



Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum

**Trustees Annual Report
For the year ended 31 March 2023**

1. The Purpose of the Charity

The Purpose of Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum is to:

“Work for the social, economic and physical regeneration of the Cliftonville community and to create the conditions for the removal of the physical and mental barriers that divide us”.

We have three key strategic outcomes which are:

Strategic Theme	Outcome
Regeneration	Our people have decent jobs and wages and a good standard of living
Peace Building and Good Relations	Our community is peaceful, shared and diverse
Children and Young People	Our children and young people have the best start in life

2. The Financial year the report relates to

This Trustees Report relates to the financial year commencing on 1st April 2022 and ending on 31st March 2023.

3. Principle Address of the Charity

185 Cliftonpark Avenue, Belfast BT14 6DT

4. Information on governance

Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum is a company limited by guarantee with a Memorandum and Articles of Association which was adopted on 13th November 2002.

5. Trustee Details

The Trustees of the Charity who have served within the period of this report are:

Mr Daniel Lavery
Mr Paul Little
Ms Dolores Quinn
Ms Kathleen Quinn
Mr Neil Montgomery

6. Trustee Appointment Information

No change

7. Public Benefit Compliance

Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum in setting our objectives and planning our activities for the year the Trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission NI's guidance on public benefit to ensure that the activities have helped to achieve the charity's purposes and provide a benefit to the beneficiaries.

8. Activities and Achievements

The Cliftonville community is one of the most deprived in Belfast and across the North of Ireland. The quality of life for local residents has declined sharply in the past year. While local people were still on the ropes from Covid-19 they were then punched in the face by the Cost of Living Crisis.

This crisis is not helped by the lack of government at Stormont or by a government in London which is totally deaf to the needs of people living in poverty. The absence of a NI Executive led to more government cuts in 2022-23 for key services that are needed by the most vulnerable and impoverished people in our community.

Cuts to public sector and community services makes it more difficult for community groups on the ground to respond to local need and to support people in our communities.

The Cliftonville community is located in the Waterworks ward which, according to the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), is the No. 1 most deprived ward in Northern Ireland. The Waterworks ward has the highest percentage of Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) claimants in Belfast (10.8%) and the 2nd highest rate of JSA claimants in NI. The NI average is 3.8%.

Homelessness is a major problem in this area. There is also a lack of good quality housing. Homelessness affects families but also individuals and young people have little chance of securing accommodation. We have 3 and even 4 generations of one family living in the same house. It is a world apart from the leafy semis with a large garden. This situation has a major impact on low education attainment and stress.

The area is also home to an increasing number of flats, apartments and low quality accommodation. The area has a high number of old 3 story properties. These are easily turned into flats and HMOs (Housing in Multiple Occupation). There is a high number of low quality private landlord accommodation. There are notable exceptions. Some private landlords are proactive in improving their properties. However, not all low quality accommodation is in the private sector. An increasing number of low quality housing is owned by social landlords. Local residents who complain about poor quality social housing are increasingly being told: "What do you expect, its social housing".

Millions of pounds is spend every year in housing benefit in the Cliftonville area. Very little of that finds it way back to support either the redevelopment of the properties or regeneration of the local area.

Economically, there are no large employers in the area and there has been no investment in any form of economic development in the area for decades. The current economic model does not work for communities such as the Cliftonville.

An alternative economic model which has emerged is called Community Wealth Building. Community Wealth Building aims to make the economy work for the people not make

people work for the economy. Community Wealth Building stops wealth leaving deprived areas, supports the local economy and places control and benefits in the hands of local people. The development of the Cliftonville Community Enterprise (below) will contribute to the building of community wealth.

8.1 Regeneration Activities

Cliftonville Enterprise Centre

Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum plans to build a Cliftonville Community Enterprise on Cliftonpark Avenue. The project is aimed at supporting long term unemployed males, women living in poverty and young people from disadvantaged families into training, employment and enterprise. The centre will also provide child care places as demand for these facilities are high in this area.

The enterprise centre will work with local people to support them to learn, make and sell. This means providing training, space and equipment to enable people to move into the labour market and increase economic activity within the local community. Critically it also means supporting them to increase their confidence and help them overcome the barriers to employment and enterprise.

Cliftonville Community Enterprise will be located in the Waterworks ward and there has been no capital investment in this area for more than 20 years. Cliftonville Community Forum is currently involved in training and employability projects. We have supported people from the Cliftonville and surrounding areas through training, with job applications, interview preparation and seen them secure employment.

