

Mid Ulster Victims Empowerment Project (MUVE Project)

(A company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital)

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

for the year ended 31 March 2023

The Trustees present their report along with the financial statements for the year ended 30th June 2022. 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 company's Articles of Association, the Companies Act 2006, Part 8 of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008, other applicable law and the requirements of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP), FRS102 and with the financial reporting standards applicable to charities preparing their accounts.

The trustees, who are also the directors of the charity, at the date of this report and those who served during the financial year together with the dates of any changes are set out on page 3 and are listed below.

The charitable company is limited by guarantee not having a share capital.

Principal Risks and Uncertainties

A summary of these risks would include VSS funding being now on a yearly basis due to a lack of political leadership, an ever-increasing workload for both volunteers and Board members.

MUVE plan to mitigate these risks through implementing and continuously monitoring our reserves policy, increasing our allocation of Board members, providing governance training, and updating our volunteers and more specific training based on their skills and abilities. We have always sourced other streams of funding, which has been successful over this past 12 months.

The directors have conducted a review of the major risks to which the company is exposed. Appropriate systems and internal controls are in place throughout the company's processes and procedures to provide clear accountability and to mitigate those risks which the company faces.

The company seeks to maintain high standards in the management of risk and the processes in place are reviewed annually to ensure their relevance.

Equality

The company is fully committed to its equality responsibilities and to provide fair and unprejudiced treatment for all.

Trustees

The trustees who served during the year are as follows:

Mr Ryan McGeown Chairman
Mr Hugh Gates Vice-Chairman
Mrs Judith McGeown
Mr Geoffrey Hamilton
Mrs Serena Hamilton Secretary
Mr Alister Robinson
Mr Jeffery Lamont Treasurer
Mrs Audrey Brodison
Mr Billy Fuhl
Mr Jason Lamont
Mr Glen Espie
Mr Derek Noonan

In accordance with the Constitution, the trustees retire by rotation and, being eligible, offer themselves for re-election.

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TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

for the year ended 31 March 2023

Objectives

The Company's objectives are specifically restricted to the relief of poverty, the advancement of education, the preservation and protection of health, the promotion of equality and diversity and the promotion of the benefit of the victims and survivors of paramilitary violence and terrorism and other inhabitants of local communities ('hereinafter called the beneficiaries') in particular, but not exclusively from the Mid Ulster Constituency and its environs in Counties Tyrone/Londonderry, Northern Ireland (hereinafter called 'the area of benefit') without distinction of age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnic identity, political or religious opinion, by associating with the statutory authorities, community and voluntary organisations and the inhabitants in a common effort to advance education, to advocate, promote and foster a community spirit in favour of equality and diversity and to provide facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation or other leisure-time occupation, with the object of improving the conditions of life of the said inhabitants.

The group aims:

To foster an atmosphere of mutual support and encouragement among people suffering from the effects of bereavement, injury or trauma as a direct or indirect result of the conflict around benefit, and their relatives, and people in communities so affected.

To assist individuals and families affected by the conflict to address their own personal experiences of hurt, loss and trauma by communicating their experiences; to support those seeking truth, justice and public acknowledgement of what has happened, and provide opportunities for remembrance and mourning.

To alleviate suffering and trauma by the provision of a drop-in facility offering emotional support and counselling services to individuals in need.

To develop the capacity and skills of the members of the socially and economically disadvantaged community of the area of benefit in such a way that they are better able to identify, and help meet, their needs and to participate more fully in society.

To advance education and raise public awareness of the effects of the conflict and sectarian violence around benefit on individuals and communities;

To positively promote the interests of innocent victims and survivors within the Mid Ulster area

To provide services, advice and support to both individuals and the group as a whole to promote the members well-being while they deal with consequences of terrorism.

To provide services directly or indirectly that recognises and addresses the individual's needs including welfare, advocacy, complementary therapies, counselling, trans-generational issues, and social support.

Public Benefit Statement

In setting our objectives and planning our activities for the year the trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit to ensure activities have helped to achieve the charity's purpose and provide a benefit to the beneficiaries.

