



# **Access-Ability Communications Technology**

**Trustees' Annual Report**

**&**

**Financial Statements**

**for the year**

**1 September 2012 to 31 August 2013**

**Vice-President:** Lord Low of Dalston CBE

**Founder:** Ken Carter

# Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31 August 2013

## Reference and administrative information

**The name of the charity:** Access-Ability Communications Technology.

**Other names by which the charity makes itself known:** AACT (pronounced 'act') & AACT for Children.

**The charity registration number:** 1113302

**The company registration number:** 5538092

**The address of the registered offices of the charity:** 3 Wesley Gate, Queens Rd, Reading, RG1 4AP

### **The names of the charity's trustees on the date this report was approved:**

Professor James Crabbe (Chair)  
Dr A Black  
Adrian Ellison  
Annette Haworth  
Mike McMillan (joined October 2012)  
Dr James Ohene-Djan  
Lorna Woodman (joined January 2013)

No trustees left the Board during 2012-13.

**Accountant:** James Cowper, 3 Wesley Gate, Queens Rd, Reading, RG1 4AP

**Bank:** CAFBank, 25 Kings Hill, West Malling, ME19 4JQ

**Insurance broker:** CaSE Insurance, James House, Emlyn Lane, Leatherhead, KT22 7EP

## Structure, Governance and Management

**The nature of the governing document:** Memorandum and Articles of Association

**How the charity is constituted:** as a company limited by guarantee

**Methods for new trustee recruitment:** personal knowledge of professionals in the IT and communication disability fields and open advertising via the web and voluntary organisations.

**Methods for new trustee appointment:** by members as laid down in the Articles of Association. The Trustees have set a target of increasing the size of the Board to at least eight trustees with a policy of actively seeking professional members in specific areas. To this end, two further trustees joined the Board this year, bringing further IT, audio-visual and disability expertise.

## Public Benefit Statement

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with their duty under section 4(6) of the Charities Act 2006 to have due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and that the public benefit requirement has informed the activities of the charity in the year covered by this report.

## Risks

Risk analysis undertaken in 2011 resulted in tightened procedures for running projects and raising related funds. Trustees are confident that financial risk is insignificant due to their reserves policy, and that choice of projects to support, and their subsequent management through the Board, will result in the effective and efficient use of resources.

## Strategy

The Board has continued its strategy of working on projects in partnership with professionals, itself acting as Project Board where appropriate.

## Trustees

**Induction:** Potential new trustees are invited to meet with trustees and to attend Board meetings. All the Charity's policies are made available and activities described through the website. In particular these include a document, 'Responsibilities and duties of AACT Trustees'

**Training:** The Board has given the administration team the responsibility to keep it updated on governance issues and any changes in charity or other relevant law. A Trustee/Volunteer actively monitors the charity press and Charity Commission communications. Changes to technology are monitored and imparted by those trustees with IT and communications backgrounds.

## Objectives and activities

(a) to promote and advance the education and training of children, young people and adults who are subject to any disability associated with speech, language and different forms of communication principally for the purpose of improving accessibility and inclusiveness through the use of ICT.

(b) to advance the education of the public by providing inclusive and accessible information and training with a view to raising awareness and understanding of persons who are challenged by speech, language and communication difficulties.

Summary of activities undertaken in relation to these objectives in 2012-13	(a)	(b)
Running a programme to increase inclusiveness and accessibility in museums	✓	
Raising awareness through publication and talks		✓
Helping schools introduce tablet computers	✓	✓

Of the activities planned for 2012-13, the pilot scheme to loan touchscreen tablets to special schools, the assessment of Viewtalk video-communication, finding a further museum to pilot projects in the iMuse Programme and investigating feasibility of a national advisory service were completed. Further work on touchscreen devices for those with early-onset dementia and their carers was dropped due to lack of time-resource of the relevant experts.

In 2013-14 we will work on another Classical Museum project, Ure Move, again with 16-year olds from a special and two other schools, work further with the Stanley Spencer Gallery, create an artist's trail around a botanic garden utilising visitors' own mobile devices and start a new project with young people (16-25) with learning/communication disabilities and volunteers to involve them in trail-making around their town centre. Depending on volunteer effort available, we will investigate further the difficulties of introducing iPad use for special needs pupils in a mainstream school. Depending on the outcome of pilots, further funding to enable some of their outcomes to be more sustained and further promulgated may be sought.

