

Blythwood Ireland Limited

Trustees' Report

The trustees, who are directors for the purposes of company law, present the annual report together with the financial statements and auditors' report of the charitable company for the year ended 31 December 2023.

Trustees

Mr JM Campbell

Mr JA Campbell

Mr AH Swanson

Mr N Hawthorne

Mr J Ross

General information

Blythwood Ireland Limited is a Christian charity which seeks to share the Gospel, to help those in need, to further educate and alleviate distress and poverty at home and abroad.

The principal place of business and the registered office is situated at 93 Templepatrick Road, Ballyclare, Co Antrim. The charity's operations include one warehouse and eight charity shops located in different areas of Northern Ireland which receive and sell donated goods in order to fund its charitable activities.

A description of the charity's operations and its principal activities are included in 'activities in the year' on page 3. The trustees who served during the period and other reference and administration information can be found on page 1.

Objectives and activities

Objects and aims

The charitable objects of the charity are the advancement of the Christian religion, the relief of poverty by the sale and distribution of donated goods and the advancement of education for the public benefit, particularly for poor and disadvantaged children.

The charity's principal activities continue to be ministering to people's spiritual and physical needs by providing relief supplies and supporting projects in Northern Ireland, Eastern European and other countries.

Blythswood Ireland Limited

Trustees' Report

Activities in the year

The trading activities of the retail operation continued to grow during 2023, allowing us to continue to work with our existing partners, Blythswood Romania, Blythswood Serbia and our major partner Blythswood Care (UK).

During the financial year 2023, the charity financed and sent out 10,893 filled Shoeboxes, which were delivered via the Blythswood Care Shoe Box Appeal, to project partners in Romania for distribution to groups of poor and needy children and adults. These boxes were collected from individual supporters, schools, churches, and other groups in the Province. They were collected and delivered to Ballyclare Hub, our main sorting centre, where each box was checked and repacked by our excellent group of volunteers and staff who recorded over many hours of voluntary time. The value of goods in these shoeboxes was approximately £272,325. Twelve boxes of blankets were also sent out with Shoebox loads to Ukraine.

Cash donations collected for the Shoe Box Appeal and forwarded to Blythswood Care in Scotland from Northern Ireland contributors amounted to £39,125 during this financial year.

The charity also donated goods to local good causes which included the Blythswood Ireland Homecare Project, through which we were able to assist with a number of requests to supply furniture and other household goods to needy families referred to us by social services, MLA's, local councillors and CAP (Christians against poverty). The value of these goods was £4,384.

Three local charities received donations as follows – Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention £2,000; Doc Café Belfast £1,000; and The Cithrah Foundation £2,000.

Activities of our Partnership Fund – supporting Blythswood Care projects – with donations of £142,634 - £14,200 to World Outreach Initiative, Burundi to support their Christian Radio Station; £34,159 for Cornerstone Ministries, in Mumbai, India; £8,400 to Life Through Sports in Pakistan; £25,000 to Blythswood Serbia; £10,875 to Sargy, Kenya; and, £50,000 for the Ukraine Appeal.

We continue to improve and develop our shop operation and eight shops continue to operate in the Province.

A dedicated body of volunteers continue to be a vital part of our organisation at the Ballyclare Hub sorting shoeboxes, and in the shops throughout the Province. The approximate value of their contribution for the year is estimated to be more than £99,924.

The value of charitable contributions to various activities can be summarised as follows:

Shoebox appeal £39,125

Local gift boxes distributed to five charities - £5,000

Overseas donations from our Partnership Account - £142,634

Gift in kind donations values at - £272,325

Blythswood Ireland Limited

Trustees' Report

Public benefit

We help to provide food and clothing to alleviate hunger and poverty suffered by those who live in or near to the project partners that we support in Eastern Europe. We also help to give life skills to those people and this in turn helps them as they seek to move out beyond their current environment and seek further education and employment, therefore improving their wellbeing and quality of life.

We try to alleviate poverty at home by providing furniture and household items to broken families who are then able to use their limited finances to better effect.

