

Dignity Boxes

Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts

1st October 2020 - 30th September 2021

A large dark blue circle containing the text "Dignity Boxes" in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font. The word "Dignity" is in a lighter yellow, and "Boxes" is in a darker yellow. The letter 'o' in "Boxes" is replaced by a solid yellow circle.

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 statement and the independent examiners report for the period ended 30th September 2021.

Reference & Administrative Information

Charity Name:	Dignity Boxes		
Charity Number:	SC048930		
Address:	3 Clement Rise Dedridge Livingston West Lothian EH54 6JY		
Current Trustees:	Isabel Dosser	CEO	Chair until 24/01/2021
	Liane Maitland	Chair from 24/01/2021	
	Megan MacDougall	Secretary from 24/01/2021	Appointed 24/01/2021
	Alan Preston	Treasurer	
	Alison Punnett		
	Norman Gill		Appointed 24/01/2021
Other Trustees during year:	Dr. Anne Williams		Resigned 24/01/2021
Independent Examiner:	Margaret Birse Tangram Accounting 23 Clark Avenue Linlithgow EH49 7AP		

Structure, Governance & Management

Governing Document

Dignity Boxes is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organization, 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.

Dr. Anne Williams left the Board of Trustees of Dignity Boxes after just over two years of service on 24th January 2021. The Board are grateful to Anne for her valuable contribution to the Charity during that time. On the same date, Liane Maitland took over from Isabel Dosser as Chair, and Megan MacDougall and Norman Gill joined the Board of Trustees, with Megan taking over from Liane as Secretary to the Board.

New Trustees are inducted / trained informally via the Founder of the Charity and at least one of the existing Trustees. All new Trustees are provided with a copy of the Governing Document (Constitution), and the most recent Annual Report with accompanying Financial Statements. They are also provided with a copy of the Business Plan and Minutes from the most recent Trustees' meeting, in order to provide earlier context for the discussions they will be part of in future. 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.

Management

The trustees are responsible for the strategic direction and governance of the charity and for fund raising activities, 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.

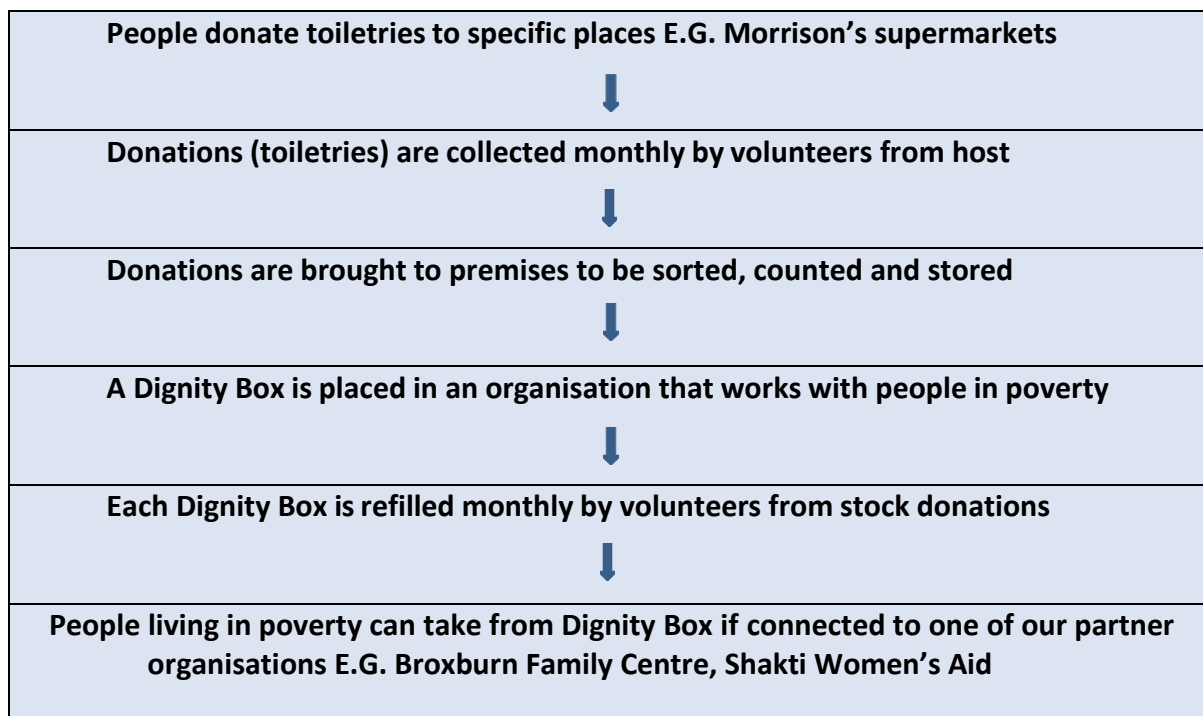
The charity's contribution to the prevention or relief of poverty is achieved by collating toiletries provided by our donating partners (most of whom regularly fill a 'Donation Box') and redistributing them in Dignity Boxes via our hosting partners (i.e. those who host a Dignity Box on our behalf) on a monthly basis. Individuals then take one or two products from the Dignity Box which provides for several people or families. It is not expected that the box is there only for an individual.

