in terms of responsibility of members under

charity legislation. There are 6 trustees, and any future appointments or changes will be made by the existing trustees.

Trustees will seek to make new appointments where necessary to ensure that the Board has the relevant knowledge and experience to support the development and growth of the charity. Potential candidates will be invited to an introductory meeting before being appointed.

New Trustees will be inducted / trained informally by the Founder of the Charity and at least one of the existing Trustees. All new Trustees will be provided with a copy of the Governing Document (Constitution), and the most recent Annual Report with accompanying Financial Statements. They will also be provided with a copy of the Business Plan and copies of the Minutes from the most recent Trustees' meeting to provide earlier context for future discussions. Trustees are also guided to the Governance documents available free on the SCVO website.

Beyond the formal management and administration structure, supporter membership of the charity is open to all individuals over 18, who support the aims and activities of the charity.

There were several changes to the Board of Trustees this year. Liane Maitland resigned as Chair on 24/4/2022. In addition, Alan Preston resigned as Treasurer and Alison Punnett resigned as Trustee on 30/1/2022. The Board are grateful to the invaluable contribution made by Liane, Alan, and Alison during their time with Dignity Boxes.

Nick Fannin joined the Board of Trustees on 1/2/2022 and took over from Liane as Chair on 24/4/2022. Mark Wilkinson was also appointed as Trustee on 1/2/2022 and Heather Darling joined as Treasurer on 24/4/2022.

Management

The trustees are responsible for the strategic direction and governance of the charity and for fund raising activities, to enhance provision of the existing service.

The trustees are responsible for the management of any risk the charity is exposed to and have established strategic plans to manage the risks. The primary risks include:

- Insufficient funds to continue operating
- Insufficient products to continue distribution
- Non-compliance with charity legislation/regulations and good practice, including issues following from Covid-19.

Charitable Purposes

The charitable purposes as set out in the SCIO constitution are the:

- Prevention or relief of poverty
- Relief of those in need by reason of age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or another disadvantage.

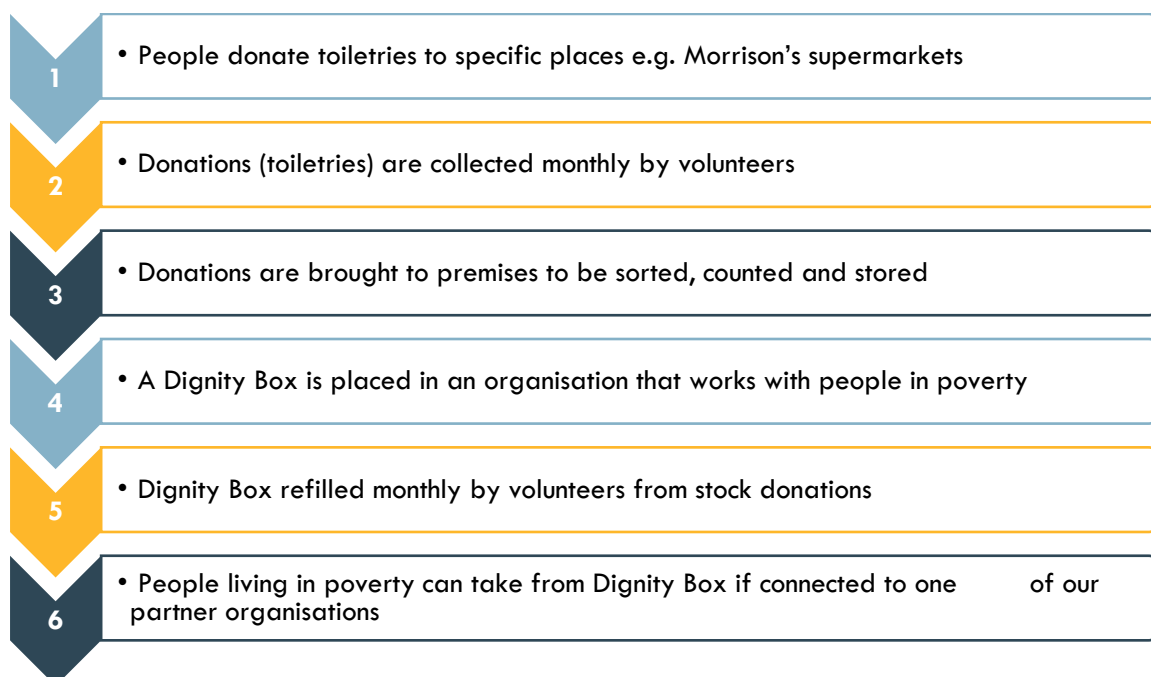
The charitable purposes are a direct response to the [Scottish Government's policy on poverty](#) - which is for "Scotland to be a place where people are healthier, happier and treated with respect, and where opportunities, wealth and power are spread more equally". Please see link above for the full Scottish Government statement on poverty and social justice.