The development of Cliftonville Community Enterprise will see this work move to a new level. This centre will be a very modest size. However, it should allow us to begin to turn the curve on poverty and disadvantage in this area.

Development stage of the project

- We own the site having purchased it from the Housing Executive.
- We have produced a fully costed business plan which shows how the centre will operate.
- We have secured planning approval for the centre
- A full Outline Business Case has been completed which justifies the investment
- Funding applications have been submitted to Belfast City Council and the Department for Communities for the capital costs of the project

Community Organising project

The Community Organising project works with residents to address the issues they identify and organise them into community groups to ensure that issues get addressed. A wide range of issues are tackled including: housing, anti-social behaviour, illegal dumping, rat infestation, landlord issues, the #BusFreeBrookvale campaign and the Save Our Post Office campaign.

The project produces and distributes a community newsletter. Since October 2020 we have produced 10 editions and distributed 1,500 free copies of each edition to local homes.

The Community Organising project works with 4 different established community groups in the area:

- Waterworks Residents Association
- Manor Street Residents Action Group
- Brucevale Residents
- Kinnaird Residents

Multi-agency work is a crucial part of the role and attending fortnightly meetings with external agencies is a great way to raise issues in the area and work collaboratively with these agencies to try and tackle the issues. Since April 2022 to March 2023 there has been:

- 22 multi agency meetings with agencies such as Community Restorative Justice, PSNI, Belfast City Council, Housing Executive, Housing Associations and politicians.
- 7 meeting have taken place with the Save Our Post Office Campaign
- 43 meetings have taken place with local councillors Tomás O'Neill, Ryan Murphy, Paul McCusker and Mal O'Hara as well as meeting with local residents groups to tackle day to day issues in the area including lack of services and investment

The project facilitated 'How to run a successful campaign' training. The course was delivered over 6 weeks with 7 local residents who are all active in the community completing it. After the completion of the training, the residents campaign started to lobby then Department for Infrastructure Minister Nichola Mallon to help change the route the buses were taking. Residents collected more than 500 signatures going door to door in the area organising the community behind the campaign.

Due to the cost of living crisis and various other social factors, the challenges the area is facing grows daily. Since the beginning of 2023 we have a significant rise in anti-social behaviour and housing issues.

Now more than ever, statutory agencies need to take responsibility for their role in improving the area, tackling the issues such as a lack of investment, poor infrastructure, poor social and private housing and the challenges people who live in the most deprived ward in the North are facing.

Crumlin Ardoyne Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership

More than 15,000 people live in the Crumlin/Ardoyne area. The area is made up of the Ardoyne and Waterworks wards. The Waterworks ward is the No.1 most deprived out of 462 wards, which means the area is in the top 1% most deprived across Northern Ireland.

Our Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership is made up of 12 members: Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum, Cliftonville Community Centre, North Belfast Senior Citizens Forum, Action Mental Health, The Vine Centre, Wishing Well Family Centre, Grace Women's Development Limited, Lower Oldpark Community Association, Cancer Lifeline, Ardoyne Association, Ardoyne Youth Enterprise and Marrowbone

Community Association. Together we agreed on five key outcomes. These are:

Outcome 1. Residents play an active part in economic life

Outcome 2. We live longer, healthier, active lives

Outcome 3. We are a shared community that respects diversity

Outcome 4. We give our children and young people the best start in life

Outcome 5. We live in a safe community

Outcomes are the key to our action plan. Outcomes tell us what differences we want for our communities. All our work is then targeted at achieving our outcomes.

The Crumlin Ardoyne area has some of the highest levels of anti-social behaviour and crime in NI. In a door-to-door survey on community safety 56% of people feel “Very Unsafe” or “Unsafe” in the area they live in. It is believed that official figures for crime and anti-social behaviour are significantly underestimated as more than 62% said they do not report anti-social behaviour to the PSNI. The survey was completed across the Crumlin/Ardoyne area in March 2023 and 325 surveys were completed.

We are involved in the Department of Communities Review of the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy also known as People and Place. As part of this we work with 4 Neighbourhood Partnerships across North Belfast — Crumlin/Ardoyne, Inner North, Ballysillan/Upper Ardoyne and Ligoniel. The aim is to develop a collective voice for North Belfast’s communities in the absence of an area partnership board.

