

Ushaw Moor Action Group

Trustees Report

2023-2024

I. Introduction

Ushaw Moor Action Group (hereafter UMAG) is a registered charity (Charity number: 115 7340), operating from The Hut, Chestnut Grove, Ushaw Moor, Durham, DH7 7LJ.

This trustees annual report has been compiled by UMAG trustees for submission to the UK Charities Commission in accordance with UMAG's status as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). It covers the period of one year from 1 November 2023 to 31 October 2024.

I. UMAG's mission and purpose

UMAG is a small volunteer-run charity established to engage with the whole village community on issues of common interest by working together to encourage community spirit and promote citizen empowerment to make a difference locally (for exact constitutional wording please see below in section III).

UMAG carries out this function primarily by offering spaces and opportunities for local people to meet, make connections and engage on local issues via two community sites: The Hut and Ushaw Moor Community Garden.

The Hut

The Hut is a local community building located close to the centre of the village, which offers an affordable local venue for parties, groups, clubs and other community-based events and gatherings including the local Youth Club, mother and toddler groups, the Bread and Butter thing, and more.

The Hut also acts as a base for all UMAG operations. UMAG volunteers use this venue to host local events that support community wellbeing and reduce social isolation, especially for children and families.

Ushaw Moor Community Garden

UMAG's community garden was established around 2012 to improve local mental and physical wellbeing. Volunteers work to maintain the garden and develop their growing experience via volunteer sessions that are held every Wednesday and Saturday. The garden has also usually hosted an annual harvest fête and a program of youth activities, acting as a resource for local schools to bring children to take part in growing and nature-based activities, as well as for local people seeking some more accessible green respite in the centre of Ushaw Moor, which is a hillside

village. The garden is one of Ushaw Moor's last remaining accessible outdoor community venues.

II. UMAG's governance structure and management

A. Governance structure

At the time of filing this report, UMAG and its activities were overseen by four trustees, as follows:

- Milena Kopowska
- Fiona Southward
- Marie-Claire Moquin
- Amber Donovan

Each trustee has an equal vote in the charity's decision making. Trustees provide oversight of UMAG operations and receive regular feedback from UMAG volunteers. UMAG's day-to-day activities are supported and implemented by a dedicated group of volunteers. From an organisational perspective, UMAG's volunteer Chairman (Jimmy Jamieson), Secretary (Rebecca Watt) and Treasurer (Anne Boll) are highly instrumental to the charity's running and management of the Hut. Three of UMAG's trustees also play an instrumental role in community garden operations.

B. Operational Management

UMAG coordinates its operations primarily via open monthly meetings that take place in The Hut on the first Thursday of every month. Here, trustees and interested volunteers convene to discuss the operation of the Hut and the garden, receive updates on the charity's financial situation and raise issues or activities of relevance to UMAG and its mission.

Between these monthly meetings, the day to day running of UMAG and its two venues is undertaken as follows:

The Hut: A small team of volunteers (primarily UMAG's Chairman and Treasurer) manage the bookings diary, payments, liaison with groups and access to the Hut, as well as communication with a local cleaner (engaged by agreement with the trustees) to ensure that the facility is maintained in good condition. In addition, this small team organises local family events and liaises with community stakeholders to coordinate the provision of emergency food bags, as needed.

Ushaw Moor Community Garden: A small volunteer coordination team (comprising gardening, maintenance and outreach coordinators) is charged with managing the day to day operations of the garden. This includes developing maintenance and growing priorities and drafting and implementing task lists that are carried out by garden volunteers. Garden volunteers take a variety of forms, including a small regular cohort of five volunteers who are often joined for periods or on an ad hoc basis by additional volunteers. Garden management takes place within the

framework of periodic coordination meetings and volunteer check-in/update meetings during gardening sessions.

C. Risk Management

UMAG undertook a review of its risk management processes and procedures in 2022, and continues to revisit these arrangements annually to ensure their continued relevance and efficacy.

All UMAG's operations are conducted in line with its constitution, as well as its policies and procedures. Copies of these policies are available to trustees and coordinators online, and to volunteers in hardcopy at each of UMAG's physical venues.

These policies include:

- Data Protection (GDPR) Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Volunteer Policy
- Volunteer Charter
- Lone worker policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

These policies are supplemented by a number of additional documents and protocols to ensure their effective implementation, including risk assessment records, accidents books, volunteer induction protocols and more. Both the Hut and the community garden are regularly assessed for potential risks to volunteers, users and other members of the public and, where identified, are discussed at UMAG's monthly meetings.

D. Volunteer and trustee recruitment

UMAG recruits volunteers to assist it in its activities via open calls on social media, as well as specific events designed to attract interest and engagement among the local community. In 2024, these events included gardening and soup sessions on Wednesday mornings and kids entertainment activities on Saturday mornings, between September and October. Both activities were advertised over social media, as well as by flyering local addresses and the Bread and Butter Thing grocery bags.

Volunteer recruitment is undertaken in line with UMAG's volunteer policy. Engaged volunteers undergo more in depth induction training and sign UMAG's volunteer charter. All UMAG's volunteers are supported to access training that is deemed necessary for the effective carrying out of their functions (e.g. health and safety, first aid, funding etc).

UMAG actively recruits trustees from its own existing volunteers and users of its facilities to ensure that trustees have some working knowledge of UMAG operations.

However, it also seeks to attract trustees from the wider community in order to ensure that it can benefit from a broader range of perspectives and talents from a managerial perspective.

Trustees are recruited by UMAG through public calls for trustees via social media, as well as requests for expressions of interest among UMAG's networks, volunteers, users and trusted members of the Ushaw Moor community. These methods were deployed throughout 2024.