## Achievements and performance - charitable activities

### The iMuse Programme

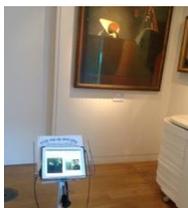
AACT manages this Programme which works on projects with partners to improve museum engagement and accessibility overall, with a particular emphasis on the Charity's part of enhancing methods of communication.

#### Text-free book



This project ran from October 2012 to April 2013 in collaboration with the Museum of English Rural Life. AACT provided an in-gallery iPad, bound to resemble a Ladybird book to accompany an exhibition that was otherwise heavily printed-text based. The 'book' enabled visitors to interact with the book's illustrations, which reacted with appropriate sounds (birdsong, wind etc.) on touch, thus giving visitors without high reading skills an opportunity to explore the illustrator's work in a different way. Museum staff reported a high interest level from visitors of all ages and abilities. In addition, the full text of the posters within the exhibition was recorded and a touchscreen interface provided to demonstrate how the whole exhibition could become more accessible.

#### Gallery activity



Part of a new project with the Stanley Spencer Gallery ran from January to June 2013. This introduced an iPad acting as an in-gallery display presenting both audio and visual information on a specific painting. The content was provided and installed by one of the Gallery's volunteers. This is a new model for iMuse which could demonstrate better long-term sustainability than that of other one-off projects where the technical implementation relies on AACT input. While this project has revealed some operational issues, particularly in this volunteer-run organisation, feedback from visitors has been positive. This project demonstrated how standard software systems can be used to produce a display which is accessible to a wide range of communication abilities with audio versions of text provided, alongside original recordings of the artist and videos about the painting, although this system was probably mainly used by the Gallery's core visitors - those with existing good communication skills.

However, we also participated in a more directly AACT-related mini-project. Ten 16-year olds with learning disabilities used iPads in-gallery to encourage their awareness of expression and 'self' through studying Spencer's portraits. There were two lively sessions with much interaction as participants used iPads to photograph each other and themselves in different 'moods' and for explored the paintings using different touchscreen-based drawing techniques.

#### Artist's story



This project ran from May to July 2013. An AACT volunteer helped an artist to record descriptions of her working methods. The recordings were then made available together with good-quality photos on an iPad within a temporary exhibition. A very simple interface, using single touch, enabled the visitor to hear the artist or move to another painting. This demonstrated a low-cost way of making the work accessible to those without text-reading skills but, as with the Ladybird book, it was enjoyed by a range of visitors. AACT has been asked to extend the work to a trail around the garden on which the exhibition was based.

### Ure Discovery



This project ran from November 2012 to June 2013 under the auspices of the Ure Museum of Classical Archaeology. Working over some ten sessions with forty 16-year olds (around a third of whom had special educational needs), a professional animator and a student panel, AACT provided a museum-tour system on an iPad. It was a challenge to use all the content provided by the participants as material ranged from academic-level catalogue records, through video animations to cartoon-like drawings. The result was a small app with a variety of material suitable for differing levels of communication ability, including a simple but popular text-free touchscreen game. This trail was exhibited in a library for three months and is now available in the Museum. Probably of more significance than this 'end product' however was the process by which its creation encouraged the young people to interact while exploring the museum objects - creating their own stories and depictions arising from them. iMuse has been asked to make the system available on visitor-owned devices which would further aid accessibility.

### Video comms



The 'AACT through Viewtalk' project ran in two special schools in the two preceding years. The SEN (special education needs) professional's report on the use of the Viewtalk video system was received and considered by the Board this year. While this particular video system is no longer in service, it was concluded that the usefulness of video as a means of enabling communication had been demonstrated. For example, video was used with autistic pupils to record and review behaviours.

### iPads 4 schools



This was a mini-project, sparked by the Charity loaning iPads to four schools with special needs pupils which had been made possible following on from the Awards for All video project. The aim was to encourage investigation of iPad use to overcome communication difficulties. Four special schools reported substantial use. One in particular, for pupils with profound symptoms of autism, reported such success that it had acquired a substantial number of further devices. However a mainstream school with special needs pupils reported that introducing the iPad was conflicting with the need for time to learn other, more established techniques, in this case braille. Further work to investigate this problem is proposed.