The Charity's contribution to the prevention or relief of poverty is achieved by collating toiletries provided by our donating partners (most of whom regularly fill a 'Donation Box') and redistributing them in Dignity Boxes via our hosting partners (i.e. those who host a Dignity Box on our behalf) monthly. Individuals then take what they need from the Dignity Box (one or a few products, not the whole box – a whole box serves many people). Our hosting partners are all like-minded organisations who share our values. Some are charities themselves who support the prevention or relief of poverty and those in need in their own individual way. Where possible the boxes are placed discreetly within the organisation to promote dignity when taking a product.

The aim of a Dignity Box is ultimately to promote self-worth (dignity) in the individual beneficiary - by allowing those in need to take what they cannot afford or gain access to, without having to ask or thank anyone. In pursuit of promoting dignity, anonymity is key in this respect and so all Dignity Boxes are placed by our hosting partners in such a way that the individual in need can take the products they require discreetly. Dignity is therefore about what we are enabling for the individual through the provision of our products, and how they access them.

It is the Trustees' intent to grow the number of donating partners and Dignity Boxes / hosting partners, broadening current reach and the diversity of hosting partners to maximise our contribution to the prevention or relief of poverty. We currently operate across Edinburgh and Lothian but have ambition to widen our distribution over time to other regions.

Operating Model



The range of places / organisations hosting a Dignity Box is diverse. Our reach includes provision of support for family units, a single parent creche, asylum seekers, homeless projects, rehab for women who have been involved in the judicial system and Women's Aid, amongst others. We also give to schools and universities for young people and students suffering hardship.

We continue to have a great team of 28 volunteers, some of which have remained with us from the beginning and others have joined over the last year. Our volunteers are across the age range from young students to retired people as well as people in middle age who are in full time employment but still make time in their busy life to help us once a month. They are inducted, once interviewed, and accepted, by visiting the HQ and having our processes explained. They are given a folding trolley on wheels as a means of promoting health and safety and discouraged to carry the products which can be heavy. We are fortunate to have a range of volunteer roles and continue to have the same graphic designer, web designer and bookkeeper which are out-with the usual roles of collecting and delivering donations. Through generous donations and funding, the community, West Lothian Council and other organisations have played a pivotal role in maintaining our ability to provide hygiene basics.

The discreet nature of what we do makes it difficult to gain direct feedback from our beneficiaries, but here are some quotes from partner organisations who hold a Dignity Box which provides qualitative feedback on the benefits:

Daisy Drop in (creche) - Many of our users tell us that Dignity Boxes are hugely appreciated, some say "life-saving" and like the fact they can take without fear of being embarrassed, we have had some users almost crying when they realise they can help themselves. This has a huge impact on our families who are struggling.

From a 15 year old at West Calder High "because it is not embarrassing taking the stuff and it is good quality and things, I would want but can't afford"

From Womens' accommodation in Leith "Residents are often excited to see what has been delivered this month and comment what a fantastic idea a Dignity Box is, staff often comment on how it goes beyond just a donation and the idea they are available to access discreetly"

Access Practice "most of our clients are homeless and live in extreme poverty. They are always very grateful, and comments are always positive (about the box)."

Head Teacher primary school "we are really grateful for the toiletries provided, they are well used and appreciated by our families"

The Bridge Project "Our clients are able to take without having to ask and this makes a huge impact on their personal, mental and financial wellbeing."

