

Charity Registration No. 100473

**NEWTOWNABBNEY ARTS & CULTURAL
NETWORK TRUSTEES REPORT AND
UNAUDITED ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR
ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

NEWTOWNABBEY ARTS & CULTURAL NETWORK

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Trustees

R Twells
L McGurk
K Crooks
G Griffith
Z Longridge
B Thompson
R Morgan

Charity number

100473

Principal address

24A The
Diamond
Rathcoole
Newtownabbey
BT37 9BJ

Independent examiner

Edward Hanna
26 Backfield Hall
Dromore
BT25 2QU
EW

NEWTOWNABBEY ARTS & CULTURAL NETWORK

NEWTOWNABBEY ARTS & CULTURAL NETWORK

TRUSTEES REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

The Trustees present their report and accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the accounts and comply with the Charity's governing document, the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 and the Statement of Recommended Practice, "Accounting and Reporting by Charities", issued in March 2005.

Structure, governance and management

The Charity was established by a charitable trust deed on 17 October 2014.

The Trustees who served during the year were:

R Twells

L McGurk

K Crooks

Z Longridge

B Thompson

G Griffith

R Morgan

Trustees have assessed the major risks to which the Charity is exposed and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate exposure to the major risks.

Objectives and activities

The Newtownabbey Arts & Cultural Network was established to enhance the quality of life for residents by delivering a broad spectrum of social, educational, and environmental projects..

BENEFITS

The Newtownabbey Arts & Cultural Network is committed to empowering residents to take an active role in shaping their living conditions and environment, while fostering improved health and wellbeing across the community. By expanding access to education and skills development, the Network supports lifelong learning and creates clear pathways to further training and employment opportunities. At the same time, it provides meaningful opportunities for individuals to explore and celebrate their culture and identity, ensuring that every resident can contribute to and benefit from a vibrant, inclusive community.

EVIDENCE OF BENEFIT

We will evidence the increased benefits through evaluation of projects delivered and feedback from participants and funding organisations.

NEWTOWNABBEY ARTS & CULTURAL NETWORK

POSSIBILITY OF HARM

Our activities are driven directly by the needs of participants, and we are confident that initiatives designed to improve living conditions and support personal development present no risk of harm to residents. On the contrary, they serve to strengthen individual capacity and enhance community wellbeing.

BENEFICIARIES

The charities of beneficiaries are the residents of Newtownabbey and surrounding areas.

PRIVATE BENEFIT

The only private benefit to trustees will be skills enhancement and experience gained through participation in activities. The group operates a programme of training which covers all aspects of good governance, and this is necessary to ensure the group complies with relevant legislation and requirements from funding organizations.

The Trustees have paid due regard to guidance issued by the Charity Commission in deciding what activities the Charity should undertake.

NEWTOWNABBEY ARTS & CULTURAL NETWORK

TRUSTEES REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Since its establishment, NACN has delivered training across a wide range of subjects, enabling community members to build skills in Leadership & Management, Human Rights, Conflict Resolution, Conflict Management, Child Protection, Volunteer Development, ICT, and Community Development (HND). We also promote tolerance and inclusion by supporting the creation of community groups when needed—for example, an Autism Support Group.

NACN serves as a link between the community and statutory organisations, helping to address issues related to health, wellbeing, and other concerns brought to our attention.

We are committed to youth engagement, encouraging participation in sport through local training opportunities and tournaments. In addition, we promote cultural activities by using music, drama, and the teaching of creative arts as a way to foster intergenerational connection and community involvement.

NEWTOWNABBEY ARTS & CULTURAL NETWORK

TRUSTEES REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Community Events and Engagements

- **Stephen Hastings Project Management Event:** Coordinated with Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council. 12 Young people took part in planning the event. They attended a series of 6 workshops that allow them to gain the knowledge of Managing a production through to showing people their seats and selling programmes.
- 1. **Night at the Races:** Fundraising event at Whitehouse Workingmen's Club with local shop sponsorships and community engagement. This was another event management project that Carly overseen. Carly has gained a level 3 OCN (Open College Network) Through Lottery funding and she developed this project to help support the finances of a trip to London. There were 8 other participants involved in this project. This was part of growing the NACN Social Enterprise Section.
- 2. **Visit from Doug Beatie and the Ulster Unionist Party:** Hosted a visit to discuss community projects and initiatives. Doug met with the NACN Youth Leaders and chatted about their work
- 3. **Hosted Chairperson Noreen McClelland:** From the Antrim and Newtownabbey Loneliness Network, and Leah Glass from the Northern Trust. As part of NACN growing projects, NACN met with the Loneliness Network Chair to organise workshops to support the charities outreach.