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 in need, by allowing them 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 in Edinburgh and the Lothians.

Our Operating Model



The range of places / organisations hosting a Dignity Box is intentionally diverse to accommodate the many faces of poverty. Our reach includes provision of support for family units, homeless projects, rehab for women who have been involved in the judicial system, Women's Aid, Street Soccer and Wishes sexual health clinic, amongst others. We also give to schools and universities for young people and students suffering hardship. This is an area of increasing demand which we are keen to support.

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

"We have quite a few service users who have greatly benefited from the toiletries, including families with multiple children and only one parent working, people living in homeless accommodation, people struggling on benefits, a service user recently out of jail and looking for work, and multiple single mothers. During lockdown we were working on referrals mainly from social workers and GP surgeries who were working with domestic abuse victims. We provided essential clothes and had incredibly positive feedback about the additional toiletries (donated by Dignity Boxes)".

Granton Goes Greener (environmental / community project)

We have elderly sheltered housing in Muirhouse. Many don't ever leave their homes and feel they have been forgotten about, so we hand some toiletries into the Warden who makes sure they are distributed to the elderly. Our Dignity Box has become one of the most valued services before, through, and after Covid-19. Thank you for all the support you have given to us.

Muirhouse LIFT (low income families together) Community Centre

Activities and Achievements

The context of Covid-19 continued to impact our ability to operate at full capacity. This was in part due to the travel restrictions imposed by the second lockdown period which commenced at Christmas 2020, and partly because many of our volunteers were considered vulnerable or felt their home circumstances made participation too much of a risk. Also, many of our partners (particularly those whom we had previously relied upon for donations) remained closed or were operating at reduced capacity themselves, with most employees working from home. The circumstances led us to make the difficult decision to pause operations for two months in November and December, and then we gave double donations at the end of January. However, despite the restrictions on our usual way of working we continued to help the community in different ways as listed below.

- We responded to a request for help from three new organisations, namely Shakti Women's Aid, Tranent Pantry, and Deans Primary school in Livingston who now receive products monthly.
- Although currently only supplying 50% of our partner organisations in the last year, the number of products supplied to clients totaled **6195** basic toiletries and **2423** miscellaneous/luxury products

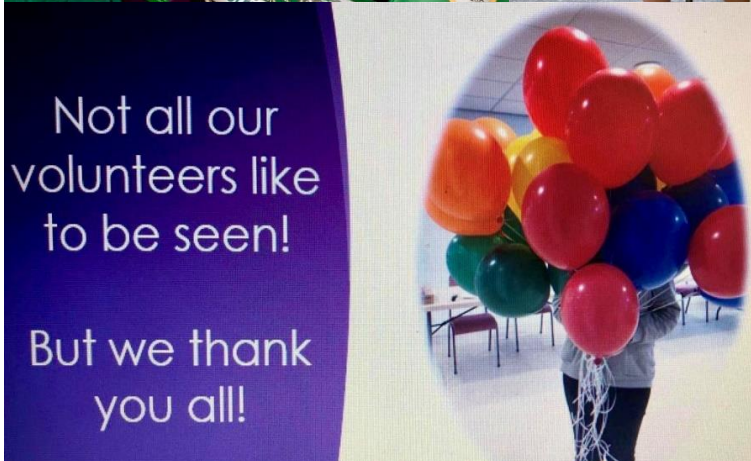
Over most of the year we continued to supply Dignity Boxes to partner organisations although operating at approximately 50% of our pre Covid capacity. We also remained in contact with the other half of the partner organisations who had temporarily closed due to Covid. In order to continue with our service and considering the drop in donations, we once again reviewed the product numbers going out and reduced each monthly refill from 35 to 30 products, but this does not include the average of 15 miscellaneous items added such as children's products, sanitary products and luxury items such as body lotion, liquid soap, perfumes and many more products not counted in stock.

