

# **GIRLS' BRIGADE NORTHERN IRELAND**

## **TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2024**

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The Trustees have pleasure in presenting their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 May 2024.

### **Introduction**

#### **About Us**

The Girls' Brigade NI Ltd is a Christian, international and interdenominational organisation. There are 269 GB companies in Northern Ireland with a total of 18,473 members, made up of 15,161 girls, 2,123 Officers, 387 Sub-Officers and 802 Associate Leaders.

GBNI employs 14 staff based at GB Headquarters (GBHQ) in Antrim.

Work carried out at GBHQ includes:

- Design and implementation of the leadership training programme;
- Production of programme resources for leaders;
- Annual Scripture Course;
- Implementation and maintenance of policies;
- Safeguarding;
- Health and safety;
- Marketing and communication
- Maintenance of the GBNI website;
- Production of GB leaders' newsletters; and
- PR and marketing services.

#### **Our Aim**

The Aim of Girls' Brigade, being a Christian organisation, international and interdenominational, shall be: To help girls to become followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, and through self-control, reverence and a sense of responsibility, to find true enrichment of life.

#### **Our Vision**

Girls' Brigade Northern Ireland will be recognised as a dynamic, relevant, Christ-centred organisation effectively reaching out to all girls to value, nurture and equip them for life.

#### **Our Motto**

'Seek, Serve and Follow Christ'.

The Trustees have the pleasure of presenting their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 May 2024.

### **Introduction**

GBNI is a Christian, international, interdenominational, uniformed organisation. The Vision for Girls' Brigade Northern Ireland is that it will be recognised as a dynamic, relevant, Christ-centred organisation, effectively reaching out to all girls to value, nurture and equip them for life.

#### **Legal Status**

GBNI is registered as a company limited by guarantee in Northern Ireland Number NI058531, registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland NIC100405 and as a charity for tax purposes by HMRC Reference No. NI00689 and VAT Registration No 254684143.

# **GIRLS' BRIGADE NORTHERN IRELAND**

## **TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)**

### **FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2024**

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#### **Members of the Board of Trustees**

Members of the Board, who are Directors for the purpose of company law and Trustees for the purpose of charity law, who served during the year and up to the date of this report are set out on page 19.

In accordance with company law, as the charity's directors, we certify that:

- As far as we are aware, there is no relevant audit information on which the charity's auditors are unaware of; and
- We have taken all the steps, that we ought to have taken, in order to make ourselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's auditors are aware of that information.

#### **Trustees' Responsibilities**

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which provides a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity at the end of the year and of the incoming and outgoing resources for the year, then ended.

In preparing those financial statements, the Trustees are required to select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently, making judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent. The Trustees must also prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records, which disclose with reasonable accuracy, at any time, the financial position of the charity and to enable it to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. The Trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charity's articles of association, the Companies Act 2006 and "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).

#### **Aims and Objectives of GBNI**

##### **Purpose and Aim**

Our charity's Purpose, as set out in the GB Regulations, is to help girls to become followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, and through self-control, reverence and a sense of responsibility, to find true enrichment of life.

The Objects contained in the charity's Memorandum of Association are to promote, extend and maintain Christian belief and behaviour primarily in girls. This is done through the formation and development of local groups for the purposes of training and encouraging such members to follow the standard set by the Lord Jesus Christ for the whole of life and to provide positive Christian teaching regarding the social issues facing them in their growing and adult lives.

Our Aim fully reflects the purpose that the charity was set up to further.

##### **Ensuring our Work Delivers our Aim and Objectives**

We review our Aim, Objectives and activities every three years. This strategic review looks at what we achieved and the outcomes of our work in the previous three years. The review looks at the success of each key activity and the benefits they have brought to those groups of girls and women we are set up to help. The review also helps us ensure our Aim, Objectives and activities remained focused on our stated purpose. We refer to the guidance contained in The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit when reviewing our Aim and Objectives and in planning future activities. In particular, the Trustees consider how planned activities will contribute to the Aim and Objectives they have set.

# **GIRLS' BRIGADE NORTHERN IRELAND**

## **TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2024**

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### **The Focus of our Work**

Our main strategic priorities for the year were:

- To deliver effective, inclusive youth work, engaging with young people across NI in our companies each week to raise standards for all.
- To train leaders to deliver high quality programmes and develop the young people. This includes delivering training for volunteers, encouraging girls into leadership and a programme of safeguarding training for leaders.
- To increase the number of girls we work with and to develop our youth-led decision-making participation scheme, 'GBNI Youth Forum'.
- To increase access and equity.
- To resource and support leaders and seek out funding. This includes the provision of programme materials and support for leaders.
- To improve the self-esteem of girls and make them become better citizens.
- To encourage personal, physical and spiritual development in the girls we engage with.

