

Damask Community Outreach
Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

The trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2022. The trustees have adopted the provisions of 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 (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and aims

Damask Community Outreach was formed in July 2011 to work primarily in the community of East Lisburn. The mission statement of Damask Community Outreach is "Dedicated to providing safe, inclusive and challenging opportunities that are changing lives and building futures in our community." The key purpose and services provided by Damask were established in response to an audit carried out in the community. The public benefit delivered by Damask provides support for older people, parents and carers and young people through a range of activities and programmes, together with advice services and support to those experiencing health problems, loneliness, unemployment, age related problems, poverty, and financial difficulties.

Damask Community Outreach is a Christian faith-based organisation, working in partnership with Seymour Street Methodist Church, but is open to all and committed to equality of opportunity for all people, regardless of religious belief, political opinion, race, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, disability, or dependency. Damask is committed to building partnerships in the community, with statutory agencies and with other relevant groups and organisations to ensure that it can offer a wide range of services that match the needs of the community and help with the personal development of individuals.

Ensuring the Work Delivers the Aims of the Company

The aims, objectives and activities are reviewed throughout the year at Damask Board Management meetings held monthly, looking at what has been achieved and the outcomes of the work. The effect of each key programme and service and the benefits they have brought to the community and the groups are reviewed systematically. This process helps ensure that aims, objectives, programmes, and services remain focused on the stated purposes. The Board refers to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing its aims and objectives, and in planning its programmes and services.

Coronavirus -19

During the period of this report the COVID restrictions were gradually lifted. The Advice Service resumed face to face interviews, the youth programme resumed indoor activities and in January 2022 the Mothers and Toddlers group resumed. The Tea Dances have not resumed but a new Community Wellbeing Programme has been developed to help people emerge from the restrictions of COVID and return to enjoying healthy activities with friends.

The Advice Service while still dealing with enquiries via the telephone helpline started to conduct face-to-face interviews where appropriate utilizing a larger room allowing social distancing to be observed along with other COVID precautions and also with a separate entrance. However, Therese Milligan resigned her post from the end of April to move to a new full-time job, and Damask is grateful to Therese for the 7 years of service she gave to our local community. As it was not possible to get short term cover the Advice Service was closed until we were able to appoint a new Adviser in September 2021. This took two rounds of advertising and the decision to appoint someone who first required additional Welfare Benefits training. Febbie Francis, who has qualifications in Human Resources Management and worked in the NHS has now been fully in post for several months and is doing well.

Damask Community Outreach

Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

Volunteers

Volunteers continue to provide a vital backbone to our activities. The Damask Board, which is made up of voluntary members, continued to provide management and administration via online meetings, and the time spent on administration remained high due to additional funding applications and the need to keep altering and re-developing our activities. In most months we have held a car boot sale which depends on voluntary support, as does the Mothers and Toddlers group which resumed in January 2022. The new Wellbeing group has voluntary leadership as does the Advice Service, and the youth programme depends on young volunteers who have come up through the group.

The below table showing year on year volunteering hours with Damask Community Outreach:

	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20
Youth Projects	2,000	1,020	2,160
Advice Service	200	400	750
Befriending Service	-	30	80
Community Services *	364	-	567
Covid Food box deliveries	-	300	-
Management & admin	1,400	1,400	1,008
Car Boot Sale	300	50	400
Food Bank collection	50	50	150
Total	4,314	3,250	5,115

(* Including Mothers & toddlers and the Wellbeing Programme)

Paid Staff and Session Workers

At the end of March 2022 Damask had one contracted staff member, Febbie Francis, Advice Service Adviser, working 16 hours per week and one contracted sessional worker Rebecca Wills, Youth Worker, working 10 hours per week on the Go Project (Children in Need). Session workers are also employed where necessary and funding is available, to deliver specific programmes such as Pilates, the Wellbeing programme, craft activities, and youth outreach.

Grant applications and donations

The Damask programme over 2021/22 has been supported by a range of funding bodies and we are grateful to these bodies for their grants. These include Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, The Education Authority, The Halifax Foundation, The Housing Executive, Lisburn and Castlereagh Policing and Community Safety Partnership and Youth Initiatives. As well as private individuals we have received donations from Seymour Street Methodist Church, Youth Initiatives and the 'Love Lisburn' project'.

Objectives for 2021/22

The main objectives for 2021/22 have continued to relate primarily to supporting families including older people, parents and carers and young people, those experiencing health problems, loneliness, unemployment, age related problems, poverty, and financial difficulties. All the charitable activities focus exclusively on meeting needs and providing support in the local community and are undertaken to further our charitable purposes for the public benefit and within the criteria that defines public benefit outlined in the statutory guidance. As we saw the COVID restrictions being reduced, a primary focus was to encourage those in our community back into activities that would improve their physical and mental wellbeing.