Across the North the 36 Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships have come together as a Forum. This Forum has met 7 times in the past year.

8.2 Peace Building and Good Relations Activities

Girdwood Youth Space Project

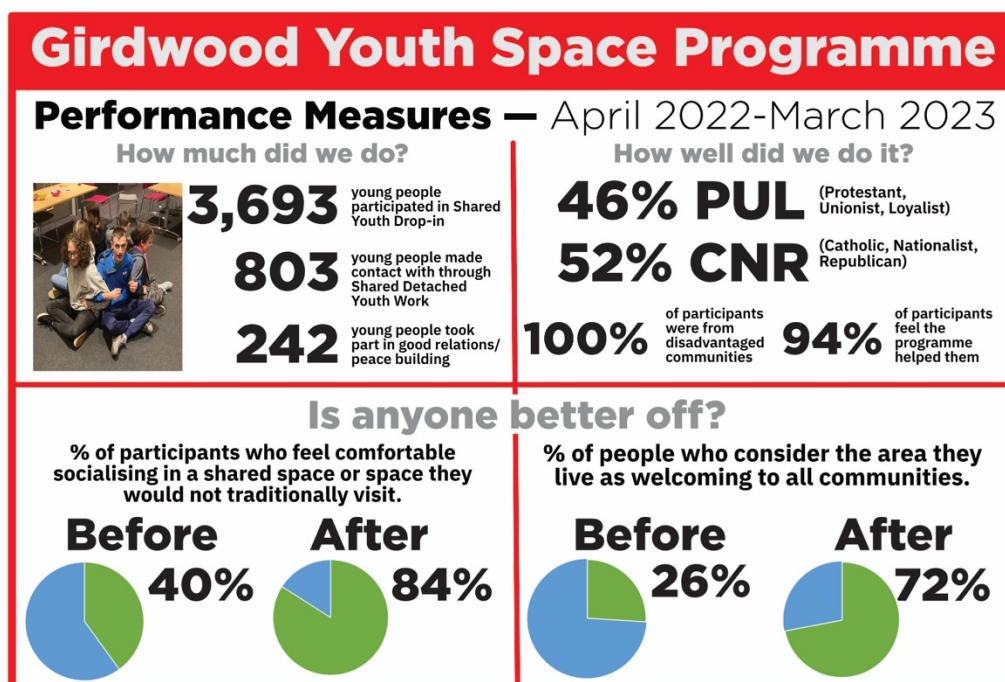


Figure 1: Project Scorecard from the Girdwood Youth Space project

The 2022/23 year saw us fully return to all pre-Covid face-to face delivery levels and we operated in the knowledge that this would increase demand for our services as the needs of local young people and their families increased. Against this backdrop we were aware that the lack of a functioning government at Stormont would bring about funding cuts decreasing our organisation's ability to meet this ever-increasing need.

Despite many challenges 2022/23 was a fun-packed, jam-packed year of cross-community activities and projects with many new friendships developed across the Manor Street interface and a new batch of local youth leaders emerging. 2022/23 saw us deliver a range of youth activities, projects, cross-community trips/residentials and team building events to ensure that the Girdwood Youth Space is a safe, shared space for all local young people.

More than 3,500 local people have participated in good relations activities organised during the year through youth and community events. Figure 1 (above) is a Scorecard from the Girdwood Youth Space project which outlines How much did we do? How well did we do it and Is anyone better off?

Our Girdwood Youth Space project works across the Cliftonville, Lower Shankill and Lower Oldpark areas and delivers youth programmes in the Girdwood Community Hub and the Girdwood Youth Space. We have made contact with 803 young people in detached (street) outreach work. 3,693 young people have participated in shared youth drop-ins.

When we began working with these young people 40% said they felt 'comfortable' socialising in a shared space (Girdwood Community Hub) or space they would not traditionally visit. At the end of the programme this had gone up to 84% of young people feeling 'comfortable' socialising in a shared space.

Imagine Peace Barriers Project

The Imagine Peace Barrier Project has been a success having begun in 2014 working on 17 sites and now working on the last 6 of these sites. This is a joint project with Lower Oldpark Community Association. We are now working on the Imagine Shared Space Project which could see the building of cross community facility that aims to remove part of the peace wall on Cliftonpark Avenue.