Broxburn and Armadale family groups "Judgement from others is a huge barrier, and this takes it away. The variety of items is fabulous, staff love this charity"

Fauldhouse Eastfield hub "we have a box in our toilets which allows clients to access deodorants, toothpaste etc that they would go without because money is tight, clients often comment on the brands and how extremely grateful they are. Staff think you do a brilliant job that everyone can access products for free in a dignified way."

The Welcoming (Gorgie) whose service users are often asylum seekers and refugees say "these products help increase our participants' feelings of self-worth and dignity."

Activities and Achievements

This year has been a period of readjustment for Dignity Boxes as the world emerged from the pandemic to face an increasingly difficult economic climate. With poverty rates rising, the use of food banks at unprecedented levels and many of us already feeling the effects of a looming cost of living crisis we have realised that the need for the Dignity Boxes service is greater than ever.

The pandemic continued to have a big impact on the charity due to many organisations that previously donated, closing or working in a hybrid manner with less footfall in offices. Sadly, we are now in a position where many people who previously donated are now potential recipients.

The challenges that we face have offered the opportunity for change and renewal. Over the last year we have undergone a Board reshuffle; begun rebuilding our network of donation and delivery points; and undertaken a review of our purpose; our governance; financial and operational management; and communications. All with a view to developing a strategy for our future development and growth. We also began to look for new premises as our building has been scheduled for demolition.

The economic situation across the country has been very challenging and donations are down on pre-Covid levels. We are constantly looking for new partners and trying to find places which will host a donation box. This has included where necessary buying products as required to meet the shortfall in donations.

Despite this we are now back to full capacity working with 41 organisations. The products numbers, delivered monthly, are 1230 basic products which include soap, shampoo, toothpaste etc as well as 615 miscellaneous items which are products not requested, such as body lotion, bath and children's products. This equates to 1845 per month and 22,140 per annum.

As organisations open their doors again following the pandemic, we were reassured that the products were in demand and in many instances relied upon. Our objectives of increasing dignity of recipients by offering access to the boxes in a discreet manner has also been respected in most places. This ideal was abandoned for a time during Covid, but it feels important to re-establish this core point.

At Dignity Boxes we believe that everyone is entitled to dignity regardless of background and circumstances. Our volunteers believe wholeheartedly in those values and are compassionate champions in our communities, campaigning for local funds and donations and ensuring that the Dignity Boxes service is delivered where it is needed.

This year we participated in a number of worthwhile projects including:

Empower – Empower is a charity which deals with digital violence. They have a project to train young people to be trustees on a board and provide training across a range of subjects. Our Founder, Isabel Dosser mentored one of the Empower candidates who joined the April Trustees meeting.

Edinburgh Napier Live Project - Four Edinburgh Napier students took on a project to benefit the charity. They provided a report on how Dignity Boxes can develop their marketing on social media. The report highlighted that we are missing out on the 18-35 demographic and should use Instagram more. They also suggested contacting Student Unions to ask if they would like to be involved and suggested that we include links to PayPal/Amazon on posters. Our charity Secretary, Megan MacDougall has now taken on the management of our Instagram account.

Kenyan Project – Isabel Dosser was approached by director of charity who works with school in Kenya called “Child in the Rough”. Dignity Boxes donated 1000s of sanitary products to the school in Kenya, the school were very grateful for this.

As always, we are extremely grateful to our Partners and Key Donors without whom our work would not be possible. We work very closely with Morrisons Supermarkets in all but two of their stores in Lothian. We also received significant financial and in-kind support from the following organisations. Arnold Clark, Tormywheel Windfarm, Heriot Watt and Edinburgh Napier Universities, Chiene + Tait, Apex Hotels, James Young High School, Livingston Roundtable and many others.

