

# RVH Liver Support Group

Northern Ireland · Charity number 100892

## Details

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**Known as** RVHLSG

**Status** Received

**Registered** 2014-10-10

**Register** [View on the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland register](#)

## Contact

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**Address** Crievemoy  
8 Dungannon Street  
Moy  
Dungannon  
County Tyrone  
Bt71 7sh  
BT71 7SH

**Phone** 07771855171

**Email** [rvhls@gmail.com](mailto:rvhls@gmail.com)

**Website** <http://rvhliversupportgroup.org/>

## Activities

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**Purposes:** The Association is established for the relief of people with liver disease in Northern Ireland (hereinafter called the "area of benefit") and to advance education about liver diseases and in particular to: (a) foster an atmosphere of mutual support and encouragement among people suffering from liver disease and their carers, family and friends; (b) raise awareness for the benefit of the public about the effects of liver disease and methods of management of such disease; (c) support by means of financial assistance any charitable project for the relief of persons suffering from liver disease in the area of benefit, or for the protection and preservation of health of such persons either indirectly by means of research, or directly by the provision of equipment or facilities designed to relieve suffering and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of treatment of liver disease or for any other purpose which the Committee may specifically approve. (d) Promote and raise awareness of the Organ Donor Register for the benefit of the public

**What the charity does:** The advancement of education, The advancement of health or the saving of lives, The relief of those in need by reason of youth, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage

**How the charity works:**

Advice/advocacy/information, Counselling/support, Education/training, Medical/health/sickness, Volunteer

development

**Who the charity helps:** Carers, Children (5-13 year olds), Men, Parents, Preschool (0-5 year olds), Volunteers, Women, Youth (14-25 year olds)

## Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-12-31	£112,496	£82,377	£0	0

## Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Ashley Collins		
Jane Megahy		
Mr Jim Kilpatrick		
Mrs Kay Duffy		
Mrs Rachel Quinney-Mee		
Patricia Getty		
Sandra Lawler		
Sharon Millen		

**RVH Liver Support Group**

Northern Ireland - Charity number 100892

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# Accounts

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**Receipts and payments accounts**

 For the period  
from

01/01/2025

To

31/12/2025

**Section A Receipts and payments**

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>					
Donations & Fundraising	60,254	-	-	60,254	65,594
Income from Just Giving	34,069	-	-	34,069	28,604
Gift Aid	8,810	-	-	8,810	9,120
Interest & Dividends	7,128	-	-	7,128	5,627
Members' Events	2,235	-	-	2,235	1,495
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>A1 Sub total</b> (Gross income for the Annual Return)	<b>112,496</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>112,496</b>	<b>110,440</b>
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales</b> (see tables 1 and 2 in section 7 of the guidance).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>A2 Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>112,496</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>112,496</b>	<b>110,440</b>
<b>A3 Payments</b>					
Patient Care	23,700	-	-	23,700	25,100
Hospital Equipment & Services	7,836	-	-	7,836	857
Committee Travel Expenses	5,211	-	-	5,211	4,240
Other Operational Costs	11,405	-	-	11,405	7,062
Printing, Leaflets & Stationery	518	-	-	518	1,668
Hospital Visits	2,888	-	-	2,888	2,329
Fees & Insurance	1,294	-	-	1,294	1,236
Members Events	29,525	-	-	29,525	12,090
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>A3 Sub total</b>	<b>82,377</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>82,377</b>	<b>54,582</b>
<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases</b> (see tables 1 and 2 in section 7 of the guidance)					
NICIFC Investment (cost)		-	-	-	50,000
		-	-	-	-
<b>A4 Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>50,000</b>
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>82,377</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>82,377</b>	<b>104,582</b>
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	<b>30,119</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>30,119</b>	<b>5,858</b>
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	80,138	-	-	80,138	74,280
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	<b>110,257</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>110,257</b>	<b>80,138</b>

**Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period**

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £	Total funds to nearest £	Last year to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Bank Balances	110,257	-	-	110,257	80,138
		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
	<b>Total cash funds</b>	<b>110,257</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>110,257</b>	<b>80,138</b>
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK	OK	OK

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £	Total funds to nearest £	Last year to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
	Total	-	-	-	-	-

Categories	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)	Last year
B3 Investment assets	NI Central Investment Fund for Charities - Purchase of 6167 shares (2020)	Unrestricted	85,000	104,497	96,063
	NI Central Investment Fund for Charities - Purchase of 2841 shares (2021)	Unrestricted	45,000	48,139	44,254
	NI Central Investment Fund for Charities - Purchase of 3233 shares (2024)	Unrestricted	50,000	54,781	50,361
			-	-	-
	Total		180,000	207,417	190,678

Categories	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)	Last year
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use			-	-	-
			-	-	-
			-	-	-
			-	-	-
			-	-	-
			-	-	-
			-	-	-
		Total		-	-

Categories	Details	Fund to which liability relates	When due (optional)	Amount due (optional)	Last year
B5 Liabilities				-	-
				-	-
				-	-
				-	-
				-	-
	Total			-	-

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature  


Print Name  
 Jim Kilpatrick MBE  
 (Treasurer)

Date of approval  
 19/01/2026

**Section C Notes to the Accounts**

**C1 Nature and purpose of funds** (may be stated on analysis of funds worksheets)

Unrestricted funds are available for general purposes in accordance with the Charity's purposes.

**C2 Grants**

Type of activity or project supported	Individual / institution	Number of grants made	£
		<b>Total</b>	-

**C3 Trustee remuneration - details**

Authority under which paid	£

**C4 Trustee expenses - details**

	Number of trustees	£
Reimbursement to trustees for minor sundry invoiced purchases, plus a 45ppm mileage allowance for attendance at approved and regular Group events, and activities in connection with Group business. ** See below for breakdown **	6	6,166

**C5 Transactions with trustees and connected persons**

Nature of relationship	Nature of transaction	Transaction amount (£)	Balance outstanding at period end (£)

**C6 Other information**

Trustee Expenses - Kay Duffy £2,160, Jim Kilpatrick £1,802, Ashley Collins £331, Sharon Millen £429, Patricia Getty £137, Arthur Goan £1,307.

**RVH Liver Support Group**

Northern Ireland - Charity number 100892

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# Accounts

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Royal Victoria Hospital Liver Support Group	100892	
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## Receipts and payments accounts

For the period from	01/01/2024	To	31/12/2024	
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### Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>					
Donations & Fundraising	65,594	-	-	65,594	49,438
Income from Just Giving	28,604	-	-	28,604	16,569
Gift Aid	9,120	-	-	9,120	4,472
Interest & Dividends	5,627	-	-	5,627	4,873
Members' Events	1,495	-	-	1,495	6,150
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>A1 Sub total</b> (Gross income for the Annual Return)	<b>110,440</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>110,440</b>	<b>81,502</b>
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales</b> (see tables 1 and 2 in section 7 of the guidance).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>A2 Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>110,440</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>110,440</b>	<b>81,502</b>
<b>A3 Payments</b>					
Patient Care	25,100	-	-	25,100	23,600
Hospital Equipment & Services	857	-	-	857	16,137
Committee Travel Expenses	4,240	-	-	4,240	3,232
Other Operational Costs	7,062	-	-	7,062	2,223
Printing, Leaflets & Stationery	1,668	-	-	1,668	3,697
Hospital Visits	2,329	-	-	2,329	1,811
Fees & Insurance	1,236	-	-	1,236	1,139
Members Events	12,090	-	-	12,090	8,240
25th Anniversary		-	-		10,786
<b>A3 Sub total</b>	<b>54,582</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>54,582</b>	<b>70,865</b>
<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases</b> (see tables 1 and 2 in section 7 of the guidance)					
NICIFC Investment (cost)	50,000	-	-	50,000	
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>A4 Sub total</b>	<b>50,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>50,000</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>104,582</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>104,582</b>	<b>70,865</b>
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	<b>5,858</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>5,858</b>	<b>10,637</b>
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	74,280	-	-	74,280	63,643
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	<b>80,138</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>80,138</b>	<b>74,280</b>

**Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period**

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £	Total funds to nearest £	Last year to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Bank Balances	80,138	-	-	80,138	74,280
		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
	<b>Total cash funds</b>	<b>80,138</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>80,138</b>	<b>74,280</b>
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK	OK	OK

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £	Total funds to nearest £	Last year to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
	<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

Categories	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)	Last year
B3 Investment assets	NI Central Investment Fund for Charities - Purchase of 6167 shares (2020)	Unrestricted	85,000	96,063	92,898
	NI Central Investment Fund for Charities - Purchase of 2841 shares (2021)	Unrestricted	45,000	44,254	42,796
	NI Central Investment Fund for Charities - Purchase of 3233 shares (2024)	Unrestricted	50,000	50,361	-
	<b>Total</b>		<b>180,000</b>	<b>190,678</b>	<b>135,694</b>

Categories	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)	Last year
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use			-	-	-
			-	-	-
			-	-	-
			-	-	-
			-	-	-
			-	-	-
	<b>Total</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

Categories	Details	Fund to which liability relates	When due (optional)	Amount due (optional)	Last year
B5 Liabilities				-	-
				-	-
				-	-
				-	-
	<b>Total</b>			<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature  


Print Name  
 Jim Kilpatrick MBE  
 (Treasurer)

Date of approval  
 02/02/2025

**Section C Notes to the Accounts**

**C1 Nature and purpose of funds** (may be stated on analysis of funds worksheets)

Unrestricted funds are available for general purposes in accordance with the Charity's purposes.

**C2 Grants**

Type of activity or project supported	Individual / institution	Number of grants made	£
		<b>Total</b>	-

**C3 Trustee remuneration - details**

Authority under which paid	£

**C4 Trustee expenses - details**

	Number of trustees	£
Reimbursement to trustees for minor sundry invoiced purchases, plus a 45ppm mileage allowance for attendance at approved and regular Group events, and activities in connection with Group business. ** See below for breakdown **	8	5,187

**C5 Transactions with trustees and connected persons**

Nature of relationship	Nature of transaction	Transaction amount (£)	Balance outstanding at period end (£)

**C6 Other information**

Trustee Expenses - Kay Duffy £1,090, Jim Kilpatrick £946, Ashley Collins £117, Jane Megahy £143, Rachel Quinney-Mee £630, Sharon Millen £532, Patricia Getty £257, Arthur Goan £1,472.

**RVH Liver Support Group**

Northern Ireland - Charity number 100892

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# Annual report

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**ROYAL VICTORIA HOSPITAL  
LIVER SUPPORT GROUP  
NIC100892  
ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2024**



**Registered Address**

Crievemoy, 8 Dungannon Street, Moy, Dungannon, BT71 7SH

**Trustees**

Kay Duffy, Jim Kilpatrick, Rachel Quinney-Mee, Sharon Millen, Patricia Getty, Arthur Goan, Ashley Collins, Jane Megahy

**Basis of Reporting**

This report covers the activities of the Group for the calendar year 2024. The Group's AGM was once again held via Zoom on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> March. All members received invitations to attend, including those for whom we don't hold an email address, to ensure all members were aware of the meeting. Members attending were issued with all relevant AGM papers by email in advance of the meeting, namely the Agenda, 2023 Annual and Financial Report, and a summary of the Accounts for 2023.

**Committee**

At the AGM all offices were declared vacant. All existing Committee members were willing to continue serving in office, and were duly re-elected.

**Election of Office Bearers**

In line with the procedure laid down in our Constitution, the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary were elected into office by the Committee members at their first meeting following the election of the full Committee at the AGM. These were Chairman – Jim Kilpatrick, Vice Chairman – Arthur Goan, Treasurer – Jim Kilpatrick, Secretary – Ashley Collins.

**Bereavements**

We remember the members of our Group who unfortunately passed away during this reporting period and pass on our condolences to their families.

**Meeting our Stated Objectives**

The work of the Group continues to be driven by the stated objectives in our governing document and as ever, any review and evaluation of our work must assess how well we have fulfilled those objectives in the past year.

***1) To foster an atmosphere of mutual support and encouragement among people suffering from liver disease and their carers, families and friends.***

The AGM was held on 21<sup>st</sup> March by Zoom, with the election of Committee members being conducted by Dr Neil McDougall, who also brought those participating in the meeting up to date with news from the Liver Unit. As with our other Zoom meetings, members from across all parts of the Province participated. There are many practical benefits and efficiencies in holding our AGM online, something the Committee have considered for future AGMs.

Following the initial success of our occasional coffee mornings in the Autumn of 2023, the Committee set about planning venues across the Province for the rest of 2024. These included the Seagoe Hotel in Portadown, the Mourne Country Hotel in Newry, Woodlawn Garden Centre in Carryduff, the Everglades Hotel in Derry/Londonderry, Mossley Mill in Newtownabbey, the Stables in Groomsport, Hillsborough Castle (to coincide with Organ Donation Week). More are planned on an ongoing occasional basis at selected venues around the Province.

Our annual Members' Lunch was held in early June, this time at the Tullyglass Hotel in Ballymena, when we were delighted to have over 100 members, family members and friends along for a most enjoyable full buffet lunch. Many positive comments on the venue, and the quality and quantity of the food on offer, means we are planning a return in June 2025.

We were delighted to be able to hold a Family Christmas Party in December, which was thoroughly enjoyed by the children and young people present, as well as their parents and family members. The afternoon was filled with art and craft activities, party food, and a visit by Santa Claus. Everyone is looking forward to a repeat in 2025.

All of the events above allow us to bring our members together socially, providing them with opportunities to mutually support each other through friendship and the chance to understand what each other has gone through in their own personal liver disease journey. We should not, however, lose sight of the primary purpose of the Group, patient and family care and support. This continues discreetly in the background, away from public gaze. One to one private support of patients and their families occurs via text messages and phone calls, often at unsociable hours, but always with the aim of providing the best possible support that we can in any particular scenario.

Many hours are spent each month by the team of Kay Duffy, Jim Kilpatrick and Arthur Goan assisting and supporting adult patients and their carers, with the same commitment shown by Rachel Quinney-Mee and Patricia Getty in their support of children and adolescents with liver conditions, and their parents.

During 2024 those committee members with responsibility for patient care made 465 contacts with adult patients and carers, and 198 with the parents of children. Most of these have been sustained contacts over difficult and sometimes distressing periods of time. Patient care remains the core element of our work and we continue to carry it out in a very dedicated and dignified way.