We are aware that the interface barriers provide a level of security and comfort to some residents and that the current political uncertainty are a reminder that we have a long way to go. The Imagine Peace Barriers Project is:

- A resident led project to improve the quality of life for residents and enhance the appearance of the area.
- Increasing the confidence and capacity of residents to engage in conversations around peace barriers that lead to improved quality of life for both communities.
- Ensuring that any changes, however slight, to the structures will only take place when community and resident safety is not compromised. Changes will only take place when the residents most impacted have given their consent.
- Developing of a comprehensive good relations programme of activities between local residents, young people, senior citizens and others.

We have developed a feasibility study and a business plan for the Imagine Shared Space Project. This aims to remove a section of the peace wall on Cliftonpark Avenue. We are

working with architects to provide designs that will be available for local community consultation.

Over the past year we have engaged with over 500 people in cross community work. This has led to an increase in relationships across the peace wall and to improved understanding. These events include good relations training sessions, the Pumpkin Patch event, cross border initiatives, trips to Newcastle, Jungle NI, Derry, a visit to Boulder World and much more.

Interface conflict

Interface violence still raises its head and sporadic attacks still do take place. We have been working with a family whose home was attacked on Rosapenna Street in April 2022 to ensure they receive compensation to repair the damage to their property. We were able to advise the family to submit a 'Notice of Intention to claim' to Compensation Services NI. However, the agency sought evidence of damage from the PSNI. They had no evidence as they pursued the attackers. We worked with various agencies and the family to ensure evidence was presented. The family received compensation and the damage was repaired.

8.3 Children and Young People Activities

Let Youth Lead project

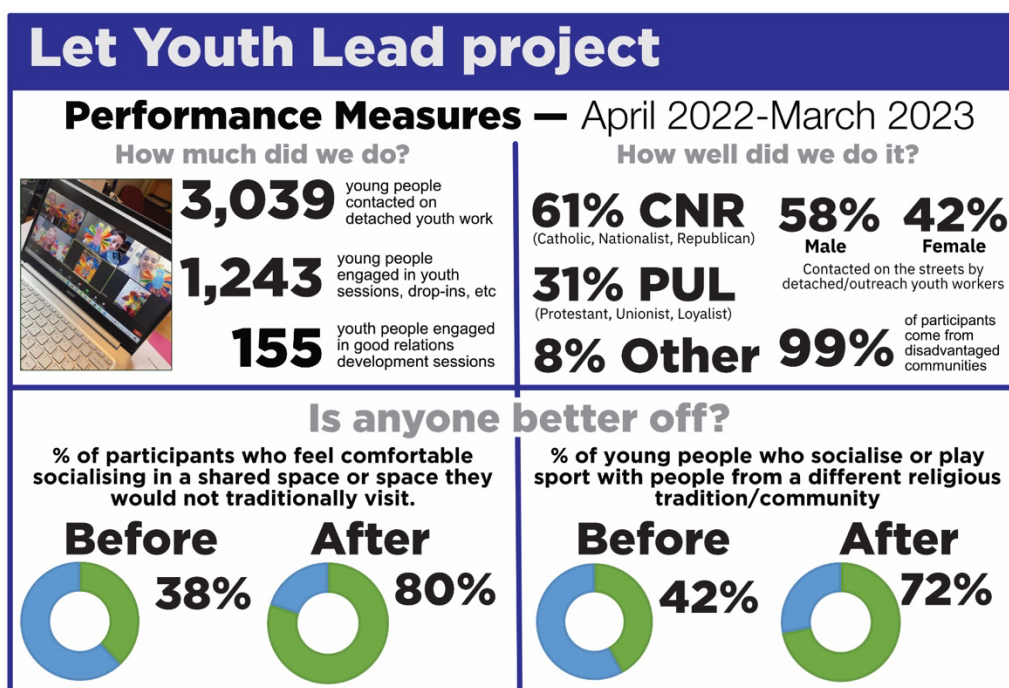


Figure 2: Scorecard from the Let Youth Lead project

“Let Youth Lead have taught me that the community and friendships are the most important thing. They have taught me to be kind, loyal and welcoming to new people and how to express myself in a welcoming and safe environment. I can’t thank them enough” – young participant.

Let Youth Lead is a youth project of Cliftonville Community Forum and works mainly with young people from the Cliftonville area. The Let Youth Lead project carries out detached

youth work, provides youth drop-in and provides support and training for young people living in an around the Cliftonville area. We operate 2 detached teams per week and provide 3 youth drop-ins in the Girdwood Youth Space.