The prevention and relief of poverty: The public benefit flowing from this purpose is improved quality of life as a result of availing of a variety of welfare services, benefits advice and advocacy services through funding and grants. The inclusion of skills-based training programmes and the work of our Health and Wellbeing Caseworker also contributes towards this objective. The Public benefit achieved via this is that levels of financial/economic deprivation faced by victims/survivors is reduced

The Advancement of Education: The public benefit flowing from this purpose is the development of new skills; improved educational standards; improved educational and career opportunities; building individual and collective capacity to learn and understand through educational classes and workshops with a view to progressing to higher education as well as the acquisition of a variety of higher level educational attainments and competencies; improved sense of worth as volunteers and enhanced career opportunities for individuals. The benefits are demonstrated through the acquisition of qualifications, attainment of certificates and completion of higher-level courses.

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TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

for the year ended 31 March 2023

The advancement of health: The public benefit which flows from this purpose is improved health and well-being; less stressful lifestyles; reduced addictions; a healthier outlook on life in general and the reintegration of persons into the community showing a positive attitude towards others through the provision of counselling, complementary therapies, stress management and health and wellbeing services. All of MUVE's programmes and services are delivered with the promotion of positive health and wellbeing at their heart, and the wellbeing of the individual. The public benefit achieved is the facilitation of victims/survivors to become happier, healthier and more fulfilled citizens.

The advancement of the arts, culture, heritage or science. Through the provision of arts and craft courses, seminars, memory quilt project, etc. The organisation also offers a wide variety of cultural-themed interventions connecting with key dates in the year such as Burns Night etc. The Public benefit obtained is the increased capacity of victims/survivors and the wider community whereby they have an appreciation for the divergence of cultures which comprise in Northern Ireland. Ultimately this has a knock-on benefit for the objective of building Peace within this Society.

The advancement of human rights, conflict resolution or reconciliation or the promotion of religious or racial harmony or equality and diversity: An aspect of MUVE's work is the furtherance of the human rights of the innocent victims and survivors of terrorism and other (Troubles related violence.) MUVE pursues opportunities to have issues raised through consultations, etc. in support of those to which it primarily affects. MUVE operates an Advocacy Support Service, enables victims/survivors to share their testimony, tell their stories in a public setting and the production of booklet for the memory quilt. The public benefit obtained is that a historically marginalised group of victims/survivors are supported in having their rights represented and furthered, reducing social inequalities. Through providing Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation-based Programmes there is also a substantive public benefit for victims/survivors and the wider community in the furtherance of a peaceful and more cohesive society.

The relief of those in need by reason of youth, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantages. MUVE strives to work in meeting the requirements of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act i.e. supporting under-represented groups and has developed a range of initiatives to support such affected individuals. The organisation has a range of youth, older people, disability-based supports and interventions in operation. The groups support of those who are vulnerable, isolated, marginalised and who have often experienced profound acts of injustice. As well as supporting its' core beneficiary constituency MUVE also has supported members of the broader community, thus contributing towards the building of a resilient and resourced community. The Public benefit is the promotion of social inclusion and the increased involvement of underrepresented groups which in turn has the impact of increasing levels of active citizenship. There is no private benefit or harm from the purposes.

Achievements and performance

In 2022/23 the group worked to achieving positive outcomes for innocent victims and survivors, focusing on the following areas:

Health and well-being services

During the year South East Fermanagh Foundation [SEFF], continued to deliver the following services - counselling, complimentary therapies, advocacy support, welfare / benefits advice and the provision of a health and well-being caseworker to provide support and assistance to our members.

Counselling targets were exceeded, and during the year addition service was provided to meet the increased demand for the service. In addition to breaking social exclusion and stigma, we aim to provide a friendly face and a sympathetic ear.

MUVE employ a health and well-being worker which provides support to MUVE's core membership. We have set up a telephones support line which has been very successful with over 400 contacts.

The weekly health and wellbeing support service has also enjoyed growth with vulnerable members accessing the service from across Mid Ulster – we have The Chatterbox club who have people who are isolated meet regularly.

We have achieved our targets in terms of complementary therapies; as usual we allocated therapies on a quarterly basis with an excellent uptake. Victims and survivors often report to us the benefits of the therapies in relieving stress and anxiety as well as assisting with pain management. These benefits are captured and are reported back to our core funders; The Victims and Survivors Service.