### **How our Activities Deliver Public Benefit**

The direct benefits which flow from the purpose of GBNI are the spiritual, personal and social development of girls who participate in GB activities, events and programmes. This includes enhanced self-confidence, self-esteem and leadership skills and the adoption of a moral framework, which encourages our girls to be good citizens. The wider benefit to the 'community at large', is enhanced social education and responsible citizenship that flows from the purpose. These benefits are demonstrated through the feedback provided by the girls and the voluntary leaders in GB companies, through feedback from local churches and statutory youth services, regular assessment by the Education and Training Inspectorate and independent evaluations of training, programmes and events.



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## TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2024

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### Who Used and Benefitted from our Services

The charity's beneficiaries are girls. There is no private benefit flowing from the purpose of the charity. GBNI offers a programme of fun activities for girls, designed to educate, challenge and inspire along with Christian teaching that is relevant and meaningful to girls today. The GB companies are run in local churches/missions. Companies meet once a week, from September to April/May each year. Girls are grouped into sections according to age:

- **Explorers:** 3-7 yrs (Pre-school - P4)
- **Juniors:** 8-10 yrs (P5 - P7)
- **Seniors:** 11-13 yrs (Yr 8 - Yr 10)
- **Brigaders:** 14 -18 yrs (Yr 11+)

GB is a safe, caring, nurturing place where girls can:

- Be creative, find sporting talents, and enter competitions;
- Have fun in a safe and caring environment;
- Make lifelong friends;
- Build confidence and self-esteem;
- Discover God and the relevance of the Bible today;
- Develop practical life skills;
- Escape from the pressures of school;
- Find a place where girls can be girls;
- Find a sense of belonging; and
- Gain access to the Duke of Edinburgh Award (DofE) and others.



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## TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2024

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### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

As I look forward to my summer holidays and take some time to reflect on our 2023/24 session of Girls' Brigade in Northern Ireland, I anticipate a summer with significant sporting events – Wimbledon in July is always a favourite in our house, the Euros in Germany and the 2024 Olympics in France during August. The athletes participating in all these events have worked hard, trained and are at the top of their sports, all competing, giving their best, hoping to win the prize, but knowing that not everyone who takes part wins, but pushing themselves to their limits to participate.

Perhaps the GBNI year, in our companies, could loosely be compared to an Olympic Games – many facets requiring different levels of strength, endurance, fitness and skill. No athlete would ever be able to compete in every event in an Olympic Games, similarly in our GB companies, we choose the events and activities which best fit our skills and talents as leaders, as well as the interests of the young ladies in our companies to enable them to learn, have fun and be encouraged to 'Seek, Serve and Follow Christ'. In each of our companies we serve God where we are, not all participating in every event, some companies not participating in any, yet all very much engaged in the Christian race, working, using the resources and gifts that we have to serve God where He has placed us. It is not an easy race, but we are all participants, but thankfully not in our own strength and always mindful that we serve one who loves us and gives so much for us.

**"...let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart." Hebrews 12:1-3.**

Parents' Evening and Displays are one of the highlights of the GB calendar. As GBNI President, it has been a real privilege to have the honour of attending some displays in the spring and seeing so much of what has been accomplished in our GB companies over the past year.

In September 2023, as we embarked once again on a year's work, it was with the familiar routine that is well-established. PE demonstrations were once again well attended and appreciated by our members. Teams once again adopted a blended approach to Team business which enabled a very encouraging regional attendance at meetings. These were a mixture of online and in-person, but always had the option of joining virtually if it was more convenient. The contribution of District Representatives to Team Meetings is so welcome, as this input, and the shared decisions of our Teams, help to shape the programme, training and events organised with our amazing staff. Training webinars are now also the norm and once again this year encouraged good attendance.

Our Duke of Edinburgh's Award Presentation took place in Thomas Street Methodist Church, Portadown last November. It was a very special evening where the guest speaker, Lisa Keys from Boys' Brigade NI, shared a message comparing the Christian journey to an expedition, which was very appropriate. It is so encouraging to see the DofE scheme grow from strength to strength with so many girls achieving Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards. At a presentation in Hillsborough to mark the King's 75th Birthday, the many years of service of three of our members, Mrs Gillian Trouton, Mrs Patricia Bradshaw and Mrs Shelley Martin, was acknowledged with the presentation of Long Service Awards. Our Vice-President, Heather Lindsay, also attended this year's Gold Award Presentation in London in May 2024.

