

CROSSFIRE TRUST

TRUSTEES' REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

The trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in the notes to the accounts and comply with the charity's governing document, the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008, the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015, Accounting and Reporting by Charities, Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland issued in October 2019, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

Objectives and activities

Crossfire Trust is a registered charity formed in 1984 providing reconciliation, hope, community connections, emergency homeless accommodation and social enterprises in South Armagh based at 95 Darkley Road, Keady, Co Armagh, BT60 3AY. We are here to empower lives, and our doors are open to anyone in need.

Our work is based in one of the most economically disadvantaged areas of Northern Ireland. According to the Neighbourhood Renewal Area Profile Report (2021)[1], 18% of the population are living in households whose income is below 60% of the NI median, 31% of the working age population are employment deprived and 42% of families are in poverty.

We accommodate over 250 people in crisis per year due to homelessness, and support our residents to manage their issues, including mental health problems, alcohol and drug addictions, and people living with an offending past. We have accommodated refugees, and individuals from the Traveller community.

We support our residents at their pace to develop life skills and social skills, and we provide social activities, involving volunteering. We are finding when our residents leave Crossfire Trust, they are unable to cope living on their own and need our help to support them to set up their homes. With residents staying longer due to the lack of social housing, this means that we are the only emergency homeless provider in the South Armagh area, and our rural location, together with the availability of Crossfire Trust's volunteering activities and other charitable services, is ideal for supporting Homeless people.

During the year Crossfire Trust launched a Health and Wellbeing Project which aims to tackle the health and well being issues faced by people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. This project gives those involved opportunities to learn new skills, make progress in their lives, meet friends and to be part of a community. These projects, principally funded by small grants from the Public Health Agency and other small funders are open to all our clients and can also accommodate some members of the community. The Public Health Authority recognises Darkley House as a location for mental health and well being especially with the pigs, donkeys and hens which stimulate positive outdoor activity therefore helping with mental health issues.

We were also delighted to participate in the CDHN Community Pharmacy Partnership. Aine from McKeeever's chemist was a fantastic match with Crossfire Trust. The group (including residents in Crossfire's temporary accommodation, volunteers, staff and local residents) were quickly put at ease by the personable and accessible approach and expressed appreciation of the opportunity to voice questions and concerns to a health professional.

During the year links were made with local agencies:-

- Clanrye presenting on their Employ Me programme
- Inspire Well-being gave a well-received session on 'Food and Mood' complimenting the ethos at Crossfire of preventing food waste and saving money by making use of the onsite community food larder.
- Financial Health from Community Advice ABC generated a lot of discussion on the despondency felt by the lack of resettlement options for residents seeking a secure home.

Crossmaglen – our second location

We are still amazed to actually own property in Crossmaglen Square! Those of you who have been around for a while will know of our wait for this location and now that we are in we are amazed at the support, understanding and acceptance. Our structures are developing as we respond to the many requests for help and the range of donation from the town.

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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

We are comforted in our developing plans of the cross community hub to have the expertise of Stephen McClelland BSc (Hons) DMS MBA Regional Co-Ordinator Social Entrepreneurship Programme and from Newry Enterprise Centre to make sense of our ideas and put them into a language that a funding group in England will interpret.

It was an amazing moment when two police officers walked into the community hub carrying a grate of Shloer for the Christmas Dinner. They stayed for a coffee and we are pleased to say that everyone present stayed too and even chatted.

We in Crossfire are willing to take this risk for peace and understand the turmoil others, especially local Crossmaglen people, may experience being in the same room as police officers. It is a new day for opportunity in community relations and we are willing to step up and facilitate community discussion on all sorts of issues.

The Community Hub is sponsored by Something More For You Ltd, our anchor tenant, which pays rent and functions with small grants. It has regular visitors from the Travelling Community who live on the edge of Crossmaglen in caravans and they are joined by Bulgarians, Nigerians, Lithuanians, Latvians and other European countries. Gospel literature in native languages is located in the hallway and brings a smile to their face and often leads to further conversation. Mission work has come to our doorstep.

We in Crossfire have been waiting along time for South Armagh to embrace a new season of hope and goodwill and particularly in Crossmaglen have worked through many different seasons. We often see sights of adjustment and improvement but the lasting change of penetrating hope is still a longing and a promised destiny. With community support we do not give up but press in reminding ourselves that the 'wait' is worth every emotion and every experience. We are still waiting with expectancy for Planning Permission for the Community Hub in Crossmaglen. It has been revised twice and is now out for community consultation.

Finance

Crossfire Trust previously received much needed funding from the NIHE Homeless Prevention Fund, but this funding is now on hold and we look elsewhere. The Homeless Prevention Funding helped us to employ a support worker which we found to be a huge benefit to our service and clients. Crossfire Trust also applied for NIHE Tenancy Sustainment Funding and will continue to investigate Government initiatives which the charity may be entitled to.

As a charity we are indebted to the services of Gail Lockhart as Fundraising Officer and her hours of diligent research and pricing has resulted in a range of grants and equipment.

Crossfire Trust have approached the NIHE's Homelessness Policy Team, Housing Benefit Policy & Supporting People regarding our financial position. Having reviewed the income & expenditure incurred in delivering the Darkley House Homeless service, Crossfire Trust is financially subsidising the accommodation costs, and this will need to find additional income for sustainability and the development of our Fund Raising Strategy.

