

EAST BELFAST COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

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

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charity's Memorandum and Articles of Association, the Companies Act 2006 and "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

The trustees have taken cognisance of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit as defined in the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008.

The aim of East Belfast Community Development Agency ('The Agency') and the group is to promote the benefit of the inhabitants of East Belfast and its environs (the "area of benefit") without distinction of age, sex, race or political, religious or other opinions by associating the statutory authorities, voluntary and community organisations and inhabitants in a common effort to relieve poverty, advance education and develop the capacity and skills of the members of the socially and economically disadvantaged communities of East Belfast in such a way that they are better able to identify, and help meet, their needs and to participate fully in society.

The principal activity of the group and company is the charitable operation of various projects to benefit the welfare of the inhabitants of East Belfast and the development and operation of an East Belfast Network Centre.

Values and Principles

- **Participation**
The Agency works proactively to ensure that people have the opportunity to fully contribute to, and share in, decision-making processes in relation to policies and programmes that will affect them.
- **Inclusion**
The Agency supports and promotes work which builds communities that include groups and people that have been most marginalised.
- **Fairness**
The Agency opposes harassment, victimisation and prejudice of any kind. The Agency is committed to ensuring that they do not discriminate against anyone within, or in contact with, The Agency on the grounds of gender, race, nationality, ethnic origin, disability, responsibility for dependents, sexuality, age, economic status, religious or political belief or marital status. This includes all the groups highlighted in Equality Legislation as outlined in Section 75 of the (1998) Northern Ireland Act.
- **Good Practice**
The Agency values learning from other places and will promote identified good practice amongst members and other stakeholders.

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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Introduction

This report covers the work delivered during the period April 2023 - March 2024. Some of the highlights are daily management of East Belfast Network Centre, a base for 10 groups with over 60 staff; moving on to the next stage of the chatty bench project which engaged 18 community groups; ongoing development of work with the menopause cafes and the development of wellbeing cafes. We were pleased to get our Community Connections Programme started in May 2023 with the employment of 2 new members of staff, this allowed us to support the establishment of East Belfast Anti-Poverty Alliance and the Welcome Café's.

We continue to collaboratively manage the various East Belfast Forums and Networks; ongoing development of work with mens groups has increased in this period; delivery of the very successful pain management programme; continuing with access NI checks for staff and volunteers of East based organisations; supporting groups in managing their finance and resources. We are active member of various committees and groups these include Dept for Communities Review of Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy Development Planning; Belfast Stories Oversight Advisory Group; NICVA Executive; EastSide Partnership Board; Inner East Forum; Inner East Neighbourhood Partnership; Charity Commission NI Stakeholder Forum; BCC Shared City Partnership.

In January 2024 we began the process of developing our new strategy for the period 2025 - 2030, working through the initial process with Board and staff. We had a first draft ready for our members seminar in June 2024, to gather views and opinions with the final document published for the AGM in December 2024.

The criteria or measures used to assess success in the reporting period

EBCDA is funded to carry out its work by several funders. All funders assign to EBCDA a series of targets and/or objectives through their letter of offer or contract for funding. The targets and/or objectives are assigned to each member of staff and that member of staff completes progress reports, which are then submitted to funders on a 3 monthly and 6 monthly basis. All the targets and/or objectives are linked to our 3 strategic themes.

Applications for funding are agreed by the Board of Directors and as each letter of offer or contract for funding comes in, the targets and/or objectives within these are presented to the Board of Directors. Progress against the targets and/or objectives are reported to the Board at 6 month and 12 month intervals in each financial year.

Achievements and performance

Theme 1 – Community Support & Capacity Building:

To assess the needs of the community sector and work with other key organisations

- *Worked directly with 1,627 people delivered a service to over 4,531 people in conjunction with other partners in East Belfast.*
- *People involved*
 - *Male 35%*
 - *Female 65%*
- *Worked with 144 Organisations*
 - *17 were full members*
 - *15 were associate members*
 - *92 were based in East Belfast*
 - *11 were Belfast based*
 - *9 were Northern Ireland wide*