In addition, the Damask Board aimed to maintain the 2021/22 balance sheet in credit as had been achieved in 2019/20 and 2020/21.

Damask Community Outreach

Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

2022 Programmes and Activities

The Damask Response to the needs of Community during 21/22.

Advice Service

When Therese Milligan left our employment two rounds of adverts failed to result in a qualified applicant coming forward. However, we did eventually find a suitable candidate, but she required 3 months training in welfare benefits. Thus it was not possible for us to restart the Advice service until the beginning of September.

With support from the Halifax Foundation, we were aiming to start new Advice Clinic Sessions in the Low Road area to reach more clients, but it proved difficult to find a suitable location. Instead, we formed a partnership with the Lisburn Food Bank. From November 2021 we started a clinic each week at the Food Bank, and they referred to us clients needing help with welfare benefits. This has been very successful with the Food Bank reporting that their clients have been greatly helped, while from Damask's perspective we are reaching a wider range of local clients.

We continued to receive PCSP funding to enable us to support clients who are victims of Domestic Violence. Due to our change of staff and period of closure, together with the reduced face to face interactions resulting from COVID we have had fewer such victims coming forward compared with previous years. However, we intend to remain focussed on this issue which is still widespread in the community.

Youth Programme

The main programme led by Youth Initiatives for 15's to 18's was Peace 4 Transform which concluded at the end of the 2021 calendar year. This Damask/Youth Initiatives partnership had a strong cross community element and like the programme at other Transform groups, helped several cohorts of young people realise their own abilities and gain valuable qualifications. From January 2022 Youth Initiatives has maintained a programme of evening groups for 15's to 18's and is now looking for support funding for this programme.

Go Project: Our BBC Children In Need funded GO Project (After School, two afternoons per week), working with 10-14s and young volunteers has continued throughout the year. With Education Authority funding a joint Damask and Seymour Street Methodist Church Summer programme was run for a week and there was excellent collaboration between the leaders of the Go Project with Church leaders during this.

Outreach: Youth Initiatives maintained weekly engagement with young people on the streets of Lisburn at the weekends with support funding from the PCSP.

Mother's and Toddlers

Due to concerns over the transmissibility for COVID among young children and families the M&T group had to restrict the numbers attending the weekly sessions when they restarted. This was done by asking members to book their places each week online. Thus a manageable system has been developed which achieves the maximum possible COVID safety in the circumstances.

Community Wellbeing Projects

Walks for Wellbeing: - During August 2021 a series of weekly evening Walks for Wellbeing from the Church car park were held and proved very popular, encouraging the community to come out, socialise in a safe outdoor environment, and take exercise. From September onwards, fortnightly afternoon walks have been held with the same purpose and a regular walking group has now been developed.

Damask Community Outreach
Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

Community Wellbeing: - With funding support from the Housing Executive a 20-week programme was initiated from October 2021 to March 2022 with a weekly programme on Tuesdays including Pilates (with a professional coach), informal coffee and chat, carpet bowls, craft sessions, healthy eating and cookery sessions. This has been linked with the Walks for Wellbeing. This whole programme has attracted a very regular group of about 20 attending the Pilates and about 50 overall including the walking group. A survey of the clients showed that they all indicated improvements in their physical and mental health from attending the programme, and they were keen for the Wellbeing group to continue meeting.

Damask Board and other aspects of Damask

The Damask Board continued to meet approximately monthly online via Zoom throughout 2021/22. The **Befriender Service** had very little activity during 2021/22 but could be revived if it was felt there was sufficient demand.

During the summer of 2021 two outdoor **Car Boot Sales** were held in the Church car Park. They were successful and attracted a good level of support. Between September and March 2022 four Car Boot sales were held indoors, although the number of traders setting up stalls was fewer than before. Nevertheless, they have still been a valuable source of fundraising for Damask mainly from the continued sale of items donated by Church members and others and the efforts of the catering team selling hot dogs and refreshments.

Damask has continued to support the **Lisburn Food Bank** by gathering food donations from Church members and others and passing them on.

FUTURE PLANS

With the one-year grant from the Halifax Foundation now drawing to a close, and the 3-year Children in Need grant finishing at the end of 2022 a priority for Damask is to secure continued funding for its youth programme and Advice Service. We hope to continue our partnership with the Housing Executive in the Wellbeing Programme and will continue to seek support from the LCCC and PCSP through annual applications. Damask fortunately has sufficient reserves to see it through any difficulties in securing funding but with the very successful outcomes of our programme we are hopeful that new funding sources can be found.

APPRECIATION

The Damask Board wish to place on record our deep appreciation and thanks to all our Volunteers who give of their time so freely, to the staff providing the Damask Advice and Counselling, the Community activities and leading the youth programme and to those who give donations regularly and generously to support the work of Damask Community Outreach.

