

**Glór Uachtar Tíre**

**Annual Report**

**For the Year to 30th September 2025**

## **Annual Report for the year ended September 30<sup>th</sup> 2025**

The trustees of Irish language community group, Glór Uachtar Tíre, are pleased to submit their report and accounts for the period 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024 to September 30<sup>th</sup> 2025.

### **Achievements and Performance**

#### **The Year in Numbers**

32 - Years promoting the use and learning of Irish in the locality

14 – Management Committee meetings

2,900 - Members of the public served

2 - Guest Speakers

#### **Meeting Programme**

Glór Uachtar Tíre's Management Committee meets every month and more frequently should matters arise requiring an urgent meeting. A number of extra Intra-committee meetings were held which focused on specific events such as plans to develop an Irish language community centre in Castlewellan.

### **Events, Programmes and Activities**

#### **Weekly activities:**

**Ranganna/Irish Language Classes:** 11 classes per week from Beginners to A2-Level and post A2-Level run in cooperation with St Malachy's High School, Castlewellan. Approximately 90 people of all ages attend these classes. The majority of classes were undertaken via face to face format with the exception of GCSE Year 1 and Year2 which are held on-line.

**Club Óige/Youth Club (10-16 years):** 25 children registered and approximately 15 attend weekly. Supported by the Education Authority, Foras na Gaeilge, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and Forúm na nÓg. This is one of the main opportunities the young Irish language speakers have to socialise through the medium of Irish outside the school environment.

**Mion-Chlub Óige/Mini Youth Club:** Caters for children in Rang/ P4 to Rang/P6. It proves very popular with 27 children registered and with weekly attendance up to 18 young people. The club receives Foras na Gaeilge, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and EA funding and is supported by Forúm na nÓg.

**Grúpaí Tuismitheoirí is Tachráin/Parent and Toddler Group: Bryansford group** (approx. 35 parents & carers are registered and around 15 parents/carers and 18 children attend weekly). The group is

open to everyone and it is a door to young parents to consider Irish language education and bilingualism as an option for their children.

**Ciorcal Comhrá/Conversation Circle** (approx. 15 people attend weekly mostly aged 55 years plus). Attendance remains stable.

**Ciorcal Comhrá fá choinne Foghlaimoirí/ Beginners Conversation:** It has two sessions per week; one in the evening time and one in the morning time. Both sessions are attended by approximately 8/10 people. Many of this group went on to obtain Silver Fáinne/Intermediate-level Irish recognition or Gold Fáinne/Advanced-level Irish recognition.

**Cumann Leabhair/ Book club** (approx. 7 people attend weekly, mostly aged 55 years plus. The group meets up in Castlewellan Library and the library helps the group to source the Irish language books.

**Raidió an Phobail/Community Radio Station:** GUT ran a series of training workshops for radio production skills throughout 2023 and 2024. Since September 2023 the group has been recording podcast series. Three sets of series were produced throughout this year. Approximately 50 people were involved in producing these series. Funding was obtained to continue this project from Mourne and Down District Council and Ultach Trust/Community Foundation.

In 2023 GUT was given a licence and funding to run **Gaisce/ The President's Award** from The Duke of Edinburgh organisation. GUT has now launched its first round of a programme. 6 young people registered for the Bronze Award and 4 are currently undertaking training in preparation for their expedition. GUT has launched its second publicity campaign and hopes to welcome a new set of cohorts to the programme this year.

### Monthly Activities

**Seal ag Canadh/Castlewellan Rhyme Time Session** for 0-4 year olds: Run in co-operation with Castlewellan Public Library. Approx. 15 people attend between toddlers and parents. This event has received funding from Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and runs monthly in Castlewellan library.

**Leabhair & Lego/ Books & Bricks:** Run in co-operation with Castlewellan Public Library. Approx. 7 people attend between children (3-6 years) and parents. This event has received funding from Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

**Seisiún Amhránaíochta/Singing Session:** Approximately 8-10 people meet once a month in Mulholand's Bar, Castlewellan. Funding has been obtained from The Community Foundation/ Ultach Trust to run this event.