Financial Report

With the challenging economic climate and the ongoing uncertainty following the pandemic we decided to focus on the following key areas over the course of the last operating period:

- Maintaining communication with our existing partners
- Building back our network of donation box hosts
- Increasing the level of product donations
- Increasing the level of financial donations
- Finding sponsors

We are truly grateful for continued support of the charity by many West Lothian Councillors from their disbursement funds, and our three supporters who give regular monthly donations via direct debit. We have also been fortunate in this last year to receive monies in the form of other donations, fundraising and sponsored events for which we are very thankful. Thank you also to the donations and grants we have received from organisations and businesses such as Arnold Clark, Tormywheel Windfarm and Heriot Watt University.

Our income increased slightly this year from £4,356 in 2021 to £5,171. This income is broadly comparable to the prior year and to the level of 3 years ago, pre Covid-19 pandemic (as the charity's income in 2020 was inflated by the receipt of a one-off Covid-19 Government Grant).

Our expenditure has also increased slightly this year to £7,835 (2021: £7,135). This reflects a continued requirement that began in the prior year to purchase products from time to time. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic these were almost solely donated to us. The earlier part of this financial year still saw significant restrictions on peoples' movements etc. due to the pandemic which impacted opportunities for individuals to donate, and once restrictions lifted, we have witnessed a slowed growth in donation receipts. In addition, we anticipate the level of donations may also be impacted by the economic conditions and cost of living crisis hitting our regular donators. This has meant that the charity ended the year with a deficit of £2,664 (broadly comparable to the deficit of £2,779 in 2021). However, our fund balances at the year-end remain strong at £8,969(though a reduction on the 2021 balance of £11,633)

Related Party Transactions

We are also fortunate that when we have had to buy products, due to the drop in product donations, we have been able at times to use the services of one of the former trustees who owns a retail business and has access to warehouses and cash and carries. He purchases the products on our behalf and then invoices the charity for the purchases, however because of his position we benefit from a greatly reduced cost in comparison to buying on the High Street.

Our Reserves Position

The Unrestricted Reserves that we currently have, £8,969 (2021: £11,633) provide financial stability and the means for the development of our principal activity. We intend to maintain our reserves at a level which is at least equivalent to 6 months ongoing expenditure, but does not exceed 18 months. Our current reserves level is sufficient within this window.

Where funds provided are restricted by donor conditions, we will use the funds according to the prescribed terms and conditions set by sponsors and donors. Restricted funds are not included in our Unrestricted Reserves.

The Trustees will, every 3 months, review the unrestricted reserves that are required to ensure that they are adequate to fulfil our continuing obligations. We will endeavour to raise product donations which would enable us to reduce the reserves required for buying products.

Future Plans

Dignity Boxes remains committed to the relief of poverty and the idea that everyone is entitled to dignity regardless of background or circumstances. Our purpose is to provide people in poverty with free toiletries to promote dignity and to make people feel better about themselves even for a short time.

- Continue to rebuild and grow our network of donating partners
- Expand the number of Dignity Boxes hosted across Lothian
- Capture new funding opportunities
- Continue to review and formalise policies.
- Launch a new strategy and operational plan for the charity
- Move to new premises
- Appoint a Patron

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our volunteers and supporters who are constant and encourage us to keep going in these times of adversity.

Approved by the trustees on 6th March 2023

And signed on their behalf by



Nick Fannin

Independent Examiner's Report

to the Trustees of Dignity Boxes, SCIO

I report on the statement of account of the charity for the period ended 30th September 2022 the financial reports of which are which are set out on pages 14 to 18.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the statement of account in accordance with the terms of the Charities and Trustees Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended).

The charity trustees consider that the audit requirement of regulation 10(1)(d) of the Accounts Regulations does not apply. It is my responsibility to examine the accounts as required under section 44(1)(c) of the Act and to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent Examiner's Statement

My examination is carried out in accordance with Regulation 11 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended). An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the statement of account presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeks explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.