Also, during the 2023/24 session, our sports competitions were Badminton for Brigaders while the Seniors took part in Futsal competitions. The Activities Team welcomed the support and sponsorship of the IFA with the Futsal programme. The NI Finals are an opportunity for our companies, from across the province, to come together for what is hoped will be a fun, competitive but enjoyable night. While getting a venue for our Senior Futsal NI Final was quite a challenge, and required a change of date, these competitions went well, and it was encouraging to see an increased number of companies participating in session. The Explorer and Junior Team Games NI Finals in Wellington Presbyterian, Ballymena were great fun and with the teams not knowing the games until they arrived, they were enjoyed by everyone, including the Team who organised and stewarded the event.



# GIRLS' BRIGADE NORTHERN IRELAND

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This year, Girls' Brigade NI welcomed a new company into our ranks – 377th NI Ballydown Presbyterian GB company. I had the pleasure, along with the National Secretary, of attending their Affiliation Service back in October. We received a very warm welcome from Mrs Sharon Moffett, the new Captain, along with the Chaplain, Officers and girls at their special service. We wish this company continued blessings for the future as they establish and grow in Banbridge.

In October, with our National Secretary and two of our Board Youth Reps, Lauren, Melissa and I attended an in-person European Fellowship weekend at Glasgow Airport. For many of us, including myself, this was our first experience of EF. Our European Vice-President, Amelia Heaford, coordinated the weekend. We had fellowship together as well as looking at EF funding and how we can realistically work together, and it was also an opportunity to learn how GB England and Wales and GB Scotland operate.

In December, the GBNI Youth Forum Carol Service at Moira Presbyterian Church once again set us all up for Christmas festivities. Everyone, who attended, very much enjoyed the night and we thank the Youth Forum for their work coordinating and leading this event.

I had the pleasure, with Heather and Tracey of chairing the NI PE Finals in February in a new venue, Parkhall Integrated College, Antrim. This was a great venue. Once again, we were amazed at the standard of the performances of teams and soloists alike. The Associate competition in Lisburn the following week was also exceptional. The professional standard of their performances was superb. The girls and Officers all did an amazing job! The passion and commitment of the Work Setters and PE Team must also be acknowledged as they work so far in advance, planning for every eventuality. Congratulations to everyone involved!

The Queen's Award, our highest GB Award, aims to encourage girls and young women to a personal commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ while respecting other faiths; inspiring them to greater endeavour in service within the general community and to contribute to the worldwide concept of the Girls' Brigade. Appreciating the work involved, it was lovely to travel to West Church Presbyterian, Ballymena to this year's Queen's Award Presentation in May. This was a very special evening for the recipients, their families, companies and the wider Girls' Brigade family with our special guest for the evening, Deaconess Rachel Cubitt, whose encouraging message was well received. We thank everyone in West Church for their warm welcome.

Endurance Awards are a very special opportunity for companies to acknowledge the bravery and courage of their members who have experienced and come through challenges. This year, once agreed by the Trustee Board, it was a pleasure to present four Awards in three companies to young ladies who have faced their own, different challenges and continued to attend and contribute to their GB companies. Awards were presented to Anna Stevenson & Sophie Leinster, 62nd NI Hamilton Road Presbyterian, Darcie Smyth, 142nd NI Kilmakee Presbyterian and Sophie McClenaghan, 155th NI Greenisland Methodist. Visiting these companies, the pastoral support, Christian concern and impact these companies have made is equally noteworthy. Congratulations to everyone involved.

The year ended with two afternoon tea events where the work of our volunteers was acknowledged at the Dunadry and Killyhevlin Hotels. These events were possible thanks to Development Funding from the Education Authority. It was lovely to meet leaders and helpers from across the province for a very relaxed afternoon of fellowship and food. A treat which was enjoyed by everyone who attended. Team Members, District Representatives and Board Members were also treated to some fun and a barbecue at GB Headquarters from these funding streams too.

After another full and busy year in Girls' Brigade, I am thankful for God's faithfulness, and His provision both in terms of grace and protection, personnel and resources. I am so grateful for all that has been achieved and the seeds that have been sown this year. As we rejoice, let us also pray that in His time, this seed will bear much fruit for God's glory and the extension of His kingdom amongst our members.

#### **1 Corinthians 3:6-9**

**"I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building."**

Isobel McKane  
GBNI President



# GIRLS' BRIGADE NORTHERN IRELAND

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2024

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### CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

I cannot quite believe that this report brings an end to my first term as Chairperson of GBNI! Thank you for trusting me to continue as Chair for another term. I hope I am going forward into my second term, wiser and more prepared than I was for the first! If I am, it is very much thanks to the talent and support of both the Trustee Board and Staff Team who do so much to look after our amazing organisation.

The last three years have been filled with both challenges and encouragement. We cannot ignore the fact that some companies are struggling, the number of leaders and girls is reducing, and costs continue to rise. The Trustee Board has had to make some difficult decisions, particularly around the issue of costs and fees, striving to keep a delicate balance which will not place too onerous a burden on companies but still allows GBNI to function at a level we have grown to expect. All of this makes running GB both at company and national level more difficult, but at the heart of it all as 1 Timothy 4:10 says, "That is why we labour and strive, because we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Saviour of all people, and especially of those who believe".