As well as practical and emotional support, we continue to offer financial assistance to patients travelling outside Northern Ireland for liver-related procedures, pre-transplant assessments or transplantation. For the financial year to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024, we paid out £25,100 in patient support grants (2023 - £23,600). The majority of payments (34) were for procedures or treatment for children and young people, 26 were for pre-transplant assessments, with 22 being paid after successful transplantation. In addition, £500 was spent on bereavement grants, to help support the immediate family circles of deceased patients.

## **2) *To raise awareness of liver disease in all its forms for the benefit of the public.***

Our Helpdesk presence outside 6B Liver Outpatients in the RVH has had a full year of operation, following its restoration in late 2023, after the lifting of Covid restrictions. We are once again interacting with patients attending their appointments as they attend their checkups. A number of leaflets from the British Liver Trust are once more on display, as well as Group contact information. Clinics are now held each day, with the principal pre- and post-transplant clinics on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, usually with no more than 8 to 10 appointments. We look forward to chatting

with patients as they come and go - if you are passing by for an appointment, please do stop and say 'hello'.

Throughout the year the joint clinics between Birmingham Children's Hospital and the Children's Hospital have continued, and we were able to see a level of normality once again. These opportunities for direct face to face contact with families are pivotal occasions to meet and support them during difficult times, and for parents of new patients to learn about the support the Group can offer them. Thanks go to the staff in the Children's Hospital for their support and cooperation during the joint clinics.

During the year we began attending the occasional joint King's/RVH clinics held in Ward 6D, where we are able to inform the attendees about the Group, and offer advice and support to those being seen. This cooperation with the medical team is greatly appreciated by them and the patients alike.

During 2024 our Facebook, Instagram and Twitter channels, as well as our own website, were a vital means of disseminating updates from the Public Health Agency, Organ Donation NI, the British Liver Trust, as well as from the RVH Hepatology Consultants, and our own Group-related activities and information.

We were delighted to see the return again of the British Liver Trusts' 'Love Your Liver' Roadshow to Northern Ireland in September, this time for a 4-day visit. This gives the public the opportunity to have a free Fibroscan check in the Roadshow trailer. We were delighted to support the Liver Trust staff in managing the queues waiting for their scan. It was an extremely busy time, with over 500 people scanned in Londonderry, Belfast, Enniskillen as well as at Stormont Buildings, of which around 7% received advice on following up their scan with their GP. We look forward to the Roadshow returning in 2025, and have pledged our continued support to the British Liver Trust once again.

We were extremely fortunate throughout 2024 to be one of the chosen charities of Cllr. Mark Cooper BEM, during his year in office as Mayor of Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council. This afforded us the opportunity to make the Group more visible across the Borough, and to avail of every opportunity to meet with Council officials and staff, and those residents we met at social events during the year. The highlight was undoubtedly the Black Tie Ball, held in March at the Hilton Hotel, Templepatrick, especially in support of the Group. Our thanks go to Mark and his team for their very substantial donation to the Group during his term in office.

### ***3) To support by means of financial assistance ... persons suffering from liver disease through research or the provision of equipment or facilities.***

The replacement of the Ward 6D portable ECG monitor, ordered at the end of 2023, due to it suffering an increasing number of operational failures, was completed in 2024, and is now in use in Ward 6D. The staff are delighted at the timing, as it has now been calibrated to feed directly into the Epic Encompass system for patient records, which went live in June.

The refurbished Relative's Room in the Glasshouse on Ward 6D is now proving to be an invaluable asset, being used by patients, family members, and Ward staff. It is also a quiet space for the Consultants to discuss the care of patients with their families. Supplies of tea, coffee, sugar, milk and biscuits are continually restocked as necessary.

At Christmas, individual adult patient gift bags were made up, comprising a selection of foodstuffs, confectionery and toiletry items, along with a variety of crossword, sudoku puzzle books and pens. The child patient hamper was filled with individually packaged 'goodie bags' containing reading books,

note pads, drawing books, puzzle books, pens and other small items to keep them all busy and active. Some toiletries were also included for the teenagers. Our thanks go to those on committee who spent considerable time putting these together. Everything was gratefully received and hopefully brought a smile and a little pleasure to those unfortunate enough to be staying in hospital over the Christmas period.

We ended the year with a new method of offering support to vulnerable adult patients arriving into the liver Ward directly from the Emergency Department, many of whom arrive with no personal items. We now supply Group-branded personal washbags, containing vital necessary personal hygiene items such as a toothbrush, toothpaste, shower gel, cleansing wipes, lip balm, deodorant, facecloth, and for the men, shaving gel and a razor. The ladies receive some moisturising face wash, skin moisturiser and some hygiene pads. These washbags have been very well received by both the patients and the Ward staff caring for them, who appreciate the 'feelgood factor' which comes from receiving quality branded items as part of their care. We will continue to keep the Ward stocked with these washbags in the future.

#### **4) *The promotion of the organ donor register.***

The Group has always espoused the benefits of organ donation and organ transplantation in all its forms, and we take every available opportunity to promote those benefits through all possible means. While this happens throughout the year, it reaches a peak during Organ Donation Week in September.

We were able to share honest, loving recollections from our members about how their lives have been positively changed due to organ donation, this time via some personal video interviews with patients. Everyone commented on the enormous sense of gratitude they feel towards their donor, their decision to donate their organs, and the fact that they'd had 'the chat' with their families about their decision. Committee members also engaged directly with local Councils as they once again supported Organ Donation Week. Our social media posts during Organ Donation Week were widely shared and copied by many organisations in support of organ donation, such as Organ Donation NI. Photographs of the Group's activities regularly appear in local newspapers.

With Daithi's Law - the Organ and Tissue Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill - now up and running, there can be no relaxation in our role of encouraging the public at every opportunity to have 'the chat' with their family and friends, and to sign the Register so that in the event of their death, their decision is clearly registered and known, thus making consent for donation by their family at that time, more clear cut. The Law has changed organ donation to a system where all eligible adults, normally resident in Northern Ireland, will be deemed to have consented to donate their organs in situations where it is possible for donation to occur, unless they specifically indicate their desire to be removed from the Organ Donor Register.

It is disappointing however that previously ring-fenced finance put in place by the Stormont Executive to continue to advertise the change to the law, has now been rescinded. We can only hope there will be no long term reduction in the public's awareness of the change, and that their willingness to consent to organ donation remains strong.

#### **Ongoing work**

The core work of the Group continues to be undertaken by our small dedicated team of Committee members, spread geographically across Northern Ireland, who keep our primary goal of support and care for liver patients and their families and friends to the fore at all times. Each member has their own particular responsibilities, ensuring we operate efficiently for the collective benefit of the whole Group.

As ever, our Founder Kay Duffy leads the Adult Patient Care team, with the same care and attention to detail as she has done for the many hundreds of patients who have been supported over the years.

Sharon Millen, acts as our liaison with the Charity Commission, our link with all matters of academic research into liver disease and psychology, and our coordinator for the Belfast Marathon and patient participation in the British, European and World Transplant Games.

Arthur Goan, in addition to his role as Vice Chairman of the Group, maintains our contact database of members and manages our website. He is also responsible for Adult Patient Care, sharing this with Kay Duffy and Jim Kilpatrick. This involves manning the Helpdesk at Liver Outpatients and also ensuring the Relative's Room is clean and restocked with tea/coffee and other supplies. He also focuses on specific areas affecting our liver patients such as alcohol, and hepatitis.

Ashley Collins is the Secretary of the Group, producing Minutes of our proceedings of a very high quality. She also willingly assists with activities for our children and adolescents, offering invaluable help to Rachel and Patricia when required.