### Raising public awareness



AACT publishes information on its projects through its blog/website and other media and by giving talks of various kinds. Around 50 IT degree students learned of communications disability issues through lectures on web accessibility, 30 people attended a seminar on IT aiding museum accessibility and 75 people heard a short talk at the Ure Discovery launch. Several dozen people interacted with text-free photo tours as part of national Heritage Days around a historic Reading site. A paper on use of QR codes and related technology for enhancing accessibility for those with communication difficulties was published in the Journal of Assistive Technologies. The aims of AACT and iMuse were published in an article on the RSA (Royal Society for the Advancement of the Arts, Manufacturing and Commerce) blog and around 200 people heard a short open mic session at the Museums and the Web Conference, London, November 2012.

## Achievements and performance - fundraising

### Grants

The trustees maintain a strategy of applying for funds only for specific, agreed, charitable projects which have relevant professionals involved. As the activity areas this year were already fully funded, no additional applications to grant-giving bodies were made for them. Two general grants, from the Chamniss Trust and Charities Aid Foundation, were received. An application to the Nominet Trust for piloting new work was unsuccessful.

### Individuals

The RSA Catalyst Fellowship funding came to an end so ideas for pursuing a nationwide advisory service have been dropped for the immediate future.



Funds raised from the British 10K run were up on last year. They cover the Charity's underlying essential costs such as insurance.

## Other resources

**Volunteers and project partners:** AACT has been helped this year by input from three volunteers working variously on projects and manning the administration team and by project partners and their volunteers, museum and school staff, and students.

**Resources:** We are grateful to the Museum of English Rural Life, the Ure Museum of Classical Archaeology and the Stanley Spencer Gallery for opportunities to use their space and exhibition material to help us trial IT-based systems, and to IT Services and the School of Systems Engineering, University of Reading, for the loan of a laptop computer and printer.

## Financial Review

**Policy on reserves:** the Trustees have a policy of holding enough funds to cover any known future liability without relying on any future income.

**Funds materially in deficit:** none.

**This report was approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by**

**date:**

## Statement of Financial Activities for the year to 31 August 2013

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted Funds £	2013 Total Funds £	2012 Total Funds £
<b>A Incoming resources</b>					
A1 Incoming resources from generated funds					
A1a	Voluntary income	1	2,050	2,050	8,506
A1b	Activities for generating funds				
A1c	Investment income	2	18	18	24
	Total incoming resources		2,068	2,068	
<b>B Resources expended</b>					
B1 Costs of generating funds					
B1a	Costs of generating voluntary income	3	(428)	(428)	(618)
B1b	Fundraising trading cost of goods sold + other costs				
B2	Charitable activities	4	(299)	(3,927)	(4,226)
B3	Governance costs	5	(300)	(300)	(615)
	Total resources expended		(1,027)	(3,927)	(4,954)
	Net incoming/(outgoing) resources for the year		1,041	(3,927)	(2,886)
	Funds brought forward		2,430	15,918	18,348
	Total funds carried forward		3,471	11,991	15,462
				18,348	

## Balance sheet at 31 August 2013 (company number: 5538092)

	2013	2012
	£	£
<b>B Current assets</b>		
B2 Debtors		50
B4 Cash at bank and in hand	15,676	21,029
Total current assets	15,676	21,079
<b>C Current Liabilities</b>		
C1 Creditors	(214)	(2,730)
Total current liabilities	(214)	(2,730)
<b>Net assets (all current)</b>	15,462	18,348
<b>E The funds of the Charity</b>		
E2 Restricted Funds	11,991	15,918
E3 Unrestricted Funds	3,471	2,430
<b>Total Funds</b>	15,462	18,348

### Audit Exemption Statement

#### Directors' statement

For the year ending 31st August 2013 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

These financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors on .....  
and are signed on their behalf by

Notes to the financial statement for the year ended 31 August 2012

	Unrestricted	Restricted	sub total
	£	£	£
Note 1			
Grants	575		575
Donations	1,475		1,475
			2,050
Note 2			
CAFBank account interest	18		18
			18
Note 3			
Justgiving	-216		-216
Union Jack Sports Ltd	-212		-212
			-428
Note 4			
General: Insurance	-214		-214
Postage, stationery, printing	-68		-68
Project evaluation/expert feedback	-17		-517
iMuse Programme:			
Equipment (inc. software/apps)		-2,372	-2,372
Travel for RNIB/MShed meeting		-5	-5
Specialist help on SLCN, IT, Museum Learning, E-access		-1,550	-1,550
	-299	-3927	-4,226
Note 5			
Independent examination	-300		-300
			-300