

Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31 December 2023

The trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2023. The trustees have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and aims

The aims and objectives of Tar Isteach are to attain equality, inclusion, full citizenship and emotional well-being for Republican Ex-Prisoners and their families in North Belfast through the provision of Advice, Counselling, Emotional support, Youth Provision, Training & Education.

However, the group is totally inclusive and is part of community development network of North Belfast working to improve social and economic conditions. No one, no matter what their background is ever turned away.

It also carries out research, lobbies, and advocates on equality of rights and opportunities. The principal activities are provision of quality services for all ages within communities of north Belfast which are socially and economically disadvantaged through activities that promote the public benefit:

- Welfare Rights/Benefits Advice Service on all aspects of welfare rights benefits, housing, debt and money management, health and disability, bereavement support and pathways to employment advice.
- Counselling and Emotional Support Service, for all aspect of mental and emotional health and well-being.
- Youth Development
- Training, Education and Employment Guidance
- Good relations programmes, promoting trust, tolerance, and respect for diversity.

The services cater for all those in need no matter what their community background. The groups since its inception is committed to community development, promoting peace and conflict transformation, improving cross community working relationships, equality, and social justice for all.

ORGANISATIONAL OBJECTIVES

The Group is established for the advancement of education, the relief of poverty, the relief of unemployment and to promote the protection and preservation of health among ex-prisoners and their families in North Belfast and its environs and in particular:

- To provide counselling, emotional support, training and education for ex-prisoners and their families, and practical support to such families which are in need as result of their economic or social circumstances.
- To organise recreational, educational and other leisure-time activities in the interests of social welfare for the ex-prisoners and their families.
- To provide information, training and practical support to charitable ex-prisoners' community groups in the area of benefit in an effort to increase their effectiveness and efficiency.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Public benefit

The trustees believe that the organisation provides a public benefit through its efforts to attain equality, inclusion, full citizenship and emotional well-being for Republican Ex-Prisoners and their families. The group is also totally inclusive in promoting community development and improving social economic conditions.

The trustees are fully aware of the guidelines from the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland to comply with the Charities Act (NI) 2008. They have complied with their duty under section 4(6) of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 to have regard to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit and that the public benefit requirement has informed the activities of the charitable company in the year ending 31 December 2023.

Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31 December 2023

ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

Charitable activities

Working in partnership with community, statutory, business and political representatives we engage and cooperate with advice services, support services, community groups and bodies across North Belfast that are addressing need and promoting good community relations, equal opportunities and challenging discrimination. Working with local community groups and statutory bodies a series of events and activities were run out aimed at promoting good relations and reconciliation.

Many thousands of people used our services or attend our events each year. Working in partnership with community, statutory, business, and political representatives we engage and cooperate with advice services, support services, community groups and bodies across North Belfast that are addressing need and promoting good community relations, equal opportunities and challenging discrimination. Working with local community groups and statutory bodies a series of events and activities were run out aimed at promoting good relations and reconciliation.

- Tar Isteach attempts to address needs and social exclusion by its support services, by informing, by guidance, and by internal and external referrals systems linked to community networks and statutory bodies and agencies.
- Tar Isteach is a member of several partnerships providing services and organising community activities in north Belfast.
- Tar Isteach relies on beneficiaries and users to support the organisation.
- Local people volunteer, assist and participate in our events.
- Local people volunteer in our offices, at our events and activities.
- Our group holds information sessions and give presentations and information on the welfare system and welfare reform to the local community.
- Hundreds of parents and children attended our community events each year and volunteer to supervise and steward.
- Our AGM is well attended.
- We provide and distribute information on all aspects of benefits, training opportunities, employment, counselling, and health promotion.
- Our building is considered safe, welcoming, and comfortable, it services are used by people from all sections of society here.
- Young people use our premises and facilities for their activities and learning.

Access to the welfare system and entitlements is crucial for people struggling to manage. Welfare rights advice is a key element in a multi-faceted and multi-agency response to poverty, social and economic deprivation. The largest proportion of advice is delivered face-to-face but we also provide home visits and telephone advice.

Our service provides the advice and support that ensures individuals and families secure the necessities, by helping them to access all benefits, secure their housing needs, ensure representation at appeals and delivering money/debt advice. Tar Isteach helps individuals improve their quality of life and enables them to contribute to the economic infrastructure within their communities.

Many of our clients are of advanced age and lived throughout the conflict. Therefore, ageing, disability, health and well-being, trauma and transgenerational trauma are also descriptors for the impact of conflict in people's lives. Many of those who come to Tar Isteach for assistance fall into these categories.

In 2023 our advice service seen in excess of 2000 people and dealt with more than 8000 queries. Almost £2 million was secured in benefits and entitlements for clients. The majority of its clients are in poor physical or mental health, disabled, afflicted by the conflict, carers, the elderly, people struggling to cope financially.

Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31 December 2023

Tar Isteach is a community-based organisation that provides family support services and assistance in response to issues of poverty, disadvantage, ill health, exclusion, and isolation. This includes Welfare Rights/Benefits Advice, Counselling and Emotional Support, youth support, and support into training, education, and employment. The group is committed to community development, promoting peace and conflict transformation, improving cross community working relationships, equality, inclusion, and social justice for all. It advocates, lobbies and campaigns on issues of equality and inclusion for political ex-prisoners and their families, including legacy issues of intergenerational discriminations.