**Cumann Siúlóide Miosiuil/Monthly Walking Group** (approximately 8 people attend of all ages.) The group is led by a professional gardener who informs the attendees about the local fauna. The walk is always supported by a Mountain Leader. It's funded by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.

### Seasonal Activities:

**Dianchúrsaí/Intensive Courses:** Once a year. All ages, approximately 40 people attend. These classes are supported by funding provided by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council. The Dianchúrsa has 4 levels; Advanced, Upper Intermediate, Lower Intermediate and Beginners.

Nuachtlitir/**Newsletter**: Printed and distributed once every season/12 weeks. Copies also emailed to all 860 on GUT's email list.

### **Annual Events:**

**The Big Give Campaign**: Ran throughout October and November 2024 to raise funds to refurbish GUT's Irish language centre.

**Aonach na Nollaig/Christmas Fair**: This event, held in December '24 had an Irish speaking Santa plus approximately 24 stalls of local crafts.

**Imbolc/ Celebration of Spring and St Brigid's Day**: This event was run in cooperation with Dolmen's Climate Action Network. It included a talk on Imbolc and a guided walking tour of local historic sites.

**Planning Day**: Focusing on language planning for the locality. The meeting took place in February this year and over 300 people attended representing local stakeholders.

**Uachtar an Uachtar [Crème de le Creme] Residential immersion, Intensive course for Irish language A-Level students**. The event, held in February '24 was attended by 20 people from all over NI. It was funded by Foras na Gaeilge and Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.

**Seachtain na Gaeilge/Irish Language Week**: GUT ran a drumming workshop at the Youth Club and a 'Mega-Conversation Circle' and Park Run to celebrate Irish Language Week.

**Margadh Eadaí Athláimhe/ Second Hand Clothes Sale**: This fund-raising event was held in April '24 in cooperation with Domens Climate Action Network.

**Aclaí Abú!/[Sports Forever]**: three day outdoor pursuits event for primary school children attending the 4 Irish language Primary Schools in Co Down. The event was held in May 2025. It was attended by 26 children. It was funded by Foras na Gaeilge and Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.

**Scoil Samhraidh Shéamuis Uí Néill/Séamus O'Neill Summer School**: Literary Festival. This July the festival included; a Festival Talk on Séamus Ó Néill's poetry given by the Children's Laureate, 2020–2023 (Ro), a stand-up comedy show, a Pop-Up Gaeltacht, a Festival walk focusing on local place-names, an introduction to Manx Irish, a talk on the Decline of Irish in Co Down, an visit to the local allotments, a book launch and panel discussion on strategies to develop Irish-speaking communities outside the Gaeltacht, a Festival Concert, Irish Language Rhyme Time Session, Irish Language Story Time, a singing session.

**Scéim Samhraidh/Summer Scheme**: A week-long activity-based summer scheme for local primary school children. 140 children attended this popular weekend long scheme which was funded by Foras na Gaeilge and 4 housing authorities; Clanmil, Ark, Radius and Arbour Housing Associations.

### **Membership**

On September 30<sup>th</sup> 2025 membership of GUT's emailing list was 860.

### **Accommodation**

GUT's office was based in Room No 8 in Dún Éigse/The Lodge, Castlewellan for 14 years until May 2024. In June 2024 GUT moved its office into a temporary accommodation in a mobile beside Castlewellan Community Hall.

In February 2024 GUT purchased a premise in Castlewellan with the goal of developing an Irish language community centre. In May 2025 GUT opened this premises on a part-time basis; GUT's administrative office and a number of activities were held there such as the Mini Youth Club, the pod-casts and classes....

### **Assets / Liabilities**

On February 29<sup>th</sup> 2024 Glór Uachtar Tíre purchased a building for £210,000 (plus £42,000 VAT). The building is currently partly in use while refurbishment is being undertaken in part of the building.

### **Financial Review**

#### **Financial Performance**

Financial performance in the year to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2024 was broadly consistent with the trustee's forecasts and expectations.