Rachel Quinney-Mee and Patricia Getty, in addition to their roles as Patient Carers for children and adolescents continued their very active liaison work with the Public Health Agency on the Group's behalf. Their dedication to their role takes up many hours of their time, all of which helps foster a close relationship with the parents of the children they support.

Jane Megahy, our Social Media Administrator, continually produces high quality graphic work for our social media channels and emails, and looks after securing appropriate software to handle our bulk emails and texts to our members. With so much of our communication relying on getting the most out of technology, Jane's knowledge in this field is a great asset.

Jim Kilpatrick fulfills the roles of Chairman, Treasurer and Adult Patient Carer. His interactions with the consultants, ward staff and outside bodies is continual, and gives direction to the Group's focus and activities.

The work of the Group is extensive and wide ranging, and it is clear that we would not be able to perform our roles and provide the support we do without the ongoing and unwavering financial support we receive from fundraisers, whether patients or their families or friends, or monies we receive in the form of bequests or 'in memoriam' donations. Every single penny we receive is put to use here in Northern Ireland to further the charity's goals and purposes.

We are rightly recognised as the 'de facto' patients' voice for liver patients across Northern Ireland, irrespective of the type of condition. Our influence extends beyond our local borders, through our relationships with the British Liver Trust, King's College Hospital, Birmingham Children's Hospital, and other patient support groups across the British Isles. To that end, we were delighted during 2024 to offer advice and to pass on our experiences over the years, ahead of the creation of the new Liver Ireland Support Network (LISN), which supports liver patients in the Republic of Ireland. We wish them success in all they do in the future.

### **Financial Report**

The total net worth of the Group at 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024 was £204,280.23, made up of our Danske Current Account £5,595.13, Danske Investment Account £68,685.10 and NI Central Investment Fund for Charities (NICIFC) £130,000. This NICIFC investment equated to 9,008 shares in the Fund, which with

a share price on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 of £15.0637 meant our shareholding at the start of this financial year had a market value of £135,693.81.

### **Income**

Total income for 2024 came to £110,440.29 (2023 - £81,501.89), our highest ever income thanks to several one-off donations. Of this total, £65,594.18 came from direct donations (2023 - £49,437.56). Some £34,516.63 came via Just Giving including Gift Aid on applicable donations (2023 - £19,212.74). The effectiveness of donating and fundraising via Just Giving is well known, and we find many fundraisers choose this online system for their campaigns. Thanks to all of you. Our own direct Gift Aid reclaim from HMRC produced £3,207.28 (2023 - £1,828.15).

To maximise the return on our investment monies, we increased our shareholding with the Northern Ireland Central Investment Fund for Charities by purchasing another 3,233 shares (£50,000), and now hold a total of 12,241 shares. This equates to a total investment of £180,000. Our NICIFC investment has been made with security and longevity in mind, and we will ride out any short term rises and falls which occur. In line with the Fund's long term stated aim of achieving a consistent 3% yield on investments, the dividends received from the Fund during the year, added to the much smaller Interest from our Danske Accounts, came to £5,627.20 (2023 - £4,873.44).

We must offer thanks to everyone - patients, family members and friends - who undertook sponsored fundraising on our behalf, and to those who made quiet and discreet personal donations during the year. The ingenuity and inventiveness of our fundraisers is amazing to see, and never fails to impress.

### **Expenditure**

Total expenditure for the year came to £54,581.68 (2023 - £70,864.81), of which £25,100 was Patient Care payments (2023 - £23,600). The reduction in expenditure compared to 2023 is due to there being no further outgoings during the year in connection with the Group's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Nor was there any spend on new equipment for the Liver Unit, as this was not requested during 2024.

Committee travel expenses, vital to ensure the Committee members can effectively undertake Group business across the whole of the Province, came to £4,240.47 (2023 - £3,232.40) and reflected a marked increase in demands for attendance at fundraising events, committee meetings, members' meetings and other Group organized events. No committee expenses are paid unless approved beforehand and fully receipted. We provide a summary of all of the expenses incurred, per person, to the Charity Commission as part of our annual submission of our accounts.

Telephone and postage charges reduced significantly to just £249.76 (2023 - £795.99) thanks to changing our phone contract to a new low cost provider, and maximising our use of electronic communications with our members. Printing, Leaflets & Stationery also saw a sizeable decrease to £1,668.44 (2023 - £3,696.86). As with all planned expenditure, quotations were received and considered by the committee before any purchase. Reflecting the large increase in the number of coffee mornings organised during the year, together with our annual Members' Lunch, expenditure for Members' Events rose to £12,090.13 (2023 - £8,240.49).

Our Public and Trustees Liability Insurance premium rose slightly again to £557.36 (2023 - £476.56). IT costs rose to £1,298.73 (2023 - £313.88), covering the charges for software licences and maintaining our website, plus our new bulk text service subscription. Maintaining consumables (tea/coffee/biscuits/milk/sugar) in the Relatives' Room in Ward 6D came to a total of £2,111.25.

Our annual return visit to King's College Hospital was in September. These visits, by the Patient Carers on the committee, are vital in ensuring we keep up to date with any personnel or operational changes at the hospital, and allow us to build and develop relationships with those people our patients are most likely to encounter when they travel to King's for either assessment or transplant. The resulting benefits to those we care for are massive, and should not be under-estimated. Our 'Patient's Guide to Visiting King's College Hospital' - a handbook for patients from Northern Ireland who need to attend King's, was reviewed and updated during the visit. It provides essential information about how to get to King's, accommodation options, and travelling around the area to and from the hospital. This will continue to be reviewed annually and updated as required to ensure it remains current at all times. Total expenditure for the visit was £2,328.68 (2023 - £1,811.16).

The year finished with a total net worth of £260,138.84, made up of our Danske Current Account £1,017.63, Danske Investment Account £79,121.21 and NI Central Investment Fund for Charities (NICIFC) £180,000 (historical cost). As referred to earlier, the NICIFC investment market value at 31<sup>st</sup> December sat at £190,678.06.

It should be noted that the administrative costs of running the Group are fully covered by our investment income and Gift Aid reclaims, meaning every single penny of personal donations or monies received by fundraising efforts, goes to patient care, member events and supporting the medical staff's work in supporting patients.

### **Conclusion**

In many respects, 2024 was something of a record year for the Group's finances, as well as our range of operations. With our financial security, the Committee will continue to explore new avenues of patient care, which would have been unthinkable even five years ago.

With our Helpdesk service at the transplant clinics back in full operation, and our presence increasing at various other clinics, along with our ability to visit patients in Ward 6D, our aim is to constantly improve our patient support, and to react to the suggestions and wishes of our members. We hope to be able to grow our support at the joint clinic at Altnagelvin, and expand our interactions with the Gastroenterology unit in the Ulster Hospital. We will continue to search out early patient engagement opportunities at the other regional hospitals across the Province, in order to be able to support liver patients early in their journeys.

I am known to state frequently how immensely proud I am of how our Committee works diligently in their service to the Group's members, and with a strong commitment to their roles, this will continue for some time. Their work however is for nothing without the desire from the members to support all we do, not only through involvement in our meetings and activities, but also through their continued financial support. We can only do what we do, because you enable us to do so.