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TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

for the year ended 31 March 2023

Coffee mornings continue to be popular with good attendances covering all manner of health, educational, welfare and other issues of related interest. We also held a Christmas luncheon and this was very popular, in particular people who are elderly, live on their own, are lonely and isolated, they report that the luncheon was the only social event they attend and they appreciate the opportunity to socialise and to get a hot meal provided for them. For isolated members MUVE has provided a hot meal that was delivered to their home.

WELFARE SUPPORT

The numbers of members who avail of the welfare support service are also steady with a continued increase in the number of people requesting support with Personal Independent Payment [PIP, TPDPS] applications. In addition there has been a significant increase in the number of members requiring Appeals Tribunal Representation. Ian Irwin (SEFF) continues to support members with advocacy and legacy support on a weekly basis.

SOCIAL SUPPORT

Walking group - We have started a walking group which is split into 2 tiers. Advanced and beginners. The advanced walkers cover approximately 5 – 10 miles of hard terrain which is beneficial for their mental health. The beginners will do less than a mile in a pathed area finishing with a hot cup of tea. This group is more social than exercise.

MEN/HEN SHED – The shed provides a safe space for members to learn and develop new and old skills. We have managed to include local school and youth services within the shed. The shed is utilised five days a week and two evenings.

In terms of classes and courses we delivered a wide variety of courses across the financial year including; arts and craft classes, woodworking courses, fishing and metal detection groups. These courses will support participants in volunteering capacities within the wider work of MUVE. This will provide additional education for a wider range of arts and craft courses in the future.

In relation to transgenerational, the following was delivered: adventure weekend to Newcastle, Halloween event, Christmas-themed activities, which are always extremely popular. (We are Vertigo – Gaming Bus – Belfast Giants – Airsoft – Splash).

RESPIRE

We delivered a number of respite day trips which included Mount Stewart, Irish War Museum, Portrush Boat Cruise, family fishing day and 3 spa days which catered for approximately 450 participants in total.

Meanwhile there was 2 overnight respites breaks which included Enniskillen and Portrush and one activity weekend to Newcastle.

In addition, there were several social events which included Burns Night, storytelling, Queens Jubilee Event, Murder Mystery Night and a Halloween event which provided a social outlet and a night's entertainment.

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TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

for the year ended 31 March 2023

Truth, Justice and Acknowledgement

10th Anniversary service – MUVE

Wreath Laying – November 22

Memory Quilt (on-going)

With these initiatives supported those socially isolated and who would have difficulty going on private holidays due to economic hardship due to the rise in the cost of living. The mainstay of our service remains our volunteers who provide advice and distribute information leaflets. In the year under review over 2,800 volunteer hours were donated and over 1,500 newsletters were distributed to members. Over 590 members availed of the weekly texting service, thus ensuring that members were kept well informed of the various events and services.

We are pleased that by working with our partners SEFF, VSS, Covenant, UDR Aftercare Service, Northern Trust – Health & Well-Being Team, Combat Stress, Mid Ulster Council Community Relations Officer, Veterans Champion, Veteran Commissioner Office, NIVSO (Liz Brown), Defence Garden Scheme and Veterans Foundation we have been able to assist some of the most isolated and deprived members in the victim's sector within the Mid Ulster Council area.

There was a total of 3506 interventions during the year across all services and activities, a significant increase on the projected 2184 agreed target on our delivery plan, with our core funder VSS.

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TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

for the year ended 31 March 2023

Principal Funding Sources

The principal funding sources for Mid Ulster Victims Empowerment are currently by way of grant and contract income

Funding

- **Victims and Survivors Service**
- **Armed Forces Covenant Trust**
- **Community Development & Health Network**
- **Asda Community Foundation**
- **Cookstown & Western Shores Network**
- **Veterans Foundation**
- **The national lottery Community Fund**

Acknowledgements

All the work would not be possible without the support of our major funders the Victims and Survivors Service. We thank the VSS staff for their continued support and assistance.

The group also appreciates the continued support from the other funders. This has enabled us to expand our services and help address some of the issues that our members face on a daily basis, mainly mental health and well-being.

The group would also like to express their sincere appreciation to all the individuals/consultants who liaise on a regular basis and especially for the support offered.