We have found that young people in this area have a lack of confidence in their future. Often, when asked to identify goals, they find it challenging to think about long term goals. Their attitude becomes dismissive around any sense of achievement.

This is a result of high levels of poverty in this area. Two-thirds of children and young people live in poverty. We found this leads to a carefree attitude when it comes to their well-being, safety and their future. Often increasing their likelihood to engage in risk-taking behaviours.

We create a safe place in the shared youth drop-ins. Here young people feel they belong and they look forward to each week. The drop-in has a deep impact on how they see themselves and how they look towards their future.

We create programmes that challenges the young people to think in a different way. This helps them to re-frame issues and begins to change mindsets. It also helps them to make friends from outside their own community.

Personal Youth Development Programme (PYDP)

The Personal Youth Development Programme (PYDP) is designed to address the multifaceted challenges faced by disadvantaged young people aged 16-25 who are living in poverty, impacted by drug addictions, left school early or with low education attainment, been in or close to the criminal justice system, suffer from poor mental health or are homeless. The programme aims to foster personal and social development, promote good relations, offer career guidance, and provide opportunities to raise their aspirations.

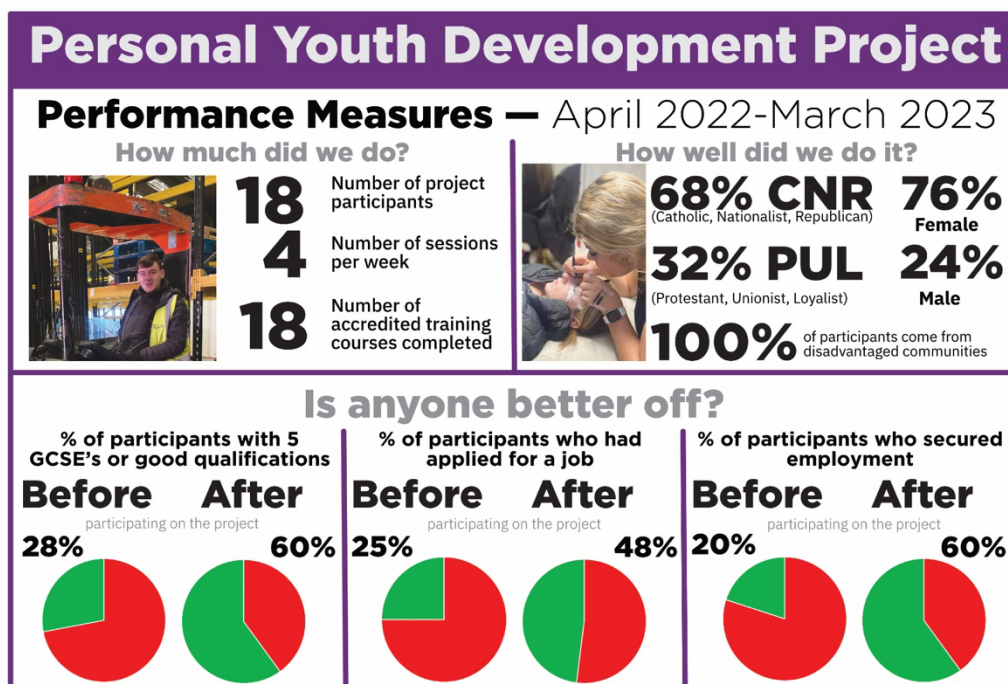


Figure 3: Personal Youth Development Programme scorecard 2022/23

Several challenges have arisen throughout the programme, including engagement difficulties, resistance to change, and the need for ongoing support. To address these, the programme offer flexible approach, tailored interventions to individual needs including sign posting to other agencies, whilst this phase of PYDP ended in March 2023 the participants still receive ongoing support on a 1:1 mentoring basis.

PYDP has empowered participants to overcome adversity and achieve their full potential. Continuous evaluation and adaptation have been essential to ensure the programme's success and positive impact over time.