Educational and Creative Workshops

1. **NACN DJ Academy:** 10-week project with Ron Ewens. 20 young people participated in this project. One young girl has gone onto make a career in DJing in the Botanic Inn in Belfast as resident DJ.
2. **Roblox Workshops:** For ages 6-7 and separate sessions for ages 8-14. In total over 50 participated. These sessions ran in 6-week slots
3. **Minecraft Workshops:** Engaging young minds in digital creativity. These classes ran over 6 weeks. 8 young people participated.
4. **Guitar Manufacturing Workshop:** Partnered with McIlroy Guitars. Leading Northern Ireland guitar manufacturer Dermot McIlroy showcased a guitar making event. 10 young people got involved with this project.
5. **Music Production Workshops:** Using Cubase software. Rikki Sawyer overseen the production class. 6 young people attended this project. This has allowed us to keep the classes going and to develop a section of young producers.
6. **Morning Reflections Workshops:** For senior citizens, supported by NACN Young Volunteers in St. Johns. Over a period of 5 months NACN supported the coffee mornings. Parents and young people took part in supporting the Church.

Artistic and Cultural Initiatives

1. **King Charles 3D Printed Models:** Part of the Fabrication Design Team's sales initiative. The fabrication Group designed and manufactured King Charles 3D Printed ornaments
2. **Into the Woods:** Licensed show with MTI Europe, involved community volunteers. Utilising performing Arts as a medium to youth empowerment we bought a licence from West End and held auditions for Into the Woods. We had a cast of 28 and 8 behind the scenes. Part of this project opened doorways to allow parents and volunteers the ability to build stage set and produce costumes. We now have a working production team that does this, and we intend to grow this as part of the social enterprise. This show was for aged 12 to 18. We sold out 2 consecutive evenings. Event was carried out in Ballyearl Courtyard Theatre

NEWTOWNABBEY ARTS & CULTURAL NETWORK

TRUSTEES REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

3. **Matilda:** Performed by the Performing Arts Academy with a cast of 42 and a stage management team of 12. This was also a West End Licenced show and involved the production team of volunteers and parents. This sold out 2 consecutive shows also. Event was carried out in Ballyearl Courtyard Theatre
4. **Variety Musical Show:** Featuring Mamma Mia, Les Misérables, School of Rock, Hairspray, Legally Blonde, Frozen. This event involved the production of 150 costumes that were all manufactured in-house by the parent and Volunteer team. This event was carried out
5. **NACN Community Choir:** Bringing together singers of all ages. This project ran for 12 weeks and involved all ages of people from different areas. This was a fantastic way to bring people together on a good relation basis.

Partnerships and Collaborations

1. **Little Stars and Thrive:** Translink advertisement boards project. NACN members had their photos taken and displayed all over Newtownabbey
2. **St. Lawrence University:** Hosted students from New York. 20 Students spent a day in Rathcoole as part of a study visit to Northern Ireland. NACN members hosted the event and afterwards the students were taken to watch rehearsals for Into the Woods.
3. **Mae Murry Charity Event:** Supported with performances. 3 of NACNs members attended an event in support of the Mae Murry Foundation
4. **Clanmil Housing:** Supported various initiatives including the NACN Tot Summer Scheme. The Summer Scheme enrolled 56 young people aged between 5 and 9 years old. This was a terrific way to bring parents together.
5. **Rapid Relief Team:** Collaborated to provide 60 food hampers to the local community. This was a fantastic Christmas support project for the community. Another event with the RRT we fed 200 people with a BBQ during our summer scheme.
6. **St. Johns Church:** Partnered for additional activity space. NACN now operates out of St. Johns as we don't have enough space to allow us to perform community shows. Now we do

Media and Publications

1. **Rathcoole Newspaper Launch:** In collaboration with Rathcoole Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership. The Young Reporters Group produced the very first copy of the Rathcoole Newsletter. This is something that the young reporters are continuing with in support of the wider community. The newsletter allows all groups in the area to promote their activities and communication to the community.
2. **Knowing Me Knowing You Podcast:** Launched to engage the community. The podcast is a great way to allow individuals to have a platform to express themselves by utilising equipment that they don't have access to. NACN empowers individuals to talk about their own stories or to come together as a group to highlight their activities in the community.
3. **The Killer Queens Podcast:** Research-focused series on unsolved murders and mysteries. 2 young ladies from the community set up the Killer Queens podcast as they wanted to share their interest in this area.