Date: 31 January 2025

Jim Kilpatrick MBE  
Chairman / Treasurer / Adult Patient Carer

**RVH Liver Support Group**

Northern Ireland - Charity number 100892

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# Annual return

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## **Independent examiner's report to the charity trustees of the Royal Victoria Hospital Liver Support Group**

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This is my report on the receipts and payments of the charity for the 12 month period ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024.

### **Respective responsibilities of charity trustees and examiner**

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008.

It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts under Section 65 of the Charities Act
- Follow the procedures laid down in the general directions given by the Commission under Section 65(9)(b) of the Charities Act
- State whether particular matters have come to my attention

### **Basis of independent examiner's report**

I have examined your charity accounts for the financial year 2020, as required under section 65 of the Charities Act and my examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland under Section 65(9)(b) of the Charities Act.

My examination included a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also included consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as charity trustees concerning any such matters.

My role is to state whether any material matters have come to my attention giving me cause to believe:

1. That accounting records were not kept in accordance with Section 63 of the Charities Act
2. That the accounts do not accord with those accounting records
3. That the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act
4. That there is further information needed for a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

### **Independent examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination and have no concerns in respect of the matters (1) to (4) listed above and, in connection with following the Directions of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, I have found no matters that require drawing to your attention.

Name: Michael Carson

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

*Michael Carson*

Address: 32 Holland Gardens, Belfast, BT5 6EG

Relevant professional qualification or body: FCPFA

Date: 11<sup>th</sup> February 2025

**RVH Liver Support Group**

Northern Ireland - Charity number 100892

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# Accounts

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**Receipts and payments accounts**

 For the period  
from

01/01/2023

To

31/12/2023

**Section A Receipts and payments**

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>					
Donations & Fundraising	49,438	-	-	49,438	50,446
Income from Just Giving	16,569	-	-	16,569	24,094
Gift Aid	4,472	-	-	4,472	3,774
Interest & Dividends	4,873	-	-	4,873	4,140
Members' Events	6,150	-	-	6,150	885
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>A1 Sub total</b> (Gross income for the Annual Return)	<b>81,502</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>81,502</b>	<b>83,339</b>
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales</b> (see tables 1 and 2 in section 7 of the guidance).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>A2 Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>81,502</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>81,502</b>	<b>83,339</b>
<b>A3 Payments</b>					
Patient Care	23,600	-	-	23,600	13,750
Hospital Equipment	16,137	-	-	16,137	19,918
Committee Expenses	3,232	-	-	3,232	1,172
Other Operational Costs	2,223	-	-	2,223	1,794
Printing, Leaflets & Stationery	3,697	-	-	3,697	1,044
Hospital Visits	1,811	-	-	1,811	2,129
Fees & Insurance	1,139	-	-	1,139	1,121
Members Events	8,240	-	-	8,240	4,499
25th Anniversary	10,786	-	-	10,786	1,045
<b>A3 Sub total</b>	<b>70,865</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>70,865</b>	<b>46,472</b>
<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases</b> (see tables 1 and 2 in section 7 of the guidance)					
<b>NICIFC Investment (cost)</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>A4 Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>70,865</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>70,865</b>	<b>46,472</b>
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	<b>10,637</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>10,637</b>	<b>36,867</b>
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	63,643	-	-	63,643	26,776
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	<b>74,280</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>74,280</b>	<b>63,643</b>

**Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period**

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £	Total funds to nearest £	Last year to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Bank Balances	74,280	-	-	74,280	63,643
		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
	<b>Total cash funds</b>	<b>74,280</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>74,280</b>	<b>63,643</b>
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK	OK	OK

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £	Total funds to nearest £	Last year to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
	Total	-	-	-	-	-

Categories	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)	Last year
B3 Investment assets	NI Central Investment Fund for Charities - Purchase of 6167 shares	Unrestricted	85,000	92,898	87,806
	NI Central Investment Fund for Charities - Purchase of 2841 shares	Unrestricted	45,000	42,796	40,450
			-	-	-
			-	-	-
	Total		130,000	135,694	128,256

Categories	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)	Last year
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use			-	-	-
			-	-	-
			-	-	-
			-	-	-
			-	-	-
			-	-	-
		Total		-	-

Categories	Details	Fund to which liability relates	When due (optional)	Amount due (optional)	Last year
B5 Liabilities				-	-
				-	-
				-	-
				-	-
		Total			-

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature



Print Name

Jim Kilpatrick MBE  
(Treasurer)

Date of approval

05/01/2024

**Section C Notes to the Accounts**

**C1 Nature and purpose of funds** (may be stated on analysis of funds worksheets)

Unrestricted funds are available for general purposes in accordance with the Charity's purposes.

**C2 Grants**

Type of activity or project supported	Individual / institution	Number of grants made	£
		<b>Total</b>	-

**C3 Trustee remuneration - details**

Authority under which paid	£

**C4 Trustee expenses - details**

	Number of trustees	£
Reimbursement to trustees for minor sundry invoiced purchases, plus a 45ppm mileage allowance for attendance at approved and regular Group events, and activities in connection with Group business.	<b>6</b>	<b>4,688</b>
** See below for breakdown **		

**C5 Transactions with trustees and connected persons**

Nature of relationship	Nature of transaction	Transaction amount (£)	Balance outstanding at period end (£)

**C6 Other information**

Trustee Expenses - Kay Duffy £1,311, Jim Kilpatrick £797, Rachel Quinney-Mee £329, Sharon Millen £420, Patricia Getty £133, Arthur Goan £1,698 - (of which £1,039 relates specifically to the refurbishment and upkeep of the Relatives' Room. Use of a debit card on the Group's account, rather than a personal card, will remove these expenses from Jan 2024 onwards).

**RVH Liver Support Group**

Northern Ireland - Charity number 100892

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# Annual report

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**ROYAL VICTORIA HOSPITAL  
LIVER SUPPORT GROUP  
NIC100892  
ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2023**



**Registered Address**

Crievemoy, 8 Dungannon Street, Moy, Dungannon, BT71 7SH

**Trustees**

Kay Duffy, Jim Kilpatrick, Rachel Quinney-Mee, Sharon Millen, Patricia Getty, Arthur Goan, Ashley Collins, Jane Megahy

**Basis of Reporting**

This report covers the activities of the Group for the calendar year 2023. The Group's AGM was once again held via Zoom on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> March. All members received invitations to attend, including those for whom we don't hold an email address, to ensure all members were aware of the meeting. Members attending were issued with all relevant AGM papers by email in advance of the meeting, namely the Agenda, 2022 Annual and Financial Report, and a summary of the Accounts for 2022.

**Committee**

At the AGM all offices were declared vacant. All existing Committee members were willing to continue serving in office.

**Election of Office Bearers**

In line with the procedure laid down in our Constitution, the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary were elected into office by the Committee members at their first meeting following the election of the full Committee at the AGM. These were Chairman – Jim Kilpatrick, Vice Chairman – Arthur Goan, Treasurer – Jim Kilpatrick, Secretary – Ashley Collins.

**Election of Committee Members**

Existing Committee members Kay Duffy, Rachel Quinney-Mee, Sharon Millen, Patricia Getty and Jane Kilpatrick were re-elected.

**Bereavements**

We remember the members of our Group who unfortunately passed away during this reporting period and pass on our condolences to their families.

**Strategy Meeting**

A Strategy Meeting with the RVH Liver Unit Consultants and staff was held in late September, where we discussed matters of mutual interest affecting the Liver Unit such as patient care, equipment provision and future plans by both the Liver Unit and ourselves.

