

Dignity Boxes

Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts

1st October 2019 - 30th September 2020



Dignity Boxes

Scottish Charity Number SC048930

Dignity Boxes is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO)

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Founder Isabel Dosser holding a Dignity Box

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 2020.

Reference & Administrative Information

Charity Name: Dignity Boxes

Charity Number: SC048930

Address: 3 Clement Rise
Dedridge
Livingston
West Lothian
EH54 6JY

Current Trustees:	(at	Isabel Dosser	Chair
	date of signing report)	Liane Maitland	Secretary
		Alan Preston	Treasurer
		Alison Punnett	
		Dr. Anne Williams	

Other Trustees during year none

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 5 trustees, and any future appointments or changes will be made by the existing trustees.

When this is required, it will be the Charities intention to find and appointment new Trustees informally, taking any gaps in existing knowledge and expertise into consideration in identifying the preferred characteristics of new Trustees. Potential candidates will be invited to an introductory meeting.

New Trustees will be inducted / trained informally via 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 in order to provide earlier context for the discussions they will in future be part of.

Beyond 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.

Management

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

The trustees are responsible for the management of the risks 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 around 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 other 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) on a monthly basis. 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).

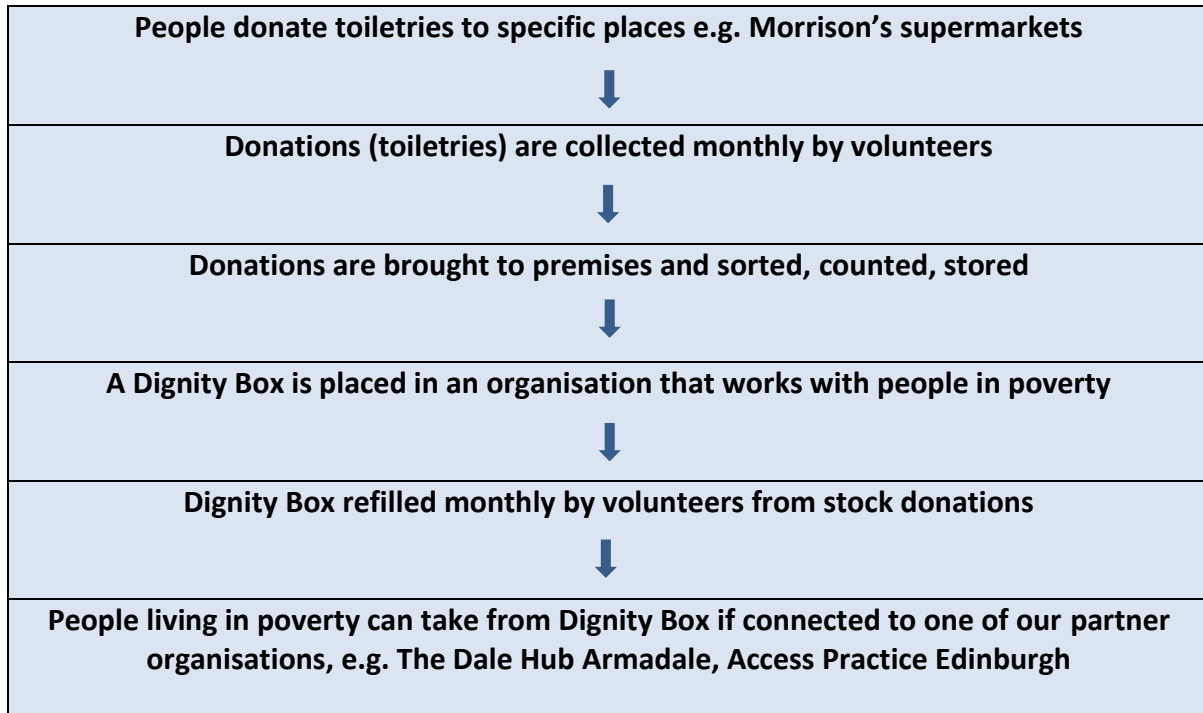
Our hosting partners are all like-minded organisations who share our values. Some are charities themselves who support the prevention or relief of poverty and those in need in their own individual way.

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 also *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 in order to maximise our contribution to the prevention or relief of poverty. We currently operate in Edinburgh and the Lothians.

Activities and Achievements

Our 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.