NEWTOWNABBEY ARTS & CULTURAL NETWORK

TRUSTEES REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

4. **Los Angeles Experimental Designs Project:** Linked with Stephen Spielberg's creative director. A group of 12 young game designers had the opportunity to be involved with a large project with Future Screens NI (Northern Ireland) and the Ulster University. The young people hosted in Rathcoole an event that seen 2 members of the creative production team from Los Angeles that came to Northern Ireland to build world story maps. This is part of research that the Director Alex McDowell is carrying out for future work within the film and gaming industries.
5. **Radio Session at Belfast 89 FM:** Discussed upcoming projects and events. 2 young singers from the Colle Studios project spent the day at the Belfast 89fm studios talking about up-and-coming projects and their songs that were played on the radio.

Performances and Events

1. **Performance at Stendhal Festival:** In Limavady with the Nerve Centre. 12 you musicians took part in the festival by singing a 45 min slot at the festival. These seen parents and other members of the community attend the event. The musicians are back again 2024.
2. **Gala Ball Performance:** NACN House band at the Europa Hotel. The NACN House Band that is made up of young musicians were the main event at the Gala Ball for Memory Stones of Love in the Europa Hotel. The event was in aid of all those that died during the pandemic.
3. **Coole Kids Garden Event:** Supported by young performers. 48 young members from NACN attended the Funking Kids Garden event at Christmas. NACN supports Funky Kids as this was a project set up originally by NACN and handed over to empower parents to run the kids group.
4. **Grand Opera House Production:** Sold out performance by the Performing Arts Academy. There were 210 seats allocated in the Grand Opera House studio to community and parents. 66 young people took part in the event, this was a showcase of all their work that ran over a 12-week period.
5. **St. Johns Parish Church Christmas Event:** Sang Christmas carols. NACN took part in support of the church's Christmas Festivities.

Training and Development

1. **Young Leaders Group Workshops:** Developed young leaders to support workshops. A training programme that looked at the opportunities, roles, and responsibilities of young leaders. 14 young leaders took part in this training that ran over 12 weeks.
2. **Springvale Training Centre Day:** Showcased NACN offerings to young people. As part of the NACN Outreach development plan, NACN carried out a series of workshops for Springvale's young people's programme. This included DJing and Music Production. 60 young people were involved.
3. **Piano Classes:** Offered to those unable to afford private lessons. 14 Young People took part in a piano class that they had to sign up to as this involved a professional teacher that taught various level of piano.
4. **Vocal Coaching Events:** Provided by Glen Tweedie Operatic Vocal Coach. 80 young people had the opportunity to work with Operatic Vocal Coach Glenn Tweedie over a 6-week period.

NEWTOWNABBEY ARTS & CULTURAL NETWORK

TRUSTEES REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Special Projects and Visits

1. **Visit to Paul Hamlyn Foundation:** In London for project discussions. 6 young people attended a visit to Paul Hamlyn in London to experience meeting the funder of a project and to engage with other similar projects from the mainland.
2. **Visit from Neal McClelland of Downtown Radio:** Conducted a podcast. A team of 8 young producers met with the Downtown Radio Star to look at the industry.
3. **NACN Members' Tour of the Grand Opera House:** Insightful behind-the-scenes experience. 14 young people took part in a visit to look at the various aspects involved in the theatre.
4. **Halloween and Christmas Creative Groups:** Created products for sale on the NACN Online Shop. An online shop was setup to sell products that the young people and the parent and volunteer group made. This is an ongoing project and part of the development of the social enterprise.
5. **Visit from 1980s Singer Daniel James:** Hosted a podcast. Daniel visited a group of 44 young people and took a workshop on the music industry.