Damask Community Outreach

Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Financial Review and Reserves Policy

In partnership with our principal funders as detailed in the notes to the financial statements we delivered an agreed programme. The amount directly expended on charitable activities in the 12 months to 31 March 2022 amounted to £42,935 (£50,664 March 2021)

We maintained tight control over our finances and are seeking to establish a reserves policy, which will maintain the financial stability of the charity.

We will continue to keep our Principal Funders fully informed through briefing and progress reports to agreed timetables.

Finances

The Statement of Financial Activities reflects a general reserve increase of £4,147, from £24,297 on 31 March 2021 to £28,444 on 31 March 2022.

The Restricted Funds carried forward on 31 March 2022 decreased by £6,108 from £7,298 on 31 March 2021 to £1,190 on 31 March 2022, due to restricted grants coming to an end.

Although the Statement of Financial Activities reflects an overall deficit of £1,961, of Resources Expended over Incoming Resources, the board maintained the general reserves in credit, as achieved in 2019/20 and 2020/21.

Risk Management

The Board continue to review the major risks to which the charity is exposed, and they endeavour to maintain control procedures and systems to mitigate those risks.

Responsibilities of the Board of Directors

Company Law requires the Board to prepare financial statements for each financial year that give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company as at the balance sheet date and of its incoming resources and applications of resources, including income and expenditure, for the financial year. In preparing those financial statements the Board follows best practice and selects suitable accounting policies, makes judgements, and estimates that are reasonable and prudent and prepares financial statements on the going concern basis, unless it is not appropriate to assume that the company will continue on that basis.

The Board of Directors is responsible for maintaining proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with all legal obligations. The Board of Directors is also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and therefore for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Damask Community Outreach

Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The charity is controlled by its governing document, a deed of trust, and constitutes a limited company, limited by guarantee, as defined by the Companies Act 2006.

Damask Community Outreach is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 22 July 2011 and registered as a Charity by the Charity Commission Northern Ireland NIC102073 on 6 March 2015. It is recognised by HMRC as a charity for tax purposes. The company was established under a Memorandum of Association, which established the objects and powers of Damask as a charitable company and is governed under its Articles of Association.

The Articles of Association were amended by a Special Resolution of the Company at a Special General Meeting held on 21 October 2013.

Recruitment and appointment of new trustees

The Directors of the company are also known as charity trustees and under the Company's Articles are known as the Board. Members of the Board are elected by the decision of the Directors, or by an ordinary resolution. All members of the Board of Directors give their time voluntarily and receive no benefits from the charity. At present there are ten Board members who have served during this past year who are listed on page 7. The Board seeks to ensure that there is an appropriate mix of skills within the trustee body and that it adequately reflects the nature and diversity of the work of the company.

Organisational structure

The Damask Community Outreach Board of Directors, who met every 6 to 8 weeks during the year, is responsible for the strategic direction and policy of the charity.

A scheme of delegation through an established management structure is in place. During the period of this report the Advice Service was managed by Jim Irwin, the Youth Programme by Dr Lindsay Easson, the Befriending Service by Harold Baird and the Toddlers, and Tea Dance by Shirley Carrington. Each of these Board Members reported to the Board on these areas at each Board meeting.

Induction and training of new trustees

Trustees are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the obligations of membership of the Board of Directors. They are also encouraged to be aware of charity legislation, to attend training relevant to their position and be aware of the current financial position, resourcing, future plans, objectives, policies and procedures of the company.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Company number

NI608313 (Northern Ireland)

Registered Charity number

102073

Damask Community Outreach

Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

Registered office

16 Adlon Crescent
Lisburn
Co. Antrim
BT28 2EG

Trustees

Dr David Lindsay Easson Retired
Rev David Lee Turtle Minister
Miss Jennifer Michelle Baird Certified Chartered Accountant
Mr John Harold Baird Chartered Management Accountant
Mrs Shirley Anne Carrington Director
Mr James Edward Irwin Retired
Mr William Donald Kinghan Engineer
Ms Anne Teresa Maxwell Retired Librarian
Mr William Eric Rainey Retired
Mrs Janet Adrienne Stewart (appointed 1.11.21)

Independent Examiner

McCleary & Company Ltd
Chartered Accountants
Garvey Studios
14 Longstone Street
Lisburn
Co. Antrim
BT28 1TP

Bankers

Danske Bank
PO Box 183
Donegall Square West
Belfast
BT1 6JS

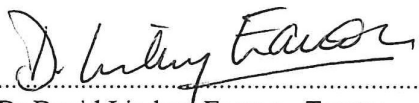
Solicitors

Carson McDowell
Murray House
4 Murray Street
Belfast
BT1 6DN

Chairperson

Dr David Lindsay Easson

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 10 June 2022 and signed on its behalf by:


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Dr David Lindsay Easson - Trustee