**Meeting our Stated Objectives**

The work of the Group continues to be driven by the stated objectives in our governing document and as ever, any review and evaluation of our work must assess how well we have fulfilled those objectives in the past year.

**1) To foster an atmosphere of mutual support and encouragement among people suffering from liver disease and their carers, families and friends.**

The AGM was held on 16<sup>th</sup> March by Zoom, with the election of Committee members being conducted by Dr Neil McDougall, who also brought those participating up to date with news from the Liver Unit. As with our other Zoom meetings, members from across all parts of the Province participated. There are many practical benefits and efficiencies in holding our AGM online, something the Committee have considered for future AGMs.

This was followed, on 29<sup>th</sup> April, by the principal event during the year to mark the Group's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Two years preparation and planning went into the Anniversary Dinner, plans made initially in the throes of Covid restrictions, when it was difficult to project how things would look by 2023. But we need not have worried, as on the night almost 280 people filled the Ballroom in the Crowne Plaza Hotel at Shaw's Bridge in Belfast. This was the same venue used to mark both the 10<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversaries, and the staff certainly prepared the rooms perfectly for us. Attending were clinicians and nursing staff from Belfast and London, members of the LISTEN Support Group in King's College Hospital, and most importantly, our local liver patients and their families. Old friendships were renewed, and many tales from years gone by were related, while it was also the perfect opportunity for members to form new friendships with fellow patients. It was a huge success.

After the Summer break we once again arranged a Members' Lunch in the Dunsilly Hotel, where over 80 members and friends enjoyed a fine three course meal, and the opportunity to meet together in person again. As everyone arrived they could take the opportunity to view some of the beautiful vehicles parked out front from the Masonic Historic Vehicle Club, as well as have a chat with members of the Belfast Advanced Motorcyclists, who had stopped by for coffee on their Sunday run. Once again there was plenty to chat about and catch up on between those who knew each other, while many new friendships were created as people introduced themselves to their fellow diners. Drew Melville, who had provided the music at our Dinner in April, joined us again to entertain us while we ate and for a few dances afterwards. It was great to provide the opportunity for everyone to socialise informally and enjoy some quality time together.

Having polled our members, they told us that they would like the chance to meet together from time to time outside of formal events such as the AGM and Members' Meetings where we have invited speakers address the members. We began in August with our first Coffee Morning, held in Bangor, where a total of 25 attended throughout the morning. It was exactly what we were hoping for, and those present looked forward to the next one in the area. This has subsequently been followed by one in Coleraine, as well as in Omagh and Enniskillen. More are planned on an ongoing occasional basis at selected venues around the Province.

We were honoured that the Mayor of Ards and North Down Council, the Mayor of Antrim and Newtownabbey Council, and also the Chair of Mid Ulster District Council, invited those Group members living in their respective Council areas to private receptions to mark our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Their ongoing support for the work of the Group is most welcome.

The Brunswick Moviebowl in Londonderry saw a large turnout in November for the Family Fun Day, allowing parents and young children to come together for some friendly competition, some tasty food and the chance to meet new friends. Judging by the photographs on our social media, it was a great success.

We concluded our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year events with a first for us - a Service of Thanksgiving for the Group, its Officers over those years, and the gift of life brought about by organ donation. This was

held in the Chapel of Unity in Methodist College, Belfast, in late November, and featured addresses by Kay Duffy OBE (Founder), Dr Sharon Millen (Past Chairman), Dr Roger McCorry (RVH Hepatology Consultant) and Canon Rev Kevin Graham (Deputy Lieutenant for the County Borough of Belfast), as well as quite fantastic music provided by Jonathan Rea, Rebekah Durston and Steph Devlin. Also participating were Cllr. Mark Cooper (Mayor of Antrim & Newtownabbey), Patricia Getty, Gerry Kelly and Dylan Caughey. Officiating was Rev. Janice Browne, and the welcome came from Chairman Jim Kilpatrick. Without doubt, for many, the highlight came when all organ recipients present were invited to come forward to light a candle in memory of their donors.

All of the events above allow us to bring our members together socially, providing them with opportunities to mutually support each other through friendship and the chance to understand what each other has gone through in their own personal liver disease journey. We should not, however, lose sight of the primary purpose of the Group, patient and family care and support. This continues discreetly in the background, away from public gaze. One to one private support of patients and their families occurs via text messages and phone calls, often at unsociable hours, but always with the aim of providing the best possible support that we can in any particular scenario.

Many hours are spent each month by the team of Kay Duffy, Jim Kilpatrick and Arthur Goan assisting and supporting adult patients and their carers, with the same commitment shown by Rachel Quinney-Mee and Patricia Getty in their support of children and adolescents with liver conditions, and their parents.

During 2023 those committee members with responsibility for patient care made 335 contacts with adult patients and carers, and 191 with the parents of children. Most of these have been sustained contacts over difficult and sometimes distressing periods of time. Patient care remains the core element of our work and we continue to carry it out in a very dedicated and dignified way.

As well as practical and emotional support, we continue to offer financial assistance to patients travelling outside Northern Ireland for liver-related procedures, pre-transplant assessments or transplantation. For the financial year to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023, we paid out £23,600 in patient support grants (2022 - £13,750). The majority of payments (37) were for pre-transplant assessments, rather than actual transplants (11). When these assessments may translate into transplants is obviously unknown, but it will be a large backlog to handle.

## **2) *To raise awareness of liver disease in all its forms for the benefit of the public.***

After some three years' absence, we were finally given permission to partially restore our Helpdesk operation outside 6B Liver Outpatients. This initially entailed just a small foldaway table, but by November our full desk was returned to its rightful place, much to the pleasure of the Outpatients' staff, and ourselves. We can now once again interact with patients attending their appointments. A number of leaflets from the British Liver Trust are once more on display, as well as Group contact information. Clinics are now held on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, usually with no more than 7 or 8 appointments, unlike the very large clinics in pre-Covid days. Nevertheless, we are back in person at each one, ready to speak to existing members and to introduce ourselves to new patients.

Throughout 2023 the joint clinics between Birmingham Children's Hospital and the Children's Hospital have continued, and we were able to see a level of normality once again. These opportunities for direct face to face contact with families are pivotal occasions to meet and support them during difficult times, and for parents of new patients to learn about the support the Group can offer them. Thanks go to the staff in the Children's Hospital for their support and cooperation during the joint clinics.

During 2023 our Facebook, Instagram and Twitter channels were a vital means of disseminating updates from the Public Health Agency, Organ Donation NI, the British Liver Trust, as well as from the RVH Hepatology Consultants, and our own Group-related activities and information. Our members actively participate in the British Liver Trust's regular Zoom wellbeing meetings. These popular hour long drop-ins are an ideal opportunity for local liver patients to join with others from around the UK to mutually support and inform each other about both liver and personal matters of interest.

We were delighted that after a lengthy absence, the British Liver Trusts' 'Love Your Liver' Roadshow returned to Northern Ireland in May, for a 3-day visit. This gives the public the opportunity to have a free Fibroscan check in the Roadshow trailer. We were delighted to support the Liver Trust staff in managing the queues waiting for their scan. It was an extremely busy time, with over 340 people scanned in Londonderry and Belfast, of which around 10% received advice on following up their scan with their GP. We look forward to the Roadshow returning in 2024, and have pledged our continued support to the British Liver Trust once again.