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TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

for the year ended 31 March 2023

Financial Review

Financial performance in the year to 31st March 2023, has been consistent with the trustee's forecasts and expectations. Restricted reserves amounting to £41,030 and unrestricted reserves amounting to £55,739

Reserves Policy

The Directors recognise the need for unrestricted reserves to be maintained at an appropriate level. MUVE's reserves policy is to maintain a sufficient level of reserves to enable operating activities to be maintained, taking account of potential risks and contingencies that may arise from time to time. The policy is reviewed annually by the Directors. The policy identifies the estimated amounts required to meet financial risk associated with potential contingencies and uncertainties relating to the charity's operating activities. These include:

the provision for an orderly winding-down of operations in the event of a significant adverse event that is outside the control of the charity.

the funding of unforeseen major projects that have not been provided for in the normal financial planning process.

Elements of the target figure will include the costs for redundancy and contractual liabilities for such items as rent of offices.

The total for this is expected to be approximately £32,000.

The committee have agreed how surplus funds beyond the amount to be held in reserve could be used for the benefit of the

project. It was agreed that surplus funds could be used as follows –

to give financial support to existing activities if required

to give financial support to assist the development of new activities and services

to purchase additional equipment for the benefit of the project and / or replace existing equipment if required

to make minor improvements to the office space to make it a more welcoming environment

to promote the project through printing of posters and leaflets and the development of a community centre website

to support training needs of volunteer's / committee members

to support volunteers through provision of volunteer expenses for travel and associated costs

to employ members of staff to work for the charity to enable it to meet its legal requirements, to provide additional support for project volunteers / committee members and to bring additional activities and services into the project.

The committee will consider on a regular basis the levels of funding that it holds and how this funding can be used to benefit the project and its associated activities and services.

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TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

for the year ended 31 March 2023

Structure, Governance and Management

The organisation is a charitable company limited by guarantee, having been incorporated on 14 May 2013. The company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its Article of Association. In the event of the company being wound up members are required to contribute an amount not exceeding £1.

Corporate Governance

The company is committed to the principles of Corporate Governance, and through the development of various manuals, will capture all internal and external processes and procedures. The detailing of the company's activities in this way will ensure we follow best practice guidelines and demonstrate appropriate openness, transparency, and accountability in all our business activities.

Embracing Corporate Governance ensures that as an organisation we adhere to the highest standards of integrity in carrying out our business and managing our finances. The company is fully aware of its responsibilities and the need for accountability, particularly in relation to the management of public money.

As a group set up to represent victims of paramilitary violence and terrorism, it is important that such an organisation exists to give support to those affected by the Troubles. The MUVE project is run by a team of dedicated volunteers. The group has a project worker and offers support and advice on a range of issues such as welfare and counselling and includes a drop-in facility as well as providing social events for its members.

The company has a board of directors of 13 members who meet regularly and are responsible for the strategic direction and policy of the project. All services are offered to victims and survivors of trouble-related violence.

RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

None of our trustees receive remuneration or other benefit from their work with the charity. They are only reimbursed for charitable expenses.

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TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

for the year ended 31 March 2023

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES RESPONSIBILITIES

The trustees are responsible for preparing the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the trustees as the directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under charitable company law the trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the net income or expenditure of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether the Charities SORP (effective January 2015) in accordance with FRS 102 has been followed;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

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 them to ensure that the financial statements comply with, and all Regulations to be construed as one with that Act. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Trustees' declaration on unaudited financial statements

In relation to the financial statements comprising the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Accounting policies, applying them consistently and making, on a reasonable and prudent basis, the judgement's underlying them. The have been prepared in the going concern basis on the grounds that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees confirm that have made available to R T J Ross & Co, Chartered Accountants, all the charity's accounting records and provided all the information, books and documents necessary for the compilation of the financial statements.

The trustees confirm that to the best of their knowledge and belief, the accounting records reflect all the transactions of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2023.

Special provisions relating to small companies

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

The trustees' annual report was approved on the 10th January 2024 and signed on behalf of the board of trustees by:

By order of the Board



Mr Ryan McGeown
Trustee

Mr Jeffery Lamont
Trustee