Community Support and Outreach

1. **Creative Parent and Toddler Group:** Established for community engagement. This project at first engaged with 12 mums with toddlers however after 6 weeks the numbers went down to 2 and we decided to end the project. The 2 parents now come to the creative parent's group and help create costumes and set for the performing arts group.
2. **Creative Adult Support Group:** Set up to support local creatives. This group supports the Performing Arts Group by making costumes and set props for the shows that are carried out in the local Church Hall that NACN has developed into a local community theatre. The group sew and produce products that can be sold on the NACN shop online.
3. **Community Karaoke Nights:** Encouraged local participation. Community Development is carried out from this approach as it allows older members of the community to get involved and out of the house. We have gained a good response to these nights, and it has helped us gain new volunteers.
4. **Disco at Kings Park Primary:** Supported the Halloween event. 2 of NACN's young DJs supported the local school by setting up the equipment and playing at the schools' events. This allowed the 2 young DJs to develop their confidence playing in front of a crowd.
5. **NACN Homework Club:** For ages 8-11 to assist with schoolwork. This project ran for 5 weeks. There was a good interest at first but after the 3rd week the young people attending only wanted to carry out the creative projects and the homework was pushed to the side. We understand that not all young people are academic and that so many thrive within the creative and innovative world. 12 young people attended
6. **Halloween Party:** For community members. 60 young people attended the event. 12 young leaders set up the event as part of their event management programme.
7. **Dance Sessions:** Held at the Valley Leisure Centre. We held 8 classes at the Valley Leisure Centre which had a low turnout. We stopped them as there was not enough interest

NEWTOWNABBEY ARTS & CULTURAL NETWORK

TRUSTEES REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Facility and Resource Development

1. **Refurbishment at 30A on Pallet Wall:** Image project for the new facility. As part of the ongoing refurbishment of the facility, young people have been fantastic in helping with the painting and building. The studio is a picture of their vision. 6-month project that seen 20 young people involved.
2. **The Vault Game and Visual Space:** Created a safe space for game developers and visual artists. This project is part of a big partnership with Epic Games, Future Screen NI, Ulster University and Studio Ulster. 12 young game developers have formed a group that is now focusing on making computer games. The aim of the group is to create a game that will go on sale. The project has gained financial support to train to local youth to become facilitators for the Fortnite developers Epic Games..... This is a fantastic opportunity.
3. **Belfast XR Festival Attendance:** Engaged with VR (Virtual Reality) and digital innovation. 9 young people were invited to take part in the Belfast event that was held in the Black Box in Belfast. It involved them gaining experience in Virtual reality.

Achievements and Awards

1. **Joan Christie Bursary Award:** Won by Charlotte Griffith-Williams for Music. This was an event held at the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Councils Theatre. Charlotte is a young leader at NACN.
2. **Level 3 Event Management Certificate:** 12 Young people took apart in the Event Management project. This allows the young people to gain the experience to hold events in the local community.
3. **10th Anniversary Celebration:** Over 500 participants, awards given to members and community groups. Attended by the National Lottery's own Jerome Grace and Professor Paul Moore of Future Screens and Ulster University. This was a celebration of all the young people's work 70 years of Rathcoole and 10 years of NACN

NACN have been actively engaging young people in a variety of creative and developmental activities through our programs. Here is a summary of the key activities undertaken on different days of the week:

Monday:

Creative Workshops: Young members collaborate with adult volunteers to engage in creative activities, fostering teamwork and artistic expression. This is part of the development for the social enterprise element of NACN

Game Development: Young designers and developers get together each week to create Graphic, 3D designs, coding etc..... this is part of the new Partnership with Future Screens NI. Collaborating with the University of Ulster and Epic Games, the young people are planning out the new Games Suite and will become facilitators in the community. They will be able to teach game development to other young individuals, fostering technological expertise. The young people will train to deliver workshops that use the industry standard software used by Epic Games that are the creators of the world's most popular game "Fortnite" This Partnership will also include working with NI Screen and Ulster film Academy.

NEWTOWNABBEY ARTS & CULTURAL NETWORK

TRUSTEES REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Tuesday:

Podcasting: Participants explore the world of podcasting, developing their communication and media skills. This is also an opportunity to engage with other groups to come in and use the facilities that NACN manage as part of the event management group.

Fabrication: Young members hone their skills in fabrication and online shop (ecommerce) by utilising the 3D Printers, laser Cutters, T-shirt and screen printing, Mug printing and Vinyl cutting. These machines require they participants to learn and use Adobe Illustrator

Vocal Workshops: We have been working on singer-songwriter projects. We have an opera vocal coach teaches the theory and techniques of singing. This is being looked at to create an OCN as part of the delivery of social enterprise activities we provide under our youth lead social action approach.

Wednesday:

DJ Academy team leader is a well know DJ that has performed over the years all over the UK and Ibiza. Grahame Williamson AKA Alex Graham takes the Academy workshops where he takes the young DJs through training to become confident in using the equipment and ready to play live at functions. There is an OCN that NACN is delivering that participant from the age of 14 and up can gain.