In October our Chairman, Jim Kilpatrick, represented the Group at the release of the British Liver Trust's Liver Cancer UK report into the state of liver cancer across the UK, held in the Palace of Westminster. Opportunity was taken to discuss this with local MPs Carla Lockhart and Jim Shannon, and to lobby them for action and support in moves to reduce instances of liver cancer by better education and provision of better screening services in Northern Ireland.

**3) *To support by means of financial assistance ... persons suffering from liver disease through research or the provision of equipment or facilities.***

The annual Strategy Meeting enables the Committee to consider requests from the Liver Unit for financial assistance with particular pieces of research or for items of equipment. Following a successful trial of ELF Tests which we purchased in 2022, we have now financed a further 100 tests at a cost of £5,000 to assist in reducing the NAFLD referral list while long term approval for their use is secured by the Trust.

Following an additional request, we also financed the replacement of the Ward 6D portable ECG monitor, due to it suffering an increasing number of operational failures. We originally provided this equipment to the Ward back in around 2008, and in the intervening period technology has progressed so much that the old monitor was barely recognisable compared to others in adjoining Wards. The new, much more effective and easier to use version was secured at a cost of £9,270.

To mark both the end of Covid restrictions, and also our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, a full refurbishment of the Relative's Room in the Glasshouse on Ward 6D was carried out. The remaining old furniture was removed and replaced by a new 3-seat recliner settee, and recliner armchair. New side tables were also bought, along with a lamp. On the kitchen side, a new coffee maker was purchased, along with a microwave, cups, cup racks and supplies of tea, coffee, sugar, milk and biscuits. Each week we will monitor the cleanliness of the Room and restock the consumables as necessary. Initial setup costs were £1,592.48. The Room has seen regular use, with the facilities being much appreciated by families spending a considerable time with ailing relatives on the Ward. It is also a quiet space for the Consultants to discuss the care of patients with their families.

Having begun in 2021, we once again prepared and delivered Christmas gifts to both the Children's Hospital and the main RVH Hospital during the week before Christmas. Hampers for the staff in the Children's Hospital and Outpatients were specifically filled with items they could use in their rest rooms and kitchens - tea, coffee, sugar, biscuits, and festive foodstuffs, as well of course, as packs of Cadbury's Heroes!

Individual adult patient gift bags were made up, comprising a selection of foodstuffs, confectionery and toiletry items, along with a variety of crossword, sudoku puzzle books and pens. The child patient hamper was filled with individually packaged 'goodie bags' containing reading books, note pads, drawing books, puzzle books, pens and other small items to keep them all busy and active. Some toiletries were also included for the teenagers. Our thanks go to those on committee who spent considerable time putting these together. Everything was gratefully received and hopefully brought a smile and a little pleasure to those unfortunate enough to be staying in hospital over the Christmas period.

#### **4) *The promotion of the organ donor register.***

The Group has always espoused the benefits of organ donation and organ transplantation in all its forms, and we take every available opportunity to promote those benefits through all possible means. While this happens throughout the year, it reaches a peak during Organ Donation Week in September.

We were able to share honest, loving recollections from our members about how their lives have been positively changed due to organ donation. Everyone commented on the enormous sense of gratitude they feel towards their donor, their decision to donate their organs, and the fact that they'd had 'the chat' with their families about their decision. Committee members also engaged directly with local Councils as they once again supported Organ Donation Week. Our social media posts during Organ Donation Week were widely shared and copied by many organisations in support of organ donation, such as Organ Donation NI. Photographs of the Group's activities regularly appear in local newspapers.

We were present once again at Stormont in early June for the official launch of Daithi's Law - the Organ and Tissue Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill, which now brings Northern Ireland into line with the rest of the UK in changing the essence of organ donation to a system where all eligible adults, normally resident in Northern Ireland, will be deemed to have consented to donate their organs in situations where it is possible for donation to occur, unless they specifically indicate their desire to be removed from the Organ Donor Register.

With the Law now in place, and operation of it underway, there can be no relaxation in our role of encouraging the public at every opportunity to have 'the chat' with their family and friends, and to sign the Register so that in the event of their death, their decision is clearly registered and known, thus making consent for donation by their family at that time, more clear cut.

#### **Ongoing work**

The core work of the Group continues to be undertaken by our small dedicated team of Committee members, spread geographically across Northern Ireland, who keep our primary goal of support and care for liver patients and their families and friends to the fore at all times. Each member has their own particular responsibilities, ensuring we operate efficiently for the collective benefit of the whole Group.

As ever, our Founder Kay Duffy leads the Adult Patient Care team, with the same care and attention to detail as she has done for the many hundreds of patients who have been supported over the years.

Sharon Millen, acts as our liaison with the Charity Commission, and our link with all matters of academic research into liver disease and psychology.

Arthur Goan, in addition to his role as Vice Chairman of the Group, maintains our contact database of members and manages our website. He also took on responsibility this year for Adult Patient Care, sharing this with Kay Duffy and Jim Kilpatrick. This involves manning the Helpdesk at Liver Outpatients and also ensuring the Relative's Room is clean and restocked with tea/coffee and other supplies.

Ashley Collins is the Secretary of the Group, producing Minutes of our proceedings of a very high quality. Unfortunately, due to family pressures, Ashley had to temporarily step back from her role for the latter part of the year, with the preparation of Committee Minutes picked up by Sharon in her absence.

Rachel Quinney-Mee and Patricia Getty, in addition to their roles as Patient Carers for children and adolescents continued their very active liaison work with the Public Health Agency on the Group's behalf. Their dedication to their role takes up many hours of their time, all of which helps foster a close relationship with the parents of the children they support.

Jane Megahy, our Social Media Administrator, continually produced high quality graphic work for our social media channels and emails, and looked after securing appropriate software to handle our bulk emails out to our members. We were delighted that in March she also found time to marry Michael, and we wish them well in the years to come.

The work of the Group is extensive and wide ranging, and it is clear that we would not be able to perform our roles and provide the support we do without the ongoing and unwavering financial support we receive from fundraisers, whether patients or their families or friends, or monies we receive in the form of bequests or 'in memoriam' donations. Every single penny we receive is put to use here in Northern Ireland to further the charity's goals and purposes.

In our drive to continually improve our efficiency, and to react quicker to requests for support, we have adopted a more 'corporate' approach to our operations. This has resulted in us standardising much of our publicity material using defined colours across the board. We have invested in new logoed clothing for the Committee, new leaflets, business cards, posters, pull-up banners and other items which project a uniform perception of the Group wherever we happen to be.

### **Financial Report**

The total net worth of the Group at 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023 was £193,643.15, made up of our Danske Current Account £6,454.43, Danske Investment Account £57,188.72 and NI Central Investment Fund for Charities (NICIFC) £130,000. This NICIFC investment equated to 9,008 shares in the Fund, which with a share price on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022 of £14.2380 meant our shareholding at the start of this financial year had slightly decreased in value to £128,255.90, due to the depressed market at the time.

Total income for 2023 came to £81,501.89 (2022 - £83,339.72), a very creditable total compared to last year's record. Of this total, £49,437.56 came from direct donations (2022 - £50,446.23). Some £19,212.74 came via Just Giving including Gift Aid on applicable donations (2022 - £27,262.34). The effectiveness of donating and fundraising via Just Giving is well known, and we find many fundraisers choose this online system for their campaigns. Thanks to all of you. Our own direct Gift Aid reclaim from HMRC produced £1,828.15 (2022 - £606.09).