Some staff have moved on from GB to go onto new adventures and new staff have joined us and the work of GB continues. Two staff members, Ann and Leeanne, celebrated 20 years of service in GB this year. We might not always say it but thank you. As members of GB, we really do appreciate the hard work and dedication of the Staff Team. I would also like to say thank you to the Trustee Board Members, Brigade Council and Team Representatives, both those who are finishing their term of office and those just starting theirs, the work that you all do is unrecognised but vital, if GB is not only to survive but thrive.

Some highlights of the year for me included:

- Northern Ireland Finals for sports competitions, team games and PE; as always, the talent on display was amazing and in all the activities, congratulations should be shared with all the worthy winners.
- Both the DofE Presentation Evening in Thomas Street Methodist and the Queen's Award Presentation Evening in West Church Ballymena were an absolute joy with girls and young women once again showing that the future of GB is in safe hands.
- Attending one of four Army District Days during April/May 2024 which saw 335 girls in total taking part in a morning of fun and fellowship as they completed several skilled challenges in collaboration with the Army. We have up to 40 girls, aged 14-18, attending the Army Summer Camp in August and we look forward to hearing the success of this event in due course.

Throughout the year I was delighted to be invited to celebrate with companies at their anniversary services and displays and attend the Lisburn City Council's D-Day Anniversary celebration.

Thanks to the receipt of some EA development funding, GBNI was also able to celebrate our volunteers with two Afternoon Tea events held at the Dunadry Hotel and the Killyhevlin Hotel and a BBQ for Team Members at GBNI Headquarters.

Looking forward to the year ahead, I once again want to say thank you to everyone who works tirelessly to promote and run our companies and encourage girls to, "Seek, Serve and Follow Christ". We are a unique group of individuals, all working with a common purpose and through good times and bad, take heart with the promise found in 1 Peter 1:6-7, "In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed".

Tracey Davies  
GBNI Chairperson



# GIRLS' BRIGADE NORTHERN IRELAND

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2024

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### Chaplain's Report

As we come to the end of our GB year and the summer stretches out before us, I am sure you have heard the phrase, "Where has the year gone?" It is fascinating, leading and serving children and teenagers for whom a year seems a terribly long time and yet for us adults a year seems to whizz by. Peter in 2 Peter 3:8 builds on Moses' Psalm 90 and reminds us that for the Lord, a day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as a day. Undoubtedly, there will have been things that you wanted to do last year but weren't able to, time just slips away but how wonderful to know that isn't the case with the Lord. God keeps all His promises in His own perfect time. There is nowhere that this is better proven than in the Saviour of sinners, the Lord Jesus. You and I know that in the person of Christ, the Lord's love is from everlasting to everlasting and we are richly blessed to have time to share that Gospel challenge and invitation with our girls.

It is deeply comforting to know that our times are in His hands. We have known that truth at GBNI Board and Brigade Council as we received reports and sought to prayerfully deliberate over matters.

Our GBNI Spiritual Team has been blessed by the arrival of Rev Aaron Ditty, our new Spiritual Officer on the Staff Team at GBHQ. Aaron, along with the support of his skilful volunteers, began and brought together the new Scripture Course for 2024/25. Our prayer is that through the engaging material, girls will encounter the Lord who reveals Himself, who made the world, who sent Jesus, who can forgive us through Jesus, and who blesses us with life to the full as His followers.

Personally, it has also been a privilege to serve on the new website project. I am really excited to see its launch soon and know it will be a great blessing for GB at all levels.

Once again, thank you for the time you faithfully give in your GB companies to serve Christ and work with the girls. I pray you know rest and refreshment before a new term starts. Psalm 125:1 tells us, "Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever."

Yours in Christ,

Rev Ben Preston  
GBNI Chaplain

# GIRLS' BRIGADE NORTHERN IRELAND

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2024

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### REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Some 15,161 girls were engaged in weekly programmes supported by 3,312 leaders in 269 GB companies. All the girls took part in age-appropriate programmes designed to challenge, educate and inspire them. The breakdown of members by age is as follows:

• Under 5s (3 - 4 yrs):	2,578
• Explorers (5 - 7 yrs):	4,579
• Juniors (8 - 10 yrs):	3,756
• Seniors (11 - 13 yrs):	2,342
• Brigaders (14 - 18 yrs):	1,816
• Associates (18 yrs+):	90
• Associate Leaders:	802
• Sub-Officers:	387
• Officers:	2,123

GB leaders were resourced with materials and ideas to create programmes that met the needs and interests of their girls. The programme is progressive and rewards girls for participation.