Although the discreet nature of our operation means we cannot accurately identify how many individuals benefit from the service, we estimate one person for every product going out. However, many of the people taking are using the products for whole families. This has the potential to at least triple the number of individuals benefiting from the charity during the last year of operation but, there may also be a few regular clients who take something from the Dignity Box every month. As some of our partners were forced to work differently with clients by using an appointment system to avoid the public entering the building in large numbers, we also had to adapt our way of working. This has meant that some of our beneficiaries could not take a product from a Dignity Box as discreetly as they had done before. Although this did not meet the ethos of the charity, we have had to be flexible so that those experiencing hygiene poverty may access our services. We hope this is only a temporary measure and where possible anonymity and dignity is still promoted.

Our donation boxes, as stated in our previous report dated September 2020, decreased hugely during the pandemic from 50 to 5 which gave us much cause for concern. This has remained low, and we now have only 15 boxes collecting for us which remains significantly lower than pre pandemic levels and we are frequently seeking new hosts.

We are proud to acknowledge that we have maintained an incredibly loyal team of 23 volunteers and gathered feedback from them via a volunteer survey run in July 2021. The outcome demonstrated high satisfaction within volunteers working for us. Our volunteers continue to be the backbone of the Charity and we simply could not run it without them. Thanks particularly to our volunteer who built and maintains our website and email accounts for negotiating free usage with Microsoft for the next decade. This is a significant saving for us financially.

As per Government recommendations, we continued to risk assess our premises and roles and supplied PPE for volunteers who were delivering donations or collecting a Dignity Box from our premises.



(Top left) Community Champion in Morrison's supermarket Bathgate and (top right) one of our loyal volunteers

Ongoing challenges / risks

Our main concern at the end of the reporting period is that some of our partnerships, particularly with donating organisations, are still on hold and as such donations continue to be low. This means we expect to have to continue to purchase products using financial donations. We intend to focus on increasing our donations of products and goods and pursuing funding opportunities, to avoid using Charity reserves in the longer term.

Our Founder is the fulcrum of the Charity, and without her it could not function. This means we have a key person dependency and need to consider a medium to long term plan to ensure the sustainability of the Charity. This was in the planning pre Covid, however like many other charities our plans were suspended with a view to revisiting in the year ahead.

We expect to have more changes to the Board of Trustees during the following operating period, so similarly in terms of the sustainability of the Charity, we need to build in a succession plan.

Financial Report

Amidst the ongoing uncertainty of Covid-19 it should be stated that the key focus areas for the Charity throughout the last operating period remain:

- Growing product donation boxes
- Finding sponsors
- Maintaining communication with our current partners

We continue to be supported by many West Lothian Councilors from their disbursement funds for which we are truly grateful. We have 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 donations. Two were people retiring who gave us money collected by their workplace instead of them receiving gifts.

Our income dropped this year from £17,203 in 2020 to £4,356. This reduction takes the charity's income to a comparable level to that of two years ago, as last year's income was inflated by the receipt of a Covid-19 Government Grant.

Our expenditure has increased this year to £7,135 (2020: £6,504) The main reason for the increase in expenditure was the requirement to purchase products, when in the past these have been donated to us. However, it was noted in last year's annual report that the Government Covid-19 Grant would be helpful to cover rent costs together with the requirement to purchase products due to the reduction in donating opportunities during the Covid-19 pandemic. This means that the charity had a deficit of £2,779, compared to the surplus of £10,699 in 2020. However, our fund balances at the year-end remain healthy with £11,633 total charity funds (2020: £14,412)

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 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 free reserves that we currently have, £11,633 (2020: £14,018) provide financial stability and the means for the development of our principal activity. In ordinary times, we intend to maintain our reserves at a level which is at least equivalent to 6 months ongoing expenditure. However, currently they are significantly higher than this due to the Covid-19 Grant we received from the Scottish Government via West Lothian Council in the previous financial year. This provides a safety net given we still have no stable regular income or product donations as a result of the pandemic. 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 Free 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 endeavor to raise product donations which would enable us to reduce the reserves required for buying products.