Independent Examiner's Statement

In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention, other than that stated below:

1. Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 44(1)(a) of the 2005 Act and Regulation 4 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations, and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with Regulation 9 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations have not been met, or

2. To which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



7th March 2023

Name: Margaret Birse CCFA CIPFA (Affil) FCIE

Address: Tangram Accounting

23 Clark Avenue, Linlithgow, West Lothian, EH49 7AP

Receipts and Payments Account

For the year to 30th September 2022

	1st October 2021 - 30th September 2022			1st October 2020 - 30th September 2021
	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Total Funds
	£	£	£	£
Receipts				
Donations	4,225	-	4,225	4,313
Grants	-	750	750	-
Fundraising	196	-	196	43
Total Receipts	4,421	750	5,171	4,356
Payments				
Fundraising Costs	14	-	14	22
Charitable Activities	6,841	750	7,591	6,883
Governance Costs – IE Fee	230	-	230	230
Total Payments	7,085	750	7,835	7,135
Surplus/Deficit for year	(2,664)	-	(2,664)	(2,779)
Opening Balance	11,633	-	11,633	14,412
Surplus/Deficit	(2,664)	-	(2,664)	(2,779)
Closing Balance	8,969	-	8,969	11,633

Statement of Balances

As at 30th September 2022

	As at 30th September 2022			As at 30th September 2021	
	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Total Funds	
	£	£	£	£	
Opening Balance	11,633	-	11,633	14,412	
Surplus/Deficit	(2,664)	-	(2,664)	(2,779)	
Closing Balance	2	8,969	-	8,969	11,633
Liabilities					
IE Fee	245			230	
Outstanding trustee expenses	-			-	
Total estimated Liabilities	245			230	

Notes on pages 16 to 18 form part of these accounts.

The accounts were approved by the trustees on 6th March 2023 and signed on their behalf by:

Nick Fannin Nick Fannin

Notes to the Accounts

Basis of Accounting

1. Fund Accounting

These accounts are prepared on the Receipts and Payments basis in accordance with the Charities and Trustees Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended).

Unrestricted Funds are those funds which can be used at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the objects of the charity.

Restricted Funds are those funds which can only be used for specific purposes as specified by the donor or when the funds have been raised for a specific purpose. the charity name.

2. Transactions with Trustees and Related Parties

The Founder is the only trustee to receive reimbursement of travel expenses during the period. She was paid travelling expenses totalling £321

No trustee or related party received any form of remuneration from the charity. Purchases of toiletries are made at times via a business owned by one of the charity's former trustees, Alan Preston. The toiletries are provided at a reduced price to the charity.

3. Movement of Funds

	Opening Balance as at 1st October 2021	Receipts	Payments	Closing Balance as at 30th September 2022
	£	£	£	£
Restricted Fund				
Volunteer and Donations Support	-	750	(750)	-
Total Restricted Funds	-	750	(750)	-
Unrestricted Funds				
General Fund	11,633	4,421	(7,085)	8,969
Total U/R Funds	11,633	4,421	(7,085)	8,969

Restricted Fund Purpose:

Volunteer and Donations Support: These funds were provided to be used specifically for purchase of supplies and for carts for volunteers.

4. Analysis of Receipts

	1st October 2021 - 30th September 2022			1st October 2020 - 30th September 2021
	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Total Funds
	£	£	£	£
Donations & Grants				
General Donations	2,138	-	2,138	2,612
Councillors Disbursements	2,080	-	2,080	1,700
Grants	-	750	750	-
Bank Cash-Back	7	-	7	1
Total Donations	4,225	750	4,975	4,313
Fundraising				
Christmas Fayres	173	-	173	0
Amazon Smile	23	-	23	43
Total Fundraising	196	-	196	43

5. Analysis of Charitable Activity Payments

			1st October 2021 - 30th September 2022	1st October 2020 - 30th September 2021
	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Total Funds
	£	£	£	£
Cost of Charitable Activities				
Storage Boxes & Small Equipment	23	-	23	14
Stationary & Print & Postage	491	-	491	171
Internet & Website	13	-	13	377
Rent, Utilities & Water Charges	3,884	-	3,884	4,130
Legal & Professional	-	-	-	120
Volunteer Supplies	188	-	188	-
Refreshments	22	-	22	-
Product Purchases	1,237	750	1,948	1,729
Promotional Activity	134	-	134	-
Gifts	121	-	121	40
Travel & Subsistence	498	-	498	302
SCVO Membership	230	-	230	-
Total charitable activity cost	6,841	750	7,591	6,883