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

At Street Soccer everything we do is led by our players and what is best for them. They come to us initially for football but stay for the friendship, purpose and support they receive. Being able to offer toiletries on a regular basis means that we are able to give that bit more dignity to a player who might otherwise need to go without. While it might seem small to some it is hugely appreciated by our players and adds another piece of the jigsaw as their self esteem and confidence is built up, in many cases leading them onto a path of employment or further education they thought was closed.

Norman Gill, COO, Street Soccer

Many of the families we support have to make choices between toiletries and food. Kids don't get baths or showers because shampoo, shower gel, soap and bubble bath are expensive. Often is too expensive to heat up water, and toiletries are not a necessity. We believe all families should have access to toiletries and sanitary products but our funding does not cover these so the Dignity Box has become one of our most valued services. Thank you for all the support you have given us.

Pauline Nicol Bowie, Muirhouse LIFT Community Centre

Pre Covid-19

In the first half of our second year from October 2019 to March 2020 demand continued and we increased the number of Dignity Boxes in the community as well as the number of organisations collecting donations on our behalf. Our key achievements in this period were:

- In October 2019 (beginning of year 2) we had 55 organisations hosting a donations / collections box. Some places had more than one box (e.g. Student Awards Agency had four boxes). However other places were not very successful and after review we withdrew those that had failed to fill. In January 2020 (2 months before Covid-19 lockdown) we had 40 organisations successfully collecting for us, with a number of new ideas and places listed to be approached regarding becoming a donating partner.
- In October 2019 we had 24 Dignity Boxes situated in organisations that worked with people in poverty and we had a waiting list. By January 2020 we had 30 organisations working with us and a plan to start giving to another 10 by March 2020, including more schools. This would have brought our partnerships to 40 places receiving products each month – a rapid expansion in the early days of our operating.
- We ran a successful crowdfunding campaign in November 2019 and raised £1173.07.
- Securing and opening our own premises to allow the expansion of our operations.
- We increased our output (number of products donated as a 'top up' to each Dignity Box) from 25 to 35 products per month in January 2020. Prior to this we were giving out a total of 600 products per month (25 products x 24 organisations hosting a Dignity Box) and the new figure became 1050 (35 products x 30 Dignity Boxes).
- Received an average of 855 product donations per month from October 2019 – March 2020.
- Although the discreet nature of our operation means that we cannot accurately identify how many individuals benefit from the service, our best guess via feedback from our receiving partners is that around 600 individuals had done so during the first

half of our reporting period, and we have gathered a wealth of anecdotal feedback about the value of the offering.

- Building and managing a team of 28 volunteers, who fulfil various roles including collecting and counting donations and collecting products from HQ to refill Dignity Boxes. We also have 3 volunteers as a 'digital team' who monitor and maintain our website and social media. Our volunteers have been incredibly loyal since we began operating and invest between 4-6 hours of their time a month, depending on the role they undertake. Volunteers are truly the backbone of the Charity and we simply could not deliver the benefits outlined above without them. The relationships our volunteers form with our donating partners and the organisations hosting a Dignity Box are crucial, with their feedback informing decision making if changes need to be made.

This was a phenomenal achievement at the beginning of only our 2nd year of operating and the Trustees main concerns pre Covid-19 were how we could meet the ever-increasing demand for services through increasing the number of donating organisations and through fund raising.



Photographs of our Founder and CEO Isabel Dosser at the official opening of our premises with Shelley Kerr, Scottish Women's Football Manager who was our Guest of Honour, and Martin Thomson, Business Gateway Growth Advisor, West Lothian Council.



Covid-19 Challenges and Our Response

We were extremely disappointed to have to make the difficult decision to significantly reduce operations when we were affected by Covid-19 and Scotland went into lockdown in March 2020. This was in part due to the travel restrictions of a five-mile radius which prevented us delivering to many organisations, partly because many of our volunteers were considered vulnerable or felt their home circumstances made participation too much of a risk, and partly because many of our partners (particularly our donating organisations) also had to cease operations.

- Sadly, the number of donations boxes we were receiving post lockdown in March reduced to just nine, mainly from Morrison's supermarkets and a branch of Clydesdale Bank which remained open during the pandemic. This meant that we had to use remaining stock and purchase products to allow us to continue to operate.
- 19 of the organisations hosting a Dignity Box remained open, and we were happy to negotiate a more flexible approach where possible so that recipients could still benefit.