Future Plans

Many of our plans remain limited by the pandemic restrictions and therefore are in the main repetitive of last year. We are slowly building our connections again as places open, but this has been slow and out of our control. We have tried to reconnect with previous partnerships, but many are now no longer functioning or are working differently. Moving forward, we will therefore:

- Continue to rebuild our donating partners
- Expand the number of Dignity Boxes across Lothian
- Build relationships with the City of Edinburgh Councilors
- Investigate funding opportunities
- Continue to review and formalise policies.

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 23rd January 2022

and signed on their behalf by

Liane Maitland

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 2021 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.

24th January 2022

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 2021

		1st October 2020 - 30th September 2021			1st October 2019 - 30th September 2020
		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Total Funds
		£	£	£	£
Receipts	4				
Donations		4,313	-	4,313	5,884
Grants		-	-	-	10,500
Fundraising		43	-	43	819
Total Receipts		4,356	-	4,356	17,203
Payments					
Fundraising Costs		22	-	22	177
Charitable Activities	5	6,489	394	6,883	6,147
Governance Costs (IE Fee)		230	-	230	180
Total Payments		6,741	394	7,135	6,504
Surplus/Deficit for year		(2,385)	(394)	(2,779)	10,699
Opening Balance		14,018	394	14,412	3,713
Surplus/(Deficit)		(2,385)	(394)	(2,779)	10,699
Closing Balance	2	11,633	-	11,633	14,412

Statement of Balances

As at 30th September 2021

		As at 30th September 2021			As at 30th September 2020
		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Total Funds
	Note	£	£	£	£
Opening Balance		14,018	394	14,412	3,713
Surplus/(Deficit)		(2,385)	(394)	(2,779)	10,699
Closing Balance	2	11,633	-	11,633	14,412
Liabilities					
IE Fee		230			
Outstanding trustee expenses					
Total estimated Liabilities		230			

Notes on pages 14 & 15 form part of these accounts

The accounts were approved by the trustees on 23rd January 2022 and signed on their behalf by:

Liane Maitland

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 £302 (2020: £250) during the period.

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

Purchases of toiletries are made via a business owned by one of the charity's trustees, Alan Preston. The toiletries are provided at a reduced price to the charity.

3. Movement of Funds

	Opening Balance at 01/10/20	Receipts	Payments	Closing Balance at 30/09/21
	£	£	£	£
Restricted Fund				
Volunteer and Donations Support	394	-	(394)	-
Total Restricted Funds	394	-	(394)	-
Unrestricted Funds				
General Fund	14,018	4,356	(6,741)	11,633
Total U/R Funds	14,018	4,356	(6,741)	11,633
Total Funds	14,412	4,356	(7,135)	11,633

Restricted Fund Purpose:

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

4. Analysis of Receipts

	1st October 2020 - 30th September 2021			Prior Year
	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Total Funds
	£	£	£	
Donations				
General Donations	2,612	-	2,612	4,334
Councillors Disbursements	1,700	-	1,700	1,550
Bank Cash-Back	1	-	1	
Total Donations	4,313	-	4,313	5,884
Fundraising				
Christmas Fayres	-	-	-	819
Amazon Smile	43	-	43	-
Total Fundraising	43	-	43	819

5. Analysis of Payments

	1st October 2020 - 30th September 2021			Prior Year
	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Total Funds
Cost of Charitable Activity	£	£	£	£
Storage Boxes & Small Equipment	14	-	14	742
Stationery & Print & Postage	171	-	171	338
Internet & Website	377	-	377	119
Rent & Water charges	4,130	-	4,130	4,192
Legal & Professional	120	-	120	50
Volunteer Supplies	-	-	-	106
Refreshments	-	-	-	-
Product Purchase	1,335	394	1,729	-
Promotional Activity	-	-	-	162
Cleaning & Safety	-	-	-	16
Gifts	40	-	40	128
Trustee Travel & Subsistence	302	-	302	294
Total charitable activity cost	6,489	394	6,883	6,147