As members of the cross community North Belfast Advice Partnership, we have access to specialist advice via the Belfast City Wide Tribunal Service. The NBAP is playing a lead role in maintaining and updating of the advice services of each of its members. By modernising and innovating we intend to ensure the services offered to the public is accessible, efficient, effective, and relevant in 2023 and beyond.

Counselling and Emotional Support Service

Counselling and emotional support also remains as a very important element in redressing the impact of the conflict and issues such as trauma, loss, relationship difficulties, maladaptive behaviours - issues that disable and prevent full social and economic participation and integration. The increase in demand is being met by face to face, phone, and video. The service has maintained its network of referral pathways and working partnerships with all relevant health, statutory and community support services across north Belfast and beyond.

Promoting Individual & Community Development,

" Promoting Peace & Conflict Transformation,

" Improving Cross Community Working Relationships,

" Advocating for Equality and Social Justice for all.

We continued to provide Good Relations Programmes, workshops, and conferences throughout the year. People of all ages and backgrounds participated in a series of workshops, conferences, training courses, and educational courses. These activities are made possible due to the support of our sponsors, the local community, our volunteers, and our partnerships with like-minded organisation such as; Coiste na n-Iarchimí, Ashton Community Trust, the Greater New Lodge Community Empowerment Partnership, Tar Anall Training and Employment, EPIC, Tra Gra, the Housing Executive, the North Belfast Interface Network, the North Belfast Christian Fellowship, The Executive Office, Newington Housing Association, Copius Consulting, and Time Associates

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Financial position

The company had net incoming resources for the year of £9,295 (2022: net incoming resources of £17,912), which reflected the completion of a number of projects during the year. Unrestricted funds increased by £10,177, while restricted funds decreased by £882.

Reserves policy

The Charity's Policy is to retain a level of reserves, which matches the needs of the organisation both at the current time and in the foreseeable future. The charity has developed a plan to establish and maintain this agreed level of reserves. The charity will continue to monitor compliance with this policy on a regular basis and the Board will review the appropriateness of the policy annually.

Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31 December 2023

FUTURE PLANS

The Tar Isteach strategic Plan is intended to provide the organisation with future direction over the next 3-year period from 2023.

Our strategic goals will determine the services, programmes, and projects we deliver. Our outcome-based approach in our work will provide a basis by which we can judge our success in our delivery.

Each aim is supported by a series of outcomes which specifies the changes we want to see, the difference we want to make.

It sets out our goals and how we will achieve them. These Strategic Aims will be achieved through operational objectives. Overall, our strategy is underpinned by our Mission and Values which drives all that we do.

The core areas of our work are defined as:

- Individual and Family Support Services
- Community Development
- Promoting Equality of Rights for All
- Promoting Peace and Reconciliation
- Organisational Development

Therefore, the strategic aims of Tar Isteach reflect these areas as follows:

Strategic Aim 1

To achieve the vision of equality and full citizenship rights for everyone.

Strategic Aim 2

To provide high quality and accessible support services for all.

Strategic Aim 3

To provide opportunities for people of all ages to engage in personal and social development activities and to leave a legacy for the community.

Strategic Aim 4

To provide opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to participate in activities that promote good relations and reconciliation in safe and comfortable shared spaces.

Strategic Aim 5

To be a 'fit for purpose' organisation that strives to continually develop and deliver high quality service provision.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The charity is controlled by its governing document, a deed of trust, and constitutes a limited company, limited by guarantee, as defined by the Companies Act 2006.

Recruitment and appointment of new trustees

The method used to recruit new trustees onto the board is that of the board networking through their own contacts, to find someone who fits the necessary requirement at the time.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Charitable Status and Registration

Tar Isteach was registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland on 2nd April 2014. Its Charity number is NIC 100049.

Risk management

The principles of good governance are embedded within all aspects of Tar Isteach's operations with management and staff being keenly aware of the Boards responsibility of ensuring that the organisation protects itself from financial exposure and reputational damage, A close working relationship is maintained between the Board and management to ensure that operationally staff are aware of the standards required of them by the Board and the Board are always in a position to provide guidance and support to management in the discharge of their duties. This two-way relationship is the key feature of Tar Isteach governance arrangements and is a key strength in the company.

A conscientious approach to ensuring that contractual project requirements are achieved has been maintained at all times both in the accounting period being reported on and since Tar Isteach establishment. Very tight financial controls on expenditure and all financial commitments are maintained at all times and project staff have been trained and have become experienced in budgetary controls. In both these areas ie Project delivery and financial controls management all staff have established close working relationships with funding organisations to ensure all mandatory standards are consistently achieved. Board representatives also actively engage with funding bodies.

The Board, management and staff are fully aware that the nature of the work in which Tar Isteach is involved can bring with it a high level of scrutiny to ensure that all activities are fully compliant with funding requirements and, therefore, beyond reproach. The Board of Tar Isteach is, therefore, greatly reassured of the company's compliance with the highest of standards of governance on the basis that all monitoring and evaluation of project delivery demonstrates achievement of all funders objectives and that funders' audits and vouching of financial expenditure and the independent examiners report confirm compliance with both probity and regularity in the use of monies received.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 26 April 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



J Doherty - Secretary