Over the reporting period, UMAG's nominated trustees have changed, altering from three trustees to four. This was the consequence of the departure of valued trustee, Shelly Gill, in May 2024, and the assumption of trusteeships by Marie-Claire Moquin and Amber Donovan in October 2024. UMAG also received the welcome support of two interim trustees over this transition period.

III. UMAG's activities and objectives throughout 2024

In accordance with its constitution, UMAG's charitable purpose is to *"engage with the whole village community to address issues which affect us all as residents ,by working together to encourage community spirit, implement improvements and promote citizen empowerment to make a difference in a Ushaw Moor."* (Art.3, Ushaw Moor Action Group Constitution).

Throughout 2024, UMAG has continued to pursue its charitable purposes in seeking to promote a sense of togetherness and community by offering local people a space and schedule of events at which they can meet and interact, as well as supporting more vulnerable members of the local community.

This has been done via the following activities:

- Providing the community with affordable venue to hire.
- Providing space for local groups and clubs to run private and open activities.
- Maintaining the community garden as a open space for the public, providing opportunities for local people to grow food, and sharing the vegetables grown in the community garden with local residents and visitors to the garden.
- Supply of emergency food bags on request with no restrictions, in coordination with local doctors/ the NHS (c.40 to 80 bags per year).
- Organisation and delivery of a Kids Christmas party 2023.
- Organisation and delivery of a Kids Easter party 2024.
- Organisation and delivery of a Summer Fair 2024.
- Coordination of food bags for vulnerable households (supply, facilitation of collection or delivery) during school summer holidays in coordination with the local primary school.
- Garden infrastructure repair and restoration.
- Organisation and delivery of three autumn garden soup sessions.
- Organisation and delivery of three autumn community garden kids activity mornings.

- Organisation and delivery of a Kids Halloween Party 2024.
- Hosting International Women's Group events in July, October and November.
- Giving out free dog waste bags.
- Organising the placement of a "letters to heaven" letterbox in the local cemetery.

All events were provided free of charge to ensure maximum participation.

Beneficiaries of UMAG-organised events have included:

- Local families, especially those on low incomes and with restricted access to transport, who were given an affordable local venue in which to host parties and gatherings, as well as a chance to access emergency food bags, when needed.
- Local families and children, who were given a chance to come together, socialise and enjoy some free local entertainment
- Local people experiencing isolation, who have an opportunity to attend regular volunteer as well as ad hoc events
- The local international community, which was given an opportunity to connect and a venue from which to base their activities
- Other local charities, including the Bread and Butter Thing, CAB, NHS, Family hub, Girl Guides, Women's institute and the local Youth Group, who benefitted from a local venue in which to host events
- Local small businesses and interest groups and their patrons, who were given an affordable venue in which to hold their own events and meetings
- Local schools and youth groups, who collaborated with the local community garden to foster a greater appreciation for nature and food growing.

IV. Financial review

Having started the year with £16,517.31 in its account, over the period 2023 to 2024, UMAG end of year accounts reported payments of £13,262.84, with a closing balance of £14,843.94 in its account. This sum comprises the following:

- £995.35 in restricted funds (as per funder T&Cs)
- £6,000.00 in reserves funds
- £2,727.14 in designated funds
- £5,121 in working capital.

Incoming receipts for the year have totalled £11,589.47. The principal sources of this income have been The Hut hire, grants and donations. These funds have been allocated to children and family events held in The Hut and Community Garden, supporting community groups, and continued provision and running of The Hut.

Trustees decided to begin earmarking a contingency reserve of UMAG funds to ensure that the charity would be able to withstand any future emergency expenditure, such as unexpected major structural repairs, legal costs or coverage of

the charity's running costs in the event of a sudden loss of income. This reserve was to be composed of unrestricted funds remaining from the £10,000 grant that UMAG had received from the UK government in 2020 as part of the Coronavirus Community Support Fund.

Whilst no official reserves policy was formulated, the sum of £6,000 was accordingly set aside as a financial reserve, and conditions for its expenditure discussed. The £6,000 sum reflects an estimate of the greatest possible repair cost that the Hut might ever be expected to incur (e.g. a major roof repair).

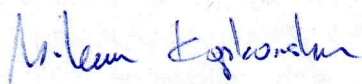
In the current reporting period, UMAG experienced an increase in outgoings. This has further underlined the prudence of trustees' approach to reserves.

Having operated on the basis of an informal reserves policy for most of 2024, UMAG is now in the process of formalising this policy, including a review of the (target) reserve sum. This policy is expected to be in place in early 2025 and will be made publicly available.

V. Funds held as a custodian trustee

UMAG holds no funds as a custodian trustee.

This report was endorsed by the undersigned trustees on 05/12/2024.



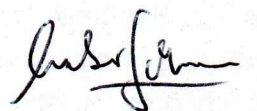
Milena Kopowska (Trustee)



Fiona Southward (Trustee)



Marie-Claire Moquin (Trustee)



Amber Donovan (Trustee)

Ushaw Moor Action Group – Financial Report

01 NOVEMBER 2023 - 31 OCTOBER 2024

Income	To Date
Hire of Hut	6,730
Funding	3,982
Donations	878
Total Income	11,589
Expenditure	
Consumables	122
Electric	201
Gas	2017
Garden	1716
Insurance	1052
Internet	460
Ground Rent	50
Caretaker	1562
Cleaning Services	1003
Water (inc Garden)	424
Equipment Check (inc Garden)	75
Website	114
Events	3321
Food Bank	139
Hut Maintenance	192
Local Donation	0
Music License	165
YAProject	150
Hut Equipment	550
Hut General Admin	90
Total Expenditure	13263