Although suspended from our usual way of working, we continued to donate to organisations locally in West Lothian who were asking for help. These included:

- The Livingston Round Table who delivered food and other necessities to people shielding, or those who were already living in poverty
- St Johns' Hospital for Covid-19 patients who were not permitted visitors to provide them with toiletries
- Two care homes for the elderly, whose residents were not permitted visitors
- Requests for gift bags for specific young people who were in an area of deprivation attached to a particular high school, and who were struggling during lockdown. In this instance we made up fifty bags for teenagers.

Reassessing Operations

A review of our partners in August 2020 showed that around 50% of services who held a Dignity Box had not re-opened due to Covid-19 restrictions. This may be temporary or a permanent situation, and we are maintaining regular contact with them for updates.

Some organisations told us they were working in a different way, e.g. using an appointment system for individual clients to avoid the public entering buildings randomly, or in large numbers. This required us to re-think our strategy, as these new ways of working mean that our beneficiaries cannot take products from a Dignity Box as discreetly as they did before. As previously stated, it is a cornerstone of the Charity's ethos that those experiencing hygiene poverty may access our services anonymously, thereby preserving their dignity. In these circumstances we have had to adapt. One example of how we have done so is having moved to providing Dignity Bags (small bags which contain travel size toiletries) to give out alongside food bags or other vouchers in three organisations.

Universities in their first trimester (September 2020) have been forced to redesign their programmes and are mainly offering them online to avoid students travelling to classes. This situation made the Dignity Boxes on campuses redundant, as student footfall is minimal within buildings. High Schools, although now opened, have also been slow to respond to our communication as we are not permitted in the building. Teachers have had to reinvent lesson delivery with staff practising social distancing and only those needed working in the building.

We have been flexible and hand in donations to the appropriate person at the door or in the car park, to top up the Dignity Box within High Schools.

A decision was made by the Trustees to officially restart operations in August 2020, and our volunteers responded positively to coming back. Only two volunteers did not return for personal reasons, however we recruited two new people in their place. As per Government recommendations we wrote a Covid-19 Policy, risk assessing our premises and roles. We also supplied PPE for volunteers who were delivering to refill a Dignity Box or collecting from our premises. Some places were happy to take the products from the volunteer and refill the Dignity Box within their building on our behalf.

September 2020

The state of play at the end of the reporting period, and still in the midst of this unprecedented period of uncertainty, is as follows:

- Although many of our partnerships are still currently on hold, we have continued to respond to need and have taken on some new organisations including another family centre and homeless accommodation for women in the City of Edinburgh.
- We now have links with 38 hosting partner organisations with 21 of these open and receiving products from us every month.
- Donation boxes have drastically dropped from 50 at the end of year one to only nine. This may be due to communities suffering new hardships due to redundancies and increased unemployment caused by the pandemic, and a drop in the economy, but also because of the new “working from home” Government led policy resulting in empty buildings and low staff footfall. These are many of the people who would have previously donated products, and this is currently our biggest concern.
- For the first time in two years, and due to the low donations, we will begin year three by using our funds when necessary to purchase products so we can continue to support our communities.

Financial Report

Due to Covid-19 most of the Charity’s operations were put on hold towards the end of March 2020. In the five months prior to this key issues to report on were:

- Maintaining communications and growing product donation boxes/sponsors
- Finding appropriate premises to suit our needs and budget
- Time to develop amidst the demand to grow based on referrals

In April 2020 we were successful in applying for a small grant of £500 from the Tormywheel Windfarm project which was used for purchasing products and buying folding trolleys for our volunteers. We also received two large donations of £1,000 from an anonymous donor and £1,000 from the JMA Trust.

We also successfully received the Government Grant for charities during Covid 19 of £10,000 which has reduced the pressure of paying rent and utilities for our premises as well as other sundries. This will also be used to buy products while low in donations.

We have one regular monthly donation and additional ad hoc donations come via our website.

Total receipts for the period to 30th September 2020 were £17,203 (2019: £5,700) of these receipts £500 were restricted (2019: £270). Payments totalling £6,504 were made (2019: £1,987) giving an overall surplus of £10,699 (2019: £3,713). Fund balances carried forwards to 2021 are £14,018 (2019: £3,663) of Unrestricted Funds together with £394 (2019: £50) of Restricted Funds.

Reserves policy

At the year end the charity held unrestricted reserves of £14,018 (2019: £3,663). It is the intention of the charity to hold reserves at a level that would at a minimum, cover the costs associated with the building rent for a period of 12 months (£4,000).

