

The following is the Trustees' Report for The Edge for the financial year April 2022 – March 2023. The Edge is registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, number NIC100853. Address is PO Box 18, Windmill Street, Ballynahinch, Co Down BT24 8YT. It is a voluntary organisation governed by a voluntary Board of Trustees.

The vision of The Edge is to:

“...Empower young people and the wider community to achieve their full potential spiritually, mentally, socially and physically”.

This year, we have been able to carry out part of this vision by going into the 3 local primary schools to deliver support to the P6 – P7 classes. This project is called ‘Listening Space’. We are given a room in the school and the kids can sign up to a 10-minute slot to chat about issues they may be facing. This has been successful, and we are able to discuss topics such as stress, family loss, anxiety and more. The school Principals have been very positive and say that they can notice changes in the kids over time. This is something we plan to keep going over the next year.

Another programme we run for the community is the Women’s Group, for women aged between 25 – 80. Around 25-30 women meet in The Edge every fortnight, to support each other and help with loneliness and isolation. Some have lost partners over the past couple of years, mainly to cancer, so this time together to make friends has been vital. They have also been running sessions on cancer awareness and how to best support each other.

Our main challenge this year has been recruitment and we have had an ongoing open post for a Youth Worker to support the Centre Manager in delivering youth programmes, particularly to girls. Across the voluntary sector and all sectors, recruitment is difficult and taking a long time. We continue to advertise this position and aim to fill the position before the new term in September 2023.

The recruitment challenge has influenced the number of sessions being delivered over the week, and we needed to rely heavily on volunteers. We saw an increase in volunteers which is positive, however this can also bring inconsistency week to week as we are dependent on them to deliver youth work.

We have seen the number of young people wanting to connect or reconnect with The Edge increase. The challenge for the year was simply being down a fulltime member of staff which meant restricting the membership. This is something we know will improve when recruitment is successful.

Fundraising has again been restricted this year by a reduction in the number of local community events and less accessibility to bag packs in local supermarkets and on-street activity. Our ability to start new programmes with only one full time youth worker has meant that new grant applications for funding have been reduced and we continue to rely heavily on the generosity of individual donors and churches.

Even with these challenges to our work, The Edge was able to engage and support large numbers of children and young people this year in relational, fun and issue-based programme work face to face, now that we have emerged from the COVID impact of remote meetings.

The Edge has been able to balance its books this year despite the reduction in grant income, as we have only had one full time youth worker, so we have saved on a salary throughout this time. In addition, through the generous provision by several funders of the means to run various youth projects. We are also grateful for the generosity of local people and churches, which has enabled us to end the year in a surplus.

Charity trustees in March 2023 were as follows:

Trustees:

- Mrs Erin Nixon
- Rev Dario Leal
- Mr Terry Hilland
- Mrs Hollie Dowling
- Mr Dave Brown
- Mr Peter Crory
- Mr Ken Foster
- Mr Philip Roy



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Erin Nixon, Chairperson

17 March 2023

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Agreed by trustees on