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- 176 people attended various forums
 - 12 East Belfast Youth Practitioners Forum
 - 2 East Belfast Youth Work Strategy Group
 - 9 East Belfast Churches Forum
 - 2 East Belfast Health Forum
 - 10 East Belfast Race Relations Network
 - 7 East Belfast Anti-Poverty Alliance
 - 10 East Belfast Tension Monitoring (Co-Chair)
 - 13 Inner East Forum
 - 10 Community Development Café
 - 4 Volunteer Development Network
 - 5 East Belfast Food Provision Network
 - 4 Drug & Alcohol Stakeholders Forum
 - 12 East Belfast Street Work, Stakeholders
 - 6 East Belfast Dementia Friendly Steering Group (Co-Chair)
 - 4 Men's Health Network
- 12 e-bulletin produced and distributed to 361 subscribers.
- 6 Youth Practitioners e-bulletin produced and distributed to 38 subscribers.
- 24 groups supported with both applying for and managing funding.
- 8 Access NI Information Sessions.
- 1 training session on Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity (SOGI).
- 1 EBCDA Members Seminar.
- 5 consultations facilitated in relation to developments affecting East Belfast.
- 13 Groups supported with developing policies, resources and training to strengthen the management of their organisation.
- 15 Groups supported with capacity building, community development, good relations and good governance procedures.
- 9 groups provided with Compassion Fatigue Training.
- 1 Small Worlds training session.
- 11 groups supported with Access NI Checks.
- 1 training session on Unconscious Bias.
- 1 mental health and well-being workshop focussed on youth workers.
- 11 groups provided with information session on Community Wealth Building.
- 30 people processed through Access NI Disclosures.
- 1 First Aid at work Training for 9 groups targeted at their volunteers.
- 2 Vaping awareness sessions.
- 24 Volunteers supported through training opportunities.
- 4 sessions of newly established Welcome Café for new arrivals to East Belfast..
- 7 people completed coaching programme with 55 sessions provided
- 8 groups facilitated through a process of support.
- 4 Lobbying skills sessions delivered.
- 8 Youth Strategy Group meetings.
- 82 sessions delivered by East Belfast Street Team Collaborative Programme.
- 2 groups supported with Charity Commission NI registration.
- 3 groups supported with Charity Commission NI filing process.
- 1 Celebrate East Volunteers event.
- 1 "Inspire" event recognising the contribution young people make to East Belfast.
- 15 People started 3 year Emerging Leaders Programme.

Theme 2 – Community Resource & Finance Services:

To manage our human and physical resources and promote good financial management practice in the community sector.

- Managed EBCDA and TAS Trust day to day finance.
- Managed an additional £34,000.
- Provided a payroll service for 6 groups covering 32 members of staff.
- Provided Independent Examination for 8 groups.
- Provided HR advice to 13 groups.
- Managed day to operations of East Belfast Network Centre with 10 organisations and over 60 staff based in the centre.

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Theme 3 – Community Health Development:

To encourage, support and facilitate the provision of community health programmes and projects.

Managed and delivered Communities in Transition Health & Wellbeing Programme engaging 29 organisations engaging 903 people participating;

- Drug & alcohol training*
- Wellbeing workshops*
- Men's health programmes*
- Mental health programmes*
- Chatty Bench programme*

7 Health observance day sessions e.g. cancer awareness month, world Alzheimer's day, international women's day etc.

17 men's health talk sessions.

34 Yoga sessions.

32 Tai Chi sessions.

42 Men's "days out" events.

810 Self-care packs distributed.

18 Men's groups supported.

11 Armchair exercise sessions.

40 soft archery, indoor golf, inflatable dart board and boccia games sessions.

37 Health awareness sessions with men's groups.

38 Take 5 Steps to Well-Being sessions.

4 "Eating healthy on a budget" sessions.

2 Pain support programmes.

9 pain support cafes.

5 Living well workshops delivered.

10 "Hug In A Box" packs delivered.

10 Reflexology sessions delivered.

11 Take 5 "In A Jar" sessions.

10 Menopause Cafés.

6 groups supported to develop "Women Home Safely" process.

4 "Time for You" Womens programme delivered.

20 "Forget Me Not" packs delivered.

50 East Belfast Drug & Alcohol Service leaflets delivered.

8 Well-Being Cafés.

9 Stress Awareness programmes delivered.

8 Carers Café sessions.

10 groups engaged in the Red Box Project.

30 Community coaching sessions.

2 Suicide awareness and mental health sessions.

23 Stress reduction sessions.

21 Well-being projects delivered.

17 Mental health awareness sessions.

1 Suicide first aid programme delivered.

27 organisations supported with delivery of their local health event.

Overall

Provided an East Belfast view at online meetings, face to face meetings, conferences and seminars with local Community Organisations, Residents Groups, Local GPs, Local Pharmacies, Public Health Agency, Belfast City Council, NICVA, Belfast Health & Social Care Trust, Department for Communities, The Executive Office, Community Empowerment Division, Belfast Stories, BCC Voluntary Community & Social Enterprise Panel, NICVA, NIO, East Belfast MP, MLAs and Cllrs.

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Financial review

The Agency's main source of funding is from government departments, principally the Department for Communities, Public Health Association, and Belfast City Council. The expenditure detailed in notes 7 & 8 of the financial statements has supported the Agency's key objectives as highlighted on page 1.

The Agency is a non-profit making organisation and these financial statements consolidate the results of the Agency and its subsidiary undertaking, Templemore Avenue School Trust ('The Trust'). The consolidated results for the year are set out in detail on pages 15 to 30. The group recorded net incoming resources for the year of £6,164 (2023 – net outgoing resources £28,623).

At 31 March 2024, the total funds of the group amounted to £3,004,142 comprising restricted funds of £2,717,906 and unrestricted funds of £286,236. A large proportion of income received by The Agency is earmarked by the donor for specific purposes (restricted income). Other income generated by The Agency is received as free monies (unrestricted income) which can be allocated to core running costs.