Our current reserves are higher than this, due to the Covid Grant that we received from West Lothian Council. However, as donations continue to be low, we intend to use some of the surplus to buy products that would in normal circumstances be donated to the charity. In addition, as the pandemic continues to have an impact, without a clear end in sight, the trustees feel that the additional reserves at the year-end are appropriate given the uncertainty that lies ahead.


Future Plans

Many of our plans from last year were curtailed due to Covid-19 and therefore we have replicated them for the year ahead, when the time is appropriate to pursue new people and places. We will:

- Rebuild the number of donating partners we work with
- Continue to expand the number of Dignity Boxes across Edinburgh and the Lothians
- Reconnect where possible with previous partnerships
- Build relationships with councillors in the City of Edinburgh and East Lothian
- Investigate funding opportunities and develop a fundraising committee
- Continue to formalise policies and join volunteer networks/organisations.

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 11th April 2021 and signed on their behalf by:


Isabel Dosser

Independent Examiner's Report

to the Trustees of Dignity Boxes, SCIO

I report on the accounts of the charity for the period ended 30th September 2020 which are set out on pages 13 to 15.

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.

Margaret Birse

13th April 2021

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 2020

	1st October 2019 - 30th September 2020			21/12/18 - 30/09/20
	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Total Funds
	£	£	£	£
Receipts				
Donations	5,884	-	5,884	5,700
Grants	10,000	500	10,500	-
Fundraising	819		819	-
Total Receipts	16,703	500	17,203	5,700
Payments				
Fundraising Costs	177	-	177	-
Charitable Activities	5,991	156	6,147	1,987
Governance Costs	180	-	180	
Total Payments	6,348	156	6,504	1,987
Surplus/Deficit for year	10,355	344	10,699	3,713

Statement of Balances

As at 30th September 2020

	As at 30th September 2020			As at 30th September 2019
	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Total Funds
	£	£	£	£
Opening Balance	3,663	50	3,713	-
Surplus/(Deficit)	10,355	344	10,699	3,713
Closing Balance	14,018	394	14,412	3,713
Liabilities				
IE Fee	230			
Outstanding trustee expenses	49			
Total estimated Liabilities	279			

Note that the prior period shown above was the first period of operation of the charity and was shorter than a full year.

Notes on page 14 and 15 form part of these accounts.

The accounts were approved by the Trustees on 11th April 2021 and signed on their behalf by

Isabel Dosser

Isabel Dosser

Notes to the Accounts

1. Basis of 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).

a. Fund Accounting

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

One trustee received reimbursement of travel expenses of £250 (2019: £258) during the period.

No trustee or related party received any form of remuneration from the charity.

3. Analysis of Receipts

	1st October 2019 - 30th September 2020			21st Dec 2018 to 30th September 2019
	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Total Funds
Donations				£
General Donations	4,334	-	4,334	1,997
Councillors Disbursements	1,550	-	1,550	2,575
Donations from Marathon	-	-	-	128
Corporate Donation	-	-	-	1,000
Total Donations	5,884	-	5,884	5,700
Fundraising				
Christmas Fayres	819	-	819	-
Total Fundraising	819	-	819	-

4. Analysis of Payments for Charitable Activities

	1st October 2019 - 30th September 2020			21st Dec 2018 to 30th September 2019
	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Total Funds
Cost of Charitable Activity	£	£	£	£
Storage Boxes & Small Equipment	742	-	742	262
Stationery & Print	338	-	338	312
Internet & Website	119	-	119	94
Rent & Water charges	4,192	-	4,192	641
Legal & Professional	-	50	50	220
Volunteer Supplies	-	106	106	120
Refreshments	-	-	-	45
Promotional Activity	162	-	162	-
Cleaning & Safety	16	-	16	35
Gifts	128	-	128	-
Trustee Travel & Subsistence	294	-	294	258
Total charitable activity cost	5,991	156	6,147	1,987

5. Movement of Funds

	Opening Balance	Receipts	Payments	Closing Balance
	£	£	£	£
Restricted Fund				
Trademark Fund	50	-	(50)	-
Volunteer and Donations Support	-	500	(106)	394
Total Restricted Funds	50	500	(156)	394
Unrestricted Funds				
General Fund	3,663	16,703	(6,348)	14,018
Total U/R Funds	3,663	16,703	(6,348)	14,018
Total Funds	3,713	17,203	(6,504)	14,412

Purpose of Restricted Funds

Trademark Fund: Funds provided to be used for trademarking the charity logo

Volunteer and Donations Support: Funds provided to be used specifically for purchase of supplies and for carts for volunteers