To encourage girls to consider their attitudes and perceptions of people from other communities, we continued to work with five other uniformed organisations on community relations programmes to develop greater understanding and respect for different cultures and traditions in Northern Ireland.

To resource leaders to deliver high-quality programmes we delivered training for volunteers, encouraging girls into leadership and a programme of safeguarding training for leaders.

#### Numbers Trained:

• Officers	177
• Sub-Officers	188
• Queens Award	25
• The Duke of Edinburgh's Award - Gold	103
• The Duke of Edinburgh's Award - Silver	88
• The Duke of Edinburgh's Award - Bronze	29

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## **TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)**

### **FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2024**

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#### **Activities Team**

The 2023/24 session was a very exciting year. It was fantastic to be out and about catching up with leaders and seeing the girls enjoying competitions. In December, the Brigaders travelled to Lisburn Racquets Club for their Badminton Doubles Finals. This was a fantastic event, and many thanks must go to William, Alec, and their team from Ulster Badminton for facilitating the NI Finals. It was greatly supported by leaders helping from District 6.

At the start of 2024, it was the Seniors turn to travel to the Valley Leisure Centre in Newtownabbey for their Senior Futsal NI Final. It was great to be collaborating with the Irish Football Association. Our thanks must go to Lauren Moore and her team from the Irish Football Association for all of their hard work throughout the entire session, for supplying a venue, scheduling match play and providing referee support for the NI Final. As part of their prizes, all teams who qualified for the NI Final were invited to go and watch the Northern Ireland Women's UEFA Play-off between Northern Ireland and Montenegro at Windsor Park in February. Those who attended the match were invited to take part in the half-time walk around the pitch, which was a fantastic opportunity for the girls and their leaders. We look forward to continuing this partnership with the IFA in the future.

Finally, in March, Explorers and Juniors took part in their respective Team Games NI Finals. The girls had a brilliant day at the Final which was held in Wellington Presbyterian Church. Throughout the day, there were lots of smiling faces and laughter to be seen and heard.

It was great to be in partnership again with Habitat for Humanity Ireland for our art competitions for Seniors and Brigaders. The theme was thinking about how we take responsibility for looking after our world. The girls were asked to capture photos of their favourite wonders of creation and to tell us how and why they think we should be doing our part to protect our world. It was incredible to see hundreds of entries coming through the door. Thanks to Peter and the team from Habitat, who spent the day at GBHQ picking the winners. As always, art entry money is a great way to do fundraising for this very worthwhile organisation as half of all entry fees went directly to help support the work of Habitat.

The Activities Team would like to thank everyone who helped out with stewarding, refereeing, and organising all levels of competitions this year, from company and district level to NI Finals. Thank you also, to the Officers and leaders in each company for training and coaching their girls, to enable them to take part in this year's competitions. We really couldn't have done it without you all.

#### **DofE Team**

The DofE Scheme continues to grow within GBNI. This year we had 103 Bronze Awards, 88 Silver Awards and 29 Gold Awards completed successfully. Gold Award participants from GBNI attended Celebration events both at Buckingham Palace and Hillsborough Castle, and our own Bronze and Silver Celebration Evening was held in Thomas Street Methodist Church. Lisa Keys (BBNI Chief Officer) spoke inspirationally to the participants and recognised all the commitment and work that our GBNI participants, leaders and parents put into each and every Award. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the GBNI leaders who work so passionately to make the DofE Scheme a continuing success in our organisation.



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#### **PE Team**

It was wonderful to see PE competitions back again in the 2023/24 session in a lovely new venue. It was amazing to see so many girls taking part to such a high standard and having fun.

Many thanks to the PE Team and Work Setters who worked so hard to provide such exciting sets that challenged the girls, but that were also enjoyable to learn and perform. PE is very much a massive team effort, and the passion and dedication of our volunteers is very much appreciated. Together they work so hard and with such enthusiasm and commitment, to ensure that PE is a huge success.

The NI Finals gives everyone the opportunity to celebrate the talents and skills, not only of the girls performing but of everyone involved in creating, teaching and developing each set. It was very encouraging to see so many companies entering the competitions and we look forward to seeing more companies coming back to PE competitions over the next year as we continue to develop and grow PE in GB. Many thanks must also go to the team at Parkhall Integrated College and Trinity Methodist Lisburn, for hosting the NI Finals, and to the members of Belfast City Mission, Rathcoole, Ballyclare Presbyterian, and Trinity Methodist Church, Lisburn, for organising and providing the charity tea and coffee at the events to raise funds for their chosen causes.

Thank you also to everyone who volunteered to help out at PE Competitions, both at district and NI level, and to the Officers and leaders in each company for training and coaching their girls; so that they were equipped and prepared to take part in the PE Competitions. All your hard work and dedication is really appreciated. We are indebted to you all for your hard work and commitment throughout the year.