The PYDP has had several positive outcomes:

- **Personal Growth:** Participants experienced improved self-confidence, better emotional well-being, and enhanced problem-solving skills.
- **Social Integration:** The programme has fostered a sense of belonging and social cohesion, reducing feelings of isolation among participants.
- **Career Pathways:** Career guidance and exposure to various industries has led to increased employability and the pursuit of meaningful careers.
- **Aspirational Shift:** Through mentorship and goal-setting, participants' aspirations may rise, motivating them to strive for higher education and life achievements.
- **Community Contribution:** As participants develop positive behaviours and skills, they can become contributing members of their communities, as part of the programme they were involved in two projects.

Case Study 1: A single mother of two children who struggled with anxiety and depression joined the Personal Youth Development Programme. She had poor employment experience and lacked carer aspirations. She managed to overcome these challenges and many more, ultimately achieving a Social Work degree and gaining Employment in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust. This journey highlights her determination and resilience in pursuing her education and career goals despite the obstacles faced over the 6 year journey.

Case Study 2: A young homeless person joined the Personal Youth Development Programme. She battled with a drug addiction and embraced risks throughout her time on the programme. She decided she needed to make a change through attending a workshop and inspirational talk – with the support of the PYDP.

This individual decided to make a positive change and succeeded in securing employment in her chosen field. Her role involves assisting young people by providing them with accurate housing information, educating them about their rights and advocating for their cases. This transformation showcases her commitment to personal growth and her dedication to making a meaningful impact on the lives of others facing similar challenges.

Pumpkin Patch: The young people designed and developed a Cross Community Pumpkin Patch in October 2022. This allowed them to develop and foster many skills including event planning, project management, communication, problem solving, creativity and much more. This event catered for 99 children from both communities in Lower Oldpark and lower Cliftonville to come together and create memories.

Pop-up café/New Ground: Personal Youth Development Project participants developed a business plan for a Pop-up cafe in Girdwood. 20 young people completed various

training courses including barista training, food hygiene, health & safety, first aid. New Ground coffee — the brand name they selected — is in the process of being established on pop-up basis.

9. Acknowledgements

Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum would like to acknowledge the support of our funders and thank them.

- The International Fund for Ireland
- The Executive Office
- Community Relations Council
- The Department for Communities
- Co-operation Ireland
- National Lottery Awards for All
- BBC Children in Need
- Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade – Reconciliation Fund
- Belfast City Council
- Housing Executive
- NI Education Authority
- Community Foundation Ireland
- Neighbourly
- Northern Ireland Water
- Cash for Kids

11. Plans for the future

Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum will be focused on the following key priorities in the year ahead:

Community enterprise centre: The development of the enterprise centre at Cliftonpark Avenue is crucial as a first step to moving the lower Cliftonville area out of poverty. The centre will provide training for local people and support them into the world of work and enterprise. Given that the Waterworks ward is the No.1 most deprived area in the North this is a priority.

Imagine Shared Space Project: The idea of developing a shared space and removing a part of the peace wall between lower Cliftonville and Lower Oldpark now looks a real possibility. In the year ahead a business plan and architectural designs will be prepared for local community consultation. A project team will also be established to drive the project forward.

The development of this project is a major step forward for peace and reconciliation in this divided community. Both communities have been working together building relationships, understanding and respect for more than 10 years.

The Imagine Shared Peace Project has grown out of the Imagine Peace Walls/Peace Barriers Project which is a partnership between Lower Oldpark Community Association and Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum.

Girdwood Youth Space Management proposal: Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum is working with community groups around the Girdwood site to manage the Girdwood Youth Space. An outline proposal has already been submitted to Belfast City Council. We have established the Girdwood Community Trust as the legal entity and members include ourselves, Lower Shankill Community Association, Lower Oldpark Community Association and New Lodge CEP/TDK Community Group.

12. Financial Review

1st April 2022-31st March 2023

Income	£628,394
Expenditure	£577,690
End of Year Balance	£50,704
Debts	£0,000
Reserves (Restricted & Unrestricted)	£283,401

Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum does have a Reserves Policy which outlines the need for financial reserves to allow the charity to make investments or deal with legal liabilities. One such liability is redundancy payments

The Directors have agreed a policy that requires financial reserves be maintained at a level to sustain 6 months' core activity during a period of unforeseen difficulty.

13. Deficit Funds

The Charity has no deficit at the end of this financial year.

14. Sign off

This Trustees Report was approved by the Board of Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum on Monday 7th November 2023 and is signed by:



Paul Little, Chairperson, Board of Trustees



Kathleen Quinn, Treasurer, Board of Trustees