The unrestricted funds are considered to be essential as it is anticipated that over the next few years, the funding available to the group may not be maintained at its current level. Unrestricted funds will therefore be essential to finance the working capital, continue the group's activities in the short term and fulfil its legal responsibilities to employees and creditors.

Reserves Policy

Advice sought by the directors suggests that reserves should be set at between 10% and 15% of total incoming resources. Approximately 90% of incoming resources in The Agency comes from grants and voluntary income. The remaining 10% is generated by providing services such as room hire and independent pieces of work such as consultation. Therefore it is difficult for The Agency to generate substantial amounts of money that could be considered as free reserves. The majority of incoming resources of the Trust relates to unrestricted funds. At 31 March 2024 the group held free reserves of £244,568.

The trustees have assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed, and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate exposure to the major risks.

Risk Management

The trustees have actively reviewed the major risks which The Agency and the group face, one of which is the risk that funding and income levels could fall for a period of time. The trustees believe that maintaining the unrestricted reserves at the required levels to finance the working capital and continue the charity's activities on a short term basis, combined with the annual review of the controls over the key financial systems, will provide sufficient resources in the event of adverse conditions. The trustees have also examined other business and operational risks which The Agency faces and confirm that they have established systems to mitigate significant risks.

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Future plans including aims and objectives and activities planned to achieve them

Established in 1970 as East Belfast Youth Council and then in 1973 as East Belfast Community Council. The name was changed again in 1989 to East Belfast Community Development Centre.

In 1996 we merged with East Belfast Development Agency, who had been promoting and supporting community businesses, to form East Belfast Community Development Agency seeking to develop the best of the work of those two organisations. Despite the name changes over the years the Agency has always had the support and development of the community in East Belfast at the forefront of all the work it has done.

Today, EBCDA exists in a very different world to what it did 54 years ago, but we are confident that our experiences to date and our skills and knowledge base will help move us and the community sector in East Belfast, into a bright and successful future.

Whilst our funders normally only offer funding year-on-year we usually follow the same targets and/or objectives that are set by the funders. During the 2023-2024 period we have been lucky to have continuation funding from our long time funders. Two of these were for the period 2023 – 2025, one for the period 2023 – 2026 and a another for the period 2023 – 2027. Another funder continues to fund us year on year, which isn't ideal, but we are grateful for their continued support.

Structure, governance and management

East Belfast Community Development Agency was established as a company under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the company and is governed under its Articles of Association.

The Agency is governed by the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees, who are elected by the members, consist of up to twelve elected persons. Every third year one half of the elected trustees retire by rotation. The trustees to retire are those who have been longest in office since their last election. A retiring trustee is eligible for re-election. Five co-opted persons are appointed by the Board and serve until the next Annual General Meeting. New trustees are briefed on their legal obligations under charity and company law, the content of the Memorandum and Articles of Association, the committee and decision making process, the business plan and recent performance of The Agency. They are free to discuss any issue with other trustees or key employees. Trustees are encouraged to attend any appropriate external training events where these will facilitate the undertaking of their role.

The trustees, who are also the directors for the purpose of company law, and who served during the year and up to the date of signature of the financial statements were:

Robert Cleland	(Resigned 14 November 2023)
Annie Cook	
Rachael Davison	
Samuel Douglas	
Mervyn Gibson	
Bernadette McConnell	
Liz Oslon	
Catherine Purdy	
Gareth Wright	
Samuel Robinson	(Appointed 12 December 2023)
Richard Williamson	(Appointed 11 June 2024)

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Arrangements for setting pay and remuneration of key management personnel and any benchmarks, parameters or criteria used

The Board of Directors, who are the charity's trustees alongside the senior management team, comprise the key management personnel of the charity in charge of directing, controlling, running and operating the charity on a day-to-day basis. All of the Board of Directors give of their time freely and none have received remuneration in the year.

The pay of the senior staff is set by reference to guidance and utilisation of NJC pay scales. In view of the nature of the charity, the Directors benchmark against pay levels in other similar size charities and level of experience, when appointing new members of key management.

Funds held as custodian trustee

The Agency is responsible for receiving and distributing funds on behalf of the Department for Communities. £300,576 (2023 - £318,266) was received and distributed during the year and no balance was held in relation to these monies at 31 March 2024.

Statement of Trustees' responsibilities

The trustees, who are also the directors of East Belfast Community Development Agency for the purpose of company law, are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the group financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company Law 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 group and parent charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the group 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;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK 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 group and charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the group and 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 charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Auditor

In accordance with the company's articles, a resolution proposing that GMcG BELFAST be reappointed as auditor of the company will be put at a General Meeting.

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Small companies exemption

In preparing this report, the directors have taken advantage of the small companies exemptions provided by section 415A of the Companies Act 2006.

Disclosure of information to auditor

Each of the trustees has confirmed that there is no information of which they are aware which is relevant to the audit, but of which the auditor is unaware. They have further confirmed that they have taken appropriate steps to identify such relevant information and to establish that the auditor is aware of such information.

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



Catherine Purdy
Director

Dated: 13 December 2024