

Lagan Valley Regional Park Limited

Company Limited by Guarantee

Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report)

Year ended 31 March 2023

The trustees, who are also the directors for the purposes of company law, present their report and the unaudited financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2023.

Reference and administrative details

Registered charity name Lagan Valley Regional Park Limited

Charity registration number XT1572

Company registration number NI063910

Principal office and registered office 3 Lock Keeper's Lane
Milltown Road
Belfast
BT8 7XT

The trustees

Mr M Murray (Appointed 19 December 2022)

Mr D Hughes

Mr J Jackson (Retired 27 June 2022)

Mr C Somerville

Mr S Pollock

Councillor G McAteer

Ms U McKernan (Retired 27 June 2022)

Chi Ting Yip (Appointed 27 June 2022)

Councillor J Palmer

Councillor A Swan

Councillor U Mackin

Councillor G Spratt

Ms G Daly (Appointed 27 June 2022)

Mr T Duffy

Dr B Simon

Councillor K Nicholl (Retired 16 April 2023)

Mr C Kinney

Ms S McClintock

Company secretary Dr Andy Bridge

Independent examiner John Magee Aubrey Campbell & Company
631 Lisburn Road
Belfast
BT9 7GT

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Year ended 31 March 2023

Structure, governance and management

The Board is made up of public representatives from Belfast City Council (BCC), and Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (LCCC), and individuals with a particular interest in the environment and conservation.

Under the guidance of a Chairman and Vice Chairman, each Director is charged with governance over the operation of the Regional Park, maintenance of its assets and welfare of its staff. There are four Board Subcommittees: Audit and Risk; Finance and Strategy; Selection and Planning. A Company Secretary is responsible for charities regulations, Companies House administration and all aspects of financial compliance. The Board meet regularly throughout the year. An effective structure runs the Park on a day to day basis. The Management Committee (including related stakeholder representatives) and Park Manager are supported by the relevant functional heads in LCCC and BCC. The Park Manager in turn manages the operational and administrative staff.

Objectives and activities

All of the Park's objectives and activities are underpinned by the Board and staff's desire to promote the Park to visitors, thus ensuring its long term future. Their strategy document and management plan outline the long term sustainability of the Regional Park and AONB. The key long term strategic focus areas are Biodiversity, Heritage, Visitors, Community, Landscape, and Health and Recreation. These themes are reflected in the five year management plan, covering the period 2017 to 2022 and will be reviewed in developing the next five year management plan 2023 to 2028.

The plan focuses on tasks such as biodiversity monitoring, enhancement and protection through practical conservation of woodland, wetland, wildflower meadow and hedgerow, to extensive survey work of key fauna including bees, butterflies, wildfowl and small mammals. The Park actively promotes and protects the built and cultural heritage of the area and is exploring the potential to uncovering the archaeological aspects of the area with a proposed audit of archaeological features in the park from which a larger project may develop. The team also cover aspects of recreational planning and support for a range of diverse park users and visitors. In built planning, the regional park ensures that planning policy plays its part in preserving the Park's character, landscapes and biodiversity and this year responded to 14 planning consultations, as well as contributing to several strategic consultations affecting the Park and the wider countryside.

The Park continues to maintain over 47km of paths to make the Park accessible to the general public, to investigate the possibility of physical links to other conservation areas, and to further enhance the existing towpath. Park management are also working on ongoing practical works, aimed at the conservation of rare species and habitats, whilst sympathetically improving the aesthetics of the Park. This includes developing biodiversity by way of promoting and protecting priority species, through tackling invasive species via a separate initiative, and by protecting and creating existing and new habitats.

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Achievements and performance

The Regional Park continues to welcome large numbers of visitor with 1.8 million visitors recorded during 2021 and 2022 stabilising to a higher level than before the Covid peak of 1.97 million users. This makes it the most visited outdoor visitor attraction in Northern Ireland and continues to present challenges both in terms of pressure on resources and user needs.

Financial review

Core funding for the Park comes from Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, Belfast City Council, the Department for Infrastructure. Despite continuing difficulties as a result of austerity and the political impasse on the not-for-profit sector in Northern Ireland, we successfully secured £220,191 of funding during the 2022/23 financial year. This is higher than the previous year.

As expected, core costs are almost entirely consistent with the previous year. As with the prior two years, careful financial planning and management means that the company was in surplus. This has an effect of leaving an overall underspend of approximately £8,500.

Small company provisions

This report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies entitled to the small companies exemption.

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The trustees' annual report was approved on 11/9/2023 and signed on behalf of the board of trustees by:

Mr M Murray
Trustee

Mr D Hughes
Trustee

Mr C Somerville
Trustee



Mr S Pollock
Trustee

Councillor G McAteer
Trustee

Chi Ting Yip
Trustee

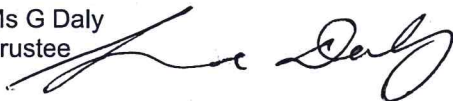
Councillor J Palmer
Trustee

Councillor A Swan
Trustee

Councillor U Mackin
Trustee

Councillor G Spratt
Trustee

Ms G Daly
Trustee



Mr T Duffy
Trustee



Dr B Simon
Trustee

Councillor K Nicholl
Trustee

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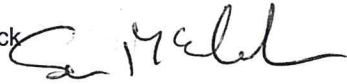
Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report) *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2023

Mr C Kinney
Trustee



Ms S McClintock
Trustee



Dr Andy Bridge
Charity Secretary