With our long term shareholding in the NICIFC now sitting at 9,008 shares - a total investment of £130,000 - we were not immune to the impact of both the general post-Covid rise in living costs, and the damaging worldwide financial downturn caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. In common with most share prices, the value of our holding remained under pressure during 2023, but the Fund

management are predicting a return to better times as we enter 2024/25, and the various holdings are amended to produce better yields for shareholders. Our NICIFC investment has been made with a long term view in mind, and we will ride out any short term rises and falls which occur. Nevertheless, in line with the Fund's long term stated aim of achieving a consistent 3% yield on investments, the dividends received from the Fund during the year, plus the Interest from our Danske Accounts, came to £4,873.44 (2022 - £4,140.06).

Total expenditure for the year came to £70,864.81 (2022 – £46,472.39), of which £23,600 was Patient Care payments (2022 – £13,750), plus £16,137.48 for the tests, ECG monitor and the refurbishment of the Relative's Room detailed previously.

An increase in Committee expenses to £4,688.63 (2022 - £1,681.97) reflected a significant increase in travel to meetings, especially those in connection with our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary events. Other Committee expenses are paid against essential spend on necessary committee business, and aside from mileage for attendance at Group events, is occasionally paid when a committee member incurs other necessary costs such as for postage, or consumables at a members' meeting, personal printing costs such as printer ink, or for gratuities, namely vouchers, presented to speakers at our members' meetings as thanks from the Group. Pending receipt of a debit card on the Group account to facilitate the ongoing purchase of supplies for the Relative's Room, a personal account was used for the initial purchase of some of the furniture, and the provisions up to the end of the year. This has adversely skewed the overall Expenses total as a result. No committee expenses are paid unless approved beforehand and fully receipted. We provide a summary of all of the expenses incurred, per person, to the Charity Commission as part of our annual submission of our accounts.

Telephone and postage charges increased to £795.99 (2022 - £642.99) mostly due to several bulk mailings in relation to Anniversary events, plus the issue of tickets to members for the Anniversary Dinner. Printing, Leaflets & Stationery saw a sizeable increase to £3,696.86 (2022 – £1,044.16) as we updated and reprinted leaflets, restocked our pens, purchased several types of new banners, and restocked our stationery. Much of this was expended in relation to Anniversary events and other publicity materials post-Covid. As with all planned expenditure, quotations were received and considered by the committee before any purchase. The cost involved in attending meetings came to £666.51 (2022 – £217.36), including attending the Liver Cancer UK report release at Westminster.

Our Public and Trustees Liability Insurance premium rose slightly to £476.56 (2022 - £462.30). IT costs were capped at £313.88 (2022 - £663.88), mostly the charges for software licences and maintaining our website.

We were able to arrange another essential return visit to King's College Hospital in August. These visits, by the Patient Carers on the committee, are vital in ensuring we keep up to date with any personnel or operational changes at the hospital, and allow us to build and develop relationships with those people our patients are most likely to encounter when they travel to King's for either assessment or transplant. The resulting benefits to those we care for are massive, and should not be under-estimated. The major outcome from this year's visit was the completion of our 'Patient's Guide to Visiting King's College Hospital' - a handbook for patients from Northern Ireland who need to attend King's. It provides essential information about how to get to King's, accommodation options, and travelling around the area to and from the hospital. This will be reviewed annually and updated as required to ensure it remains current at all times. Total expenditure for the visit was £1,811.16 (2022 - £2,129.42).

Once again, we had great support from our members who participated in the Belfast Marathon (though with this falling on the morning after our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner, there were some very tired people at the end)! Their sponsorship is always welcome.

Member events increased again as we left Covid behind. These included, not just participation in the Marathon, but also our Members' Lunch once again in the Dunsilly Hotel, Antrim, in September, when over 80 members and friends enjoyed the opportunity to meet, chat and make new friends face to face. Following feedback from our members, we began a series of on-going coffee mornings, paid for by us as a result of your fundraising. In addition, providing tea/coffee/biscuits and cleaning materials for the refurbished Relatives' Room has resulted in total expenditure on members' events rising to £8,240.49 (2022 - £4,499.02).

After Patient Care and the provision of Hospital Equipment & Services, our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary events saw the highest expenditure during the year, covering the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner and Service of Thanksgiving. The net spend of £6,180.89 on our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary events is derived from the sum of the expenditure for these in 2022 (£1,045.00) and 2023 (£10,785.89), offset by income for tickets in 2022 (£560.00) and 2023 (£5,090.00).

The year finished with a total net worth of £204,280.23, made up of our Danske Current Account £5,595.13, Danske Investment Account £68,685.10 and NI Central Investment Fund for Charities (NICIFC) £130,000 (historical cost). As referred to earlier, the NICIFC investment market value at 31<sup>st</sup> December sat at £135,693.81.

### **Conclusion**

2023 brought the Group's operations back to full tilt once again. Overall income reached £81,501.89, including the exceptional income related to the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, with total expenditure coming to £70,864.81, resulting in a net increase in the worth of the Group of £10,637.08. We are in a very sound financial position, able to move forward with our plans for 2024 and beyond.

Having seen the resumption of our full Helpdesk service at the Outpatients Clinics, and our ability to visit patients in Ward 6D, our aim is to constantly improve our patient support, and to react to their suggestions and wishes.

On a personal note, I was privileged to be awarded the honour of Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) for services to people with liver disease and their carers across Northern Ireland, in the King's New Year Honours List 2024, an award I accept on behalf of the Group. I state frequently and loudly, how immensely proud I am of how our Committee works diligently in their service to the Group's members, and with a strong commitment to their roles, this will continue for some time. Their work however is for nothing without the desire from the members to support all we do, not only through involvement in our meetings and activities, but also through their continued financial support. Our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year is now behind us, here's to the next 25.



Date: 16 January 2024

Jim Kilpatrick MBE  
Chairman / Treasurer / Adult Patient Carer

**RVH Liver Support Group**

Northern Ireland - Charity number 100892

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# Annual return

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## **Independent examiner's report to the charity trustees of the Royal Victoria Hospital Liver Support Group**

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This is my report on the receipts and payments of the charity for the 12 month period ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023.

### **Respective responsibilities of charity trustees and examiner**

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008.

It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts under Section 65 of the Charities Act
- Follow the procedures laid down in the general directions given by the Commission under Section 65(9)(b) of the Charities Act
- State whether particular matters have come to my attention

### **Basis of independent examiner's report**

I have examined your charity accounts for the financial year 2020, as required under section 65 of the Charities Act and my examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland under Section 65(9)(b) of the Charities Act.

My examination included a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also included consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as charity trustees concerning any such matters.

My role is to state whether any material matters have come to my attention giving me cause to believe:

1. That accounting records were not kept in accordance with Section 63 of the Charities Act
2. That the accounts do not accord with those accounting records
3. That the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act
4. That there is further information needed for a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

### **Independent examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination and have no concerns in respect of the matters (1) to (4) listed above and, in connection with following the Directions of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, I have found no matters that require drawing to your attention.

Name: Michael Carson

Signature: Michael Carson

Address: 32 Holland Gardens, Belfast, BT5 6EG

Relevant professional qualification or body: FCPFA

Date: 16<sup>th</sup> January 2024