These benefits can be demonstrated by testimonials from recipients that are published in Blythswood News and by the regular attendances at the centres operated by the project partners that we support. Children and young people are clothed and fed at many of our supported facilities. Some of the facilities have benefitted from building teams who have made improvements to the fabric of the buildings, but all of this work is undertaken to improve the facilities so that all those who attend will benefit from the improvements and have better conditions in which to learn, eat and mix socially with others, thereby improving their quality of life.

The trustees confirm that they have complied with the requirements of section 4 of the Charities Act 2008 to have due regard to the public benefit guidance published by The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland.

Financial review

The results for the period are detailed on page 12 of the financial statements. The net incoming resources for 12 months to 31 December 2023 is £32,420 (12 months to 31 December 2022 net incoming resources of £158,857).

Our trading income from 1 January to 31st December 2023 was £1,062,162. (£1,019,057 in 1 January to 31 December 2022).

Policy on reserves

The charity is founded on the basis of Christian beliefs. The trustees do not consider it appropriate to retain significant surpluses but have faith that the needs of the charity will be met as they arise. On a day-to-day basis, the charity has established a policy whereby the charity maintains sufficient levels of cash to continue current activities for 2 to 3 months before utilising the remaining unrestricted reserves to fund the organisation for up to 6 months based on the current year's total expenditure.

The trustees consider that reserves maintained at this level will ensure that in the event of a significant drop in income they will be able to continue the charity's current activities while consideration is given to ways in which additional funds may be raised. This level of reserves has been maintained throughout the year.

Going concern

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis.

The trustees assess whether the use of going concern is appropriate i.e., whether there are any material uncertainties related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the ability of the charity to continue as a going concern. The trustees make this assessment in respect of a period of one year from the date of approval of the financial statements.

Blythswood Ireland Limited

Trustees' Report

Structure, governance and management

Recruitment and appointment of trustees

Trustees (who are the directors of Blythswood Ireland Limited) are appointed by the members and hold office for an indefinite term.

Induction and training of trustees

All trustees receive information outlining the responsibilities of trustees/directors and are invited to take part in external governance training.

Decisions regarding strategic development and organisational outputs and outcomes are decided by the trustees, on advice of senior staff. All expenditure is monitored by the trustees/directors and in line with and documented financial procedures.

Organisational structure

The organisation is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 13 May 2004, registered with the Charity Commission of Northern Ireland and with HM Revenue and Customs. The objects and powers of the company are governed by its Articles of Association.

For many years the company has worked in partnership with Blythswood Care (a company registered in Scotland number SC583493 with Scottish Charity number SC048001). Blythswood Care is the sole member of the company.

Future Plans

In 2024 and beyond, Blythswood Ireland Limited will continue to raise funds through trading in charity shops to support the projects of Blythswood Care. Currently there are eight charity shops in Northern Ireland and we aim to increase the number of shops over the next few years. There are key towns in Northern Ireland where we are investigating premises.

Over the past two years, the surplus in the organisation has been administered more generously to support the work of Blythswood Care. We anticipate we will continue to reduce that surplus to a managed level which could be used to see the organisation through any more difficult cashflow issues which may arise in the future.

Blythswood Ireland Limited

Trustees' Report

Major risks and management of those risks

Risk Management

Blythswood Ireland Limited maintains a risk management system which seeks to identify and prioritise any risks to its activities and the delivery of its objectives and puts in place measures proportionate to the management of those risks. The main risks are categorised as:

Generating sufficient income

Ensuring the income of the charity exceeds the costs of the charity and continuing financial support of ongoing charitable projects.

Reputation risk

Ensuring that the organisation is associated/involved with reputable charitable projects.

Key management and personnel

Retention of key management and experienced personnel.

Failure to respond to changing environment

The risk that the organisation does not take a proactive approach to change.

Reappointment of auditor

The auditors TB Millar & Co are deemed to be reappointed under section 487(2) of the Companies Act 2006.

The annual report was approved by the trustees of the charity on 4 June 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



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Mr JM Campbell
Trustee

Blythswood Ireland Limited

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The trustees (who are also the directors of Blythswood Ireland Limited for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland". The report and accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions in the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under company law the trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards, comprising FRS 102 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 charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that can disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company 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 corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Approved by the trustees of the charity on 4 June 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



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Mr JM Campbell
Trustee