#### **Income**

£193,686

#### **Expenditure**

£88,941

### **Reference and Administrative Details**

#### **Charity Name**

Glór Uachtar Tíre

#### **Charity Number Registered Charity in Northern Ireland**

NIC102681

#### **Principal Address**

2-4 Castle Ave

Castlewellan

Co Down, BT31 9DX

### **Charity Trustees as of 30<sup>th</sup> September 2025**

Ciara Pickering – Chairperson

Alannah Nic Artáin - Secretary

Beth Lawlor - Treasurer

Róisín Sloan – Board Member

Wayne Pickering – Board Member

Ciarán Dunbar – Board Member

Ciarán Fox – Board Member

Felicity O'Connor – Board Member

Sara Camplisson – Board Member

Séamus Boyd – Board Member

Méabh Morgan – Board Member

Séamus Lawlor – Board Member

Aidan Rodgers – Board Member

Nicole Toner – Board Member

### **Structure, Governance, and Management**

#### **Governing Document and Constitution**

The Society is a charity and is governed by a constitution adopted January 2011 and last amended September 15<sup>th</sup> 2022 and on May 22<sup>nd</sup> 2025; this is publicly available at from GUT's office. The Society is run entirely by its Board Member who meet at least every 4 weeks to manage it. The group has five active sub-committees; Finance Committee, Fund Raising Committee, Buildings Committee, Community Outreach Committee and Youth Committee.

Glór Uachtar Tíre employs an Irish Language Development Officer for 37 hours per week. In addition, the group currently employs a Higher Level Apprenticeship in Digital Marketing, Advertising and Communications for 21 hours per week. GUT has a number of facilitators to run its initiatives including, two Senior Youth Officers for 4 hours per week and 6 tutors to teach Irish classes. The group has approximately 30 local people who very generously volunteer for the organisation when required.

#### **Trustee Selection and Management**

The three directors of the Management Committee are adopted solely on the basis of a vote at the groups' AGM as outlined in Glór Uachtar Tíre's constitution.

## **Objectives and Activities**

### **Charitable Objects**

The object of GUT as set out in our Constitution is the following:

The Charity is a community association and its objectives are to promote the benefit of the inhabitants of Castlewellan and its environs ('the area of benefit') without distinction of age, sex, race, political religious or other opinion, by associating the statutory authorities, voluntary, organisations and inhabitants in a common effort to advance education in the Irish language and to provide facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation or other leisure time occupation, with the objects of improving the condition of life for the said inhabitants.

### **Public Benefit Statement**

The trustees of Glór Uachtar Tíre confirm that they have had regard to the NI Charity Commission's Public benefit requirement statutory guidance.

The public benefit requirement has informed the activities of GUT in the year to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2025. In evaluating public benefit, the trustees note that membership of the society is open to all who share an interest in the Irish language. Whilst we would encourage those with interest to join our ranks we also strive to make our services and facilities available to those with no background in Irish.

The direct benefits which flow from our object or purpose includes increasing the opportunity for locals to either learn the Irish language or to attend social events at which they can speak it. The participants can either attend subsidised classes or they can enjoy lectures, social nights and finally they can participate by supporting Glór Uachtar Tíre in organising these events. These benefits are demonstrated by the growing class sizes that Glór Uachtar Tíre experiences year on year and the trend for the class sizes to be maintained throughout the year. Additionally, the benefits are demonstrated through feedback Glór Uachtar Tíre receives in our event feedback forms from participants and beneficiaries and by the level of uptake of our activities. The purposes of our charity will not lead to any harm. Glór Uachtar Tíre's beneficiaries includes the general population living within south east Down including Newcastle, Castlewellan, Dundrum, Clough, Hilltown, Rathriland, Ballyward and the surrounding areas. A private benefit to trustees may arise from our programme of ongoing training programmes. Through this training trustees may gain skills and experience which are transferable to other settings. These benefits are incidental and necessary to ensure the benefit is provided to our beneficiaries.

Approved, adopted and signed on behalf of the Management Committee.

Chairperson,



Ciara Pickering, 29<sup>th</sup> September, 2025