Thank you all again and we look forward to seeing you next year.

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### **Programme Team**

The 2023/24 GB session saw the GBNI Programme Team complete the third and final set of programme updates in association with Habitat for Humanity Ireland as part of the three-year charity partnership. Habitat updates were developed for leaders across all sections (Under 5s, Explorers, Juniors, Seniors, and Brigaders) focusing on advocacy and using our voices to help others and effect change.

A new relationship was developed with Ulster Wildlife, and we were excited to be able to produce a Leader Programme Pack as well as fun, interactive workbooks for Explorers and Juniors.

Three editions of the Resources4U publication were published, packed full of craft, games and activity ideas for leaders for every section.

The Programme Team also developed a series of short video resources, available from August 2024, for GBNI leaders covering topics such as:

- An introduction to GB for potential leaders;
- Guide to GB uniform;
- Basic PE steps and movements; and
- Leading from the front.

Thank you to the GBNI Programme Team for their commitment and enthusiasm all year and we look forward to everything the 2024/25 session brings!

### **Queen's Award Team**

The Queen's Award Team were delighted to award The Queen's Award badge and certificate to 25 young women upon successful completion of their Award programme this session. Between them, the Award recipients completed over 1200 hours of service within their local community. This is in addition to service within their GB company and also in the wider life of their church.

This year girls, once again, completed project assignments to an extremely high standard. We were delighted to see some new project choices, such as planning, recording and editing a podcast series and the design and distribution of hundreds of Discipleship stones.

As a GB family, we congratulate all the girls on their achievement and thank them all for their commitment to GB. GBNI is very proud of our Queen's Award girls and the level of dedication they have shown in completing the Award programme.

West Church Ballymena warmly welcomed the Queen's Award recipients and guests to their church for this year's Award Presentation Ceremony on Friday 10th May 2024. Our guest speaker was Deaconess Rachel Cubitt. We were also delighted to be joined by Alderman Gerardine Mulvenna, Mayor of Mid and East Antrim, as well as Group Commander Archie McKay, Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service who was presented with trauma teddies completed by the girls as part of their initiative test. A special thanks to everyone at West Church Ballymena including the catering team and the praise band for their kindness and hospitality.

During the evening, experiences and lessons learned during their Queen's Award journey were also shared by Hannah Chambers (111th NI Newtownabbey Methodist Mission), Olivia Smyth (221st NI Magherafelt Presbyterian), Amy McGregor (252nd NI Balteagh Presbyterian) and Mollie Guthrie-Drumm (320th NI Kilfennan Presbyterian).

In this upcoming session, we continue to offer a Queen's Award programme that will continue to inspire, stretch, challenge, and equip girls by developing skills, offering experiences, and supporting each girl on her journey of faith. We ask you to remember in prayer all Queen's Award girls as they complete the programme and their leaders who continue to support and encourage girls at each stage of the Award.

Thank you to the Queen's Award Team for their support, enthusiasm and dedication to GB and the Queen's Award programme. The time and effort the Team commit to marking initiative tests, assessing projects, conducting final interviews etc. is considerable and we commend them for their willingness to serve completely and wholeheartedly.



# GIRLS' BRIGADE NORTHERN IRELAND

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2024

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### Queen's Award recipients 2023/24

#### District 1

18th NI Dundonald Presbyterian	Rachel McVeigh
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#### District 4

197th NI Ballyblack Presbyterian	Rebecca McCormick
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#### District 6

92nd NI Hillsborough Presbyterian	Zoe Taylor
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#### District 7

138th NI Moy Presbyterian	Katie Stinson
138th NI Moy Presbyterian	Grace Wylie

#### District 8

111th NI Newtownabbey Methodist Mission	Hannah Chambers
111th NI Newtownabbey Methodist Mission	Leah McCallan

#### District 9

20th NI Joymount Presbyterian	Eden Cully
367th NI Ballyclare Presbyterian	Megan Allen
367th NI Ballyclare Presbyterian	Ellie Andrew

#### District 10

221st NI Magherafelt Presbyterian	Ellen Bleaks
221st NI Magherafelt Presbyterian	Olivia Smyth
258th NI Culnady Presbyterian	Abbie Caskey

#### District 11

248th NI Second Limavady Presbyterian	Charlee Hamilton
252nd NI Balteagh Presbyterian	Amy McGregor
254th NI First Limavady Presbyterian	Rebecca Hutton
254th NI First Limavady Presbyterian	Millie Thompson
312th NI Bovevagh Parish	Anna Burnett
320th NI Kilfennan Presbyterian	Mollie Guthrie-Drumm
320th NI Kilfennan Presbyterian	Hollie Parke
320th NI Kilfennan Presbyterian	Keira Thompson

#### District 12

208th NI Irvinestown Presbyterian	Jasmine Giles
208th NI Irvinestown Presbyterian	Rebecca Thompson

#### District 13

236th NI Armoy Presbyterian	Amy McCurdy
273rd NI Ballymoney Reformed Presbyterian	Rebekah Blair

### Spiritual Team

The 2023/24 session of GB has provided many reasons and opportunities to give thanks to God for His provision and guidance. We are a Team that cannot do our work without the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives and are thankful that, in our deliberations and work, God's hand has been evident time and time again.