Creative Writing:

The Creative writing workshop is run by North Belfast writer Leesa Harker. Leesa is known for her "Fifty Shades of Red, White and Blue" Plays, along with others. The workshops are for all ages in the community and attract people from as far as Dromore..... this is great for the image of Rathcoole.

Thursday:

Musicians Workshop: Young musicians are encouraged to express themselves through their music. This workshop helps them develop their unique artistic profiles, nurturing their musical talents.

These diverse activities not only offer creative outlets for our young people but also provide them with valuable skills, opportunities for personal growth, and the chance to express themselves through various art forms.

Within the musicians workshops we have created 2 bands that have begun to work on their Artist profiles and performance set. These band members are from age 13 to 21

The young people are engaged in a songwriting programme and have written an original song that be released as part of an event in the community and will involve social media advertising that will be overseen by the young team members interested in social media and promotional support.

Saturdays: NACN Performing Arts Academy currently runs from St. Johns Church as we needed a larger hall to accommodate the numbers of young students. We have 3classes that run (Little Stars, Juniors, and Seniors) Classes run from 10am to 5pm and are supported by our young leaders. Each young leader that volunteers have been through a training programme delivered by NACN and they are now managing small groups within the Academy.

NEWTOWNABBEY ARTS & CULTURAL NETWORK

TRUSTEES REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

As part of the delivery and services we provide to the community, NACN have become a delivery partner for the University of West London's College of Music. We are now an accredited centre for young people to train in vocal singing and grades. Being an area of socio-economic deprivation, we see this as a game changer in the community by opening the gap to allow local children gain the opportunities of those in better off areas.

This report highlights the diverse range of activities, events, and initiatives undertaken by NACN during the year, demonstrating a strong commitment to community engagement, education, and cultural development.

Facility Works

Work has been ongoing on both 24C and 26C The Diamond which consists of sewing/costume/prop making room and office space.

This is expected to be completed by summer 2024.

NEWTOWNABBEY ARTS & CULTURAL NETWORK

TRUSTEES REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

On behalf of the board of Trustees

Mrs L McGurk

Trustee

Dated: 10/04/2025

NEWTOWNABBEY ARTS & CULTURAL NETWORK

TRUSTEES REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

TO THE TRUSTEES OF NEWTOWNABBEY ARTS & CULTURAL NETWORK

I report on the accounts of the Charity for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and examiner

The charity Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's Trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- (i) examine the accounts under the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2022;
- (ii) to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission Northern Ireland; and
- (iii) to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission Northern Ireland. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (a) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
 - (i) to keep accounting records in accordance with Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2022; and
 - (ii) to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2022;have not been met; or
- (b) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Edward Hanna
24 Rockfield Hall
Dromore
BT25 2QU

Dated: 23/04/2025

NEWTOWN ABBEY ARTS & CULTURAL NETWORK

TRUSTEES REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

INCOME

FUNDING	170,208.62
SUBSCRIPTION/MEMBERSHIPS	20,126
OTHER	7468.18

TOTAL INCOME 197802.80

EXPENDITURE

BANK CHARGES	705.98
INSURANCE	2174.08
ENT/OUTTINGS	198
CONSUMABLES	135.57
OFFICE EXPENSES	5519.41
PROFESSIONAL FEES/FACILITATION	8255.50
SALARIES	97,084.89
SUBSCRIPTIONS	214.20
TEL/INTERNET	1724.53
TRAVEL	1383.44
GAS/ELECTRIC	1364.01
EQUIPMENT/OTHER	43039.36

TOTAL EXPENDITURE 161798.97

NEWTOWNABBEY ARTS & CULTURAL NETWORK

TRUSTEES REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

The accounts were approved by the Trustees on 10 April 2025

Mrs L McGurk

Trustee

NEWTOWNABBEY ARTS & CULTURAL NETWORK

TRUSTEES REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Donations & Legacies	2024	2023
National Lottery Funding	97221	93932
Other Funders (ACNI ANBC NIHE P Hamlyn)	45393	67154
Donations & Other	27594	18706
TOTAL	170208	179792

Total resources expended	2024	2023
Charitable activities		
Staff Costs	97085	101446
Training Costs	8256	12957
Running & Other Costs	56458	61445
TOTAL	161799	175848