The cost of living crisis is still a challenge to many and often creates a cash flow problem in making ends meet to the end of the month.

Future

Crossfire Trust can only deliver this vital Homeless service with adequate staffing - 24-hour supervision due to the high-risk nature of our residents and we are revisiting our strategic goals and staffing levels to achieve two goals :-

- Ensure maximum use of the property
- Safety for all.

Crossfire Trust at Darkley House delivers a statutory duty for the NIHE by providing temporary accommodation for vulnerable adults with multiple and complex needs and is recognised as an essential homeless service in the South Armagh area.

We have been waiting for plumbing equipment to install oil fired heating into two static caravans and our business connections have produced free to the charity all the necessary equipment. The wait paid off as our thinking developed with safety in mind for our residents moving from gas heating to oil. This will allow us further opportunity and development.

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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

We are waiting and working on our new governance for Crossfire Trust and suitable people with business and life experiences are stepping up to be new Directors in this growing expression of God's love.

Finally

We are very grateful for the existing Trustees who have been on board for many years and have navigated the charity through refurbishment, construction work and community development. We are now facing a new dawn of hope and good will.

Volunteers

Volunteers contain the passion which drives the charity forward and we celebrate their personal achievements and diverse skill base. Their involvement weekly, monthly, quarterly and annually allow us to draw from their expertise and enrich the range of projects we offer. It is estimated that over 6,500 (2023 - 7,020) volunteer hours have been provided during the year. If this was conservatively valued at the average minimum wage for workers aged 21 years and older for the period of £10.18 (2023 - £9.18) an hour the volunteer effort amounts to over £66,170 (2023 - £64,444).

Public benefit

The trustees of Crossfire Trust confirm that they have had due regard for the guidance on Public Benefit by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland and are pleased to report that during the year the charity has continued to provide Public Benefits through programmes and services it offers. In particular, the trustees consider how planned activities will contribute to the aims and objectives they have set out.

Activities

Our public benefits are:

- Individuals have a positive life change creating openness and respect of relationships.
- People are supported to live a wholesome, full, and exciting life.
- People take confidence and pride in their lives through access to services which help address poverty.
- Promote Christianity through value and respect and hope for the future.
- A calming influence for a peaceful society.
- Increased understanding of citizenship and community.
- Individuals feel secure and valued.
- Supporting a joined up approach from all agencies for the development of South Armagh.

We demonstrate these benefits through strong monitoring and evaluation systems. We undertake an annual performance review of Crossfire Trust by consulting the community and key stakeholders. This process includes evaluations, focus groups and end project evaluations. We also record levels of participation.

Achievements and performance

Significant activities and achievements against objectives

Financial review

Total income for the year was £264,099 (2023 - £366,546). Income from donations and legacies amounted to £62,144 (2023 - £198,710), income from charitable activities amounted to £200,066 (2023 - £166,740) and other income amounted to £1,889 (2023 - £1,909).

Total expenditure for the year amounted to £235,512 (2023 - £262,094). The cost of charitable activities amounted to £235,512 (2023 - £262,094).

As at 31 March 2024, the charity has unrestricted funds carried forward of £380,508 (2023 - £396,098), restricted revenue funds carried forward of £75,993 (2023 - £12,494) and restricted capital funds carried forward of £113,604 (2023 - £132,926).

The managing trustees consider that the Trust is in a satisfactory position to carry on its charitable activities.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Reserves policy

It is the policy of the charity to maintain free reserves which match the needs of the trust, both at the current time and in the foreseeable future. This provides sufficient funds to cover running costs which include management, administration and support costs. Free reserves are those unrestricted reserves not designated nor invested in fixed assets which are available for general use.

Structure, governance and management

Governing document

The organisation is a charitable trust constituted under a trust deed dated 28 November 1984, which is recognised as a charity with The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland.

The trustees who served during the year and up to the date of signature of the financial statements were:

C Weir

M Rawding

Mrs K Thompson

P Galloway

Recruitment and appointment of trustees

The present trustees have been involved in the charity for a number of years and so are familiar with its work. The trustees regularly review the requirements of the charity and the possibility of a need for additional trustees. Any new trustees would be appointed by the settlor as required. Appropriate training and induction is available to all trustees.

Organisational structure

Crossfire Trust has a management committee of 6 (2023 - 6) members who meet regularly and are responsible for the strategic direction and policy of the charity. A Chief Executive Officer is appointed by the trustees to manage the day to day operations of the organisation. A Secretary is appointed by the trustees to assist the Chief Executive Officer.

Other matters

Risk management

The trustees have assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed, in particular those related to the operations and finances of the Trust, and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate an exposure to major risks. Where appropriate, systems or procedures have been established to mitigate the risks the charity faces. Internal control risks are minimised by the implementation of procedures for authorisation of all transactions and projects. Procedures are in place to ensure compliance with health and safety of staff, volunteers, clients and visitors. These procedures are periodically reviewed at least annually to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the charity.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Responsibilities of the Trustees

The charity's trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in Northern Ireland requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that year.

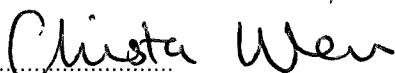
In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP 2019 (FRS 102);
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- 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 that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008, the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and the provisions of the trust deed. The trustees 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.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the charity and financial information included in the charity's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of the financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

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



C Weir
Trustee

Date: 17. 1. 2025