Our GBNI Chaplain, Rev Ben Preston, has led the Team with passion and wisdom. We are thankful for his enthusiasm for the Scriptures.

This year we have seen a significant change in the Spiritual Team and department. Namely, we welcomed our new Spiritual Officer, Aaron Ditty, in August 2023. Much of his work has been concentrated on our new Scripture Course for the 2024/25 session. It is titled, "We Believe" and consists of ten lessons outlining the core, fundamental beliefs of the Girls' Brigade.



# **GIRLS' BRIGADE NORTHERN IRELAND**

## **TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)**

### **FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2024**

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The Spiritual Team believes that in this current cultural climate, there are many opposing voices vying for our girls' attention. Stating clearly who and what we believe in, as an organisation, will enable us to be stronger and more confident as we move forward.

Additional support for GB companies has not been as plentiful as it has been in previous years. Much of this is due to the Spiritual Officer learning the role and taking time to assess the best way to assist companies in their delivery of the Scriptures. It is hoped that throughout the coming year there will be a Leaders' Worship Event, a GB Prayer Week and the option for online learning and fellowship.

Work will begin early in the Autumn session to prepare for next year's Scripture Course. The Spiritual Team would appreciate the prayers of our membership for wisdom, passion and guidance from God. May, all that we do, help girls to "Seek, Serve and Follow Christ".

#### **Training Team**

This year saw a significant increase in trainees for both the Officer and Sub-Officer training courses, with 177 coming forward for Officer training and 188 for Sub-Officer training. The new format for the Sub-Officer training, introduced last year, was continued in 2023/24 and we are very grateful for the continued support of each district in running workshops for their trainees.

It is fantastic to see so many come forward to take up leadership roles in our local GB companies, allowing GBNI to continue its great work with our girls and young women. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the leaders who work so hard to make the training so successful each year - Captains, GB leaders, Training Team Reps and District Reps all come together to provide the leadership training that helps keep our GB companies well supplied with leaders for the future.

#### **Youth Forum**

Over the course of the 2023/24 session, the GBNI Youth Forum experienced times of great blessing and joy but also some moments that gave us pause for thought as we considered the future. Chief among those considerations is the desire to have a Forum that works for the benefit of our most important members, the girls we serve.

We continued to practically support members through the delivery of our "Roadshows". These saw a member of the GBNI Youth Forum Team visit individual GB companies, from north to south and east to west. Each Roadshow included a presentation about the work of the Forum and an invitation to get involved in future events. Membership and representation at district level and in GB Teams, were highlighted as a positive for all involved.

We held our annual Carol Service on 2 December in Moira Presbyterian Church. Our speaker for the evening was Ruth Dalzell who encouraged us to think about the women of Jesus' family tree. Upwards of 90 members joined together for what proved to be an uplifting and God-glorifying evening.

Another popular aspect of the GBNI Youth Forum's work is our resources. One resource that is given out on request is our "Next Chapter" boxes. This tremendous resource includes a book and other gifts that can aid those girls in our companies who are moving on to university or college. There are encouragements and tips for life after GB and spiritual guidance for those times when following Jesus is tough. Over 100 of these have been distributed and we give thanks for the provision and continued interest there has been. Another resource we were delighted to provide was our "GB Prayer Book". This book has 40 specially written prayers that cover a wide range of topics that the girls can use as part of their devotional life, or as a means of help when they struggle to find the words in prayer. 500 of these have been distributed to date at our Carol Service and Roadshows.

The year ahead will see inevitable change for the Forum. We would appreciate the prayers of the membership as we discern God's leading for the future. A special word of thanks to all who have been involved and given so much of their time to the GBNI Youth Forum. Namely, we thank Melissa Meldrum who is stepping back this year from the Team after many years of faithful and passionate service.

## GIRLS' BRIGADE NORTHERN IRELAND

### TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)

#### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2024

##### GBNI Shop

Due to uniform and leisure wear sales, September and October are the busiest months of the year. Overall, these categories account for 69% of yearly sales. Shop Staff processed 2203 orders in September - 1285 were customers in-store and 918 by post. The Shop opens on Saturday mornings during September and two in October- these days continue to be extremely busy with up to 75 customers dealt with each morning.

See the table below with sales figures (including returns) listed by category for 2022/23 and 2023/24 (sales figures do not include VAT).

	2022/23 £	2023/24 £	Difference £
Uniform	212,277	171,494	-40,783
Leisure Wear	39,479	37,501	-1,978
Awards	25,692	28,289	2,597
Trophies	5,181	8,097	2,916
Gifts	20,981	23,258	2,277
Coronation Coin	15,786	0	-15,786
Resources	5,996	4,983	-1,013
Scripture	32,411	22,105	-10,306
DofE	6,544	7,781	1,237
Totals	364,347	303,508	-60,839

- Overall sales have decreased by £60,839.
- Uniform sales have decreased by £40,783 due to the extremely busy previous year as companies reopened fully after COVID-19.
- Uniform sales accounted for 57% of all sales.
- We had £15,786 in sales of the Coronation Coin the previous year, contributing to the overall loss for 2023/24.
- Scripture sales for 2022/23 included sales from 2021/22 therefore this year is showing a decrease of £10,306.
- Awards, Trophies, and Gifts have all increased by over £2,000.
- Stock value for the end of the year is £111,828.87 and has decreased by £9,578.41 from the previous year.



# **GIRLS' BRIGADE NORTHERN IRELAND**

## **TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)**

### **FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2024**

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#### **Financial review**

The Trustees are reporting a surplus for the year to 31st May 2024 of £45,212 (2023: deficit of £9,297). Assessment fees were £260,282 (2023: £266,398) and shop sales were £303,508 (2023: £364,347). Shop expenditure reduced to £314,905 (2023: £325,809) as a result of decreased activity.

The year ended with an operational deficit of £49,917 (2023: surplus of £7,879). Our investments continued to perform well, providing £27,588 (2023: £28,386) of income in the year. Surplus on sales amounted to £11,195 (2023: £61,652), which, affected the overall value of our portfolio at 31 May 2024 and increased it by £95,129 (2023: decreased by £17,176).

The Trustees regard this as a satisfactory outcome in another difficult year and consider the financial position to be sound, with reserves, which are adequate to meet the future needs of the charity.

#### **Reserves Policy**

It is the policy of the charity that unrestricted funds which have not been designated for a specific use or are not invested in tangible fixed assets should be maintained at a level equivalent to between six and nine month's charitable expenditure. The Trustees consider that reserves at this level will ensure that, in the event of a significant drop in funding, they will be able to continue the charity's current activities while consideration is given to ways in which additional funds may be raised. On 31st May 2024, the free reserves of £2,136,838 would have covered 27 months of the charity's expenditure. These reserves include buildings of £888,538.

#### **Principal Funding Sources**

Our principal funding sources are annual assessments on individual Girls' Brigade companies and shop sales. The Trustees are grateful for the continuing support of the Education Authority by way of a grant.

#### **Investment Policy**

The Trustees, with the assistance of their registered investment advisors, regularly monitor the investment portfolio to ensure maximum income and growth from the investments whilst continuing to pursue an ethical, medium risk policy which is not contrary to the charity's principles and values.

#### **Risk Policy**

The Trustees have considered the consequences of the continually rising cost of living and other major risks to which the charity is exposed and are satisfied that systems and protocols are in place to mitigate exposure to those risks. The current and future impact does not create a material uncertainty that casts doubt on the ability to continue as a going concern.

#### **Plans for future periods**

Given the strength of reserves and the continuing support of our funders for the foreseeable future, the principal plan is to build and strengthen the organisation through monitoring and reviews of the Strategic document and the feedback from our members.



# **GIRLS' BRIGADE NORTHERN IRELAND**

## **TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2024**

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### **Structure, governance and management**

The charity is a company limited by guarantee as defined by the Companies Act 2006.

The Trustees, who are also the directors for the purpose of company law, and who served during the year and up to the date of signature of the financial statements were:

I McKane

H Lindsay

T Davies

L Murtagh

I Orr

M Meldrum

L Cull

I Bryans

J Budd

A Bingham

T Erskine

B Preston

K Orr

(Appointed 13 September 2023)

### **Recruitment and Appointment of New Trustees**

When new or additional trustees are required then the members are invited to submit nominations and subject to their compliance with the Memorandum and Articles of Association they are considered by the membership for election at the Annual General Meeting. Trustees may be co-opted at other times by the Board and their election as trustees is ratified or otherwise by the membership at the next AGM.

### **Trustees' Interests**

None of the Trustees has any beneficial interest in the company.

### **Auditor**

In accordance with the company's articles, a resolution proposing that Corrigan CA Limited be reappointed as auditor of the company will be put at a General Meeting.

The Trustees' report was approved by the Board of Trustees.



T Davies

**Trustee**

21 August 2024