

# **EAST BELFAST COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

## **TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)**

### **FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

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The trustees present their report and consolidated financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025.

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.

# **EAST BELFAST COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

## **TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

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### **Introduction**

This report focuses on the work delivered during the period. Some of the highlights are, daily management of East Belfast Network Centre, a base for 10 groups with over 60 staff; our Community Connections Programme, using the Social Value Engine (SVE) as an evaluation tool, showing a Social Value Return (SVR) of £5.45 for every £1.00 spent. We continue to collaboratively manage the various East Belfast Forums and Networks; the final year of our 4 year Communities In Transition (CiT) programme; ongoing development of work with men's groups has increased in this period; continued delivery of the very successful pain management programme; continuing with access NI checks for staff and volunteers of East Belfast based organisations, though changes from Access NI has made this process more difficult; supporting groups in managing their finance and resources; held a very successful members seminar in June 2024, this being an opportunity to discuss with our members the work of EBCDA and to get their views and input on our Strategy for 2025-2030. Our Strategy for 2025 – 2030 was then presented and agreed at our AGM in December 2024 and became active on 1 April 2025.

### **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.

### **Significant charitable activities and achievements against objectives**

Within each annual report we report on our activity under our three themes within the strategy. These themes and outcomes under each are detailed below and over

#### **Theme 1 – Community Support & Capacity Building:** *To assess the needs of the community sector and work with other key organisations*

- *Worked directly with and delivered a service to 4,182 people.*
- *Community Connections Programme had a Social Value Return (SVR) of £5.45 for every £1.00 spent.*
- *Worked with 156 Organisations*
  - *18 were full members*
  - *13 were associate members*
  - *101 were based in East Belfast*
  - *13 were Belfast based*
  - *11 were Northern Ireland wide*
- *201 people attended various forums and networks*
  - *12 East Belfast Youth Practitioners Forum*
  - *2 East Belfast Youth Work Strategy Group*
  - *10 East Belfast Churches Forum*
  - *1 East Belfast Health Forum*
  - *11 East Belfast Race Relations Network*
  - *8 East Belfast Anti-Poverty Alliance (including associated sub-groups)*
  - *10 East Belfast Tension Monitoring (Co-Chair)*
  - *12 Inner East Forum*
  - *10 Community Development Café*
  - *3 Drug & Alcohol Stakeholders Forum*
  - *8 East Belfast Street Work, Stakeholders Meetings*
  - *8 East Belfast Dementia Friendly Steering Group (Co-Chair)*
  - *5 sessions of newly established Welcome Café for new arrivals to East Belfast*
  - *11 Wellbeing Cafes*
  - *6 East Belfast Men's Network*
  - *6 Menopause Cafes*
  - *3 Housing Provider's Network*

## **EAST BELFAST COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

### **TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

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- 12 e-bulletin produced and distributed to 347 subscribers
- 17 groups supported with both applying for and managing funding
- 8 Access NI Information Sessions
- 11 groups supported with Access NI Checks
- 26 people processed through Access NI Disclosures
- 6 consultations facilitated in relation to policy developments that will have an affect on East Belfast
- 9 Groups supported with developing polices, resources and training to strengthen the management of their organisation
- 16 Groups supported with capacity building, community development, good relations and good governance procedures
- 41 East Belfast Welcome Packs distributed
- 12 Volunteers supported through training opportunities
- 6 people completed coaching programme with 43 sessions provided
- 8 groups facilitated through a process of support
- 4 Lobbying skills sessions delivered
- 57 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 Volunteer Fair
- 1 Community Development Retreat
- 1 Community Dialogue Training event
- 1 EBCDA Members Seminar
- 11 People completed year 2 of Emerging Leaders Programme
- 11 Emerging Leaders completed Accredited ILM Level 3, Leadership & Management
- East Belfast Anti-Poverty Strategy launched

#### **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 £28,500
- Provided a payroll service for 7 groups covering 49 members of staff
- Provided Independent Examination for 9 groups
- Provided HR advice to 11 groups
- Managed day to operations of East Belfast Network Centre with 10 organisations and over 60 staff based in the Centre.

#### **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 35 organisations with 996 people participating.
    - Drug & alcohol training
    - Take 5 workshops
    - One to One Counselling
    - Men's health programmes
    - Chatty Bench programme
  - 7 Health observance day sessions e.g. cancer awareness month, world Alzheimer's day, International Women's Day etc
  - 40 groups provided with direct support in developing health programmes
  - 2 Take 5 Champions Training sessions
  - 71 Take 5 Sessions delivered
  - 3 Pain Support workshops
  - 8-week Better Days Pain Support Programme
  - 27 Women's health related sessions
  - 9 pain support cafes
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## **EAST BELFAST COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

### **TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

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- 14 Red Box locations supported
- 4 Grieve awareness sessions
- 35 Yoga sessions
- 34 Tai Chi sessions
- 22 Soft Archery sessions
- 9 Boccia Sessions
- 9 Dementia Friendly Awareness Sessions
- 11 Gentle exercise sessions
- 7 Carers Café
- 76 Health sessions delivered to 15 East Belfast men's groups
- 4 Healthy Living Centre Alliance meetings
- 7 Self Care Wellbeing sessions
- 11 Mental Health awareness sessions
- 9 Stress Awareness sessions
- 4 Top Tips for Looking After Yourself programmes
- 1 Living Life to The Full programme
- 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 Groups and Organisations, Residents Groups, Local GPs, Local Pharmacies, Public Health Agency (PHA), Belfast City Council (BCC), NICVA, Belfast Health & Social Care Trust (BHSCT), Department for Communities (DfC), The Executive Office (TEO), Community Empowerment Division (CED), Belfast Stories, BCC Voluntary Community & Social Enterprise (VCSE) Panel, NI Charity Commission Stakeholders Forum, BCC Shared City Partnership, Belfast Community Of Interest for Mental Health Promotion / Suicide Prevention, Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing Working Group, Belfast Men's Health Group, Regional Dementia Project Board, BCC Design Team-Take 5 Participatory Budgeting Programme, NICVA, PSNI, NIO, East Belfast MP, East Belfast MLAs and East Belfast Cllrs.

#### **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 14 to 31. The group recorded net outgoing resources for the year of £2,584 (2024 – net incoming resources £6,164).

At 31 March 2025, the total funds of the group amounted to £3,001,558 comprising restricted funds of £2,634,785 and unrestricted funds of £366,773. 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.

# **EAST BELFAST COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

## **TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)**

### **FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

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#### Reserves Policy

Advice sought by the directors suggests that reserves should be set at between 10% and 15% of total incoming resources. Approximately 87% of incoming resources in The Agency comes from grants and voluntary income. The remaining 13% is generated by providing services such as room hire and independent pieces of work such as consultation. The majority of incoming resources of the Trust relates to unrestricted funds. At 31 March 2025 the group held free reserves of £314,273.

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.

#### 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 55 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 2024 – 2025 period we have been lucky to have continuation of funding from our funders. Two of these were for the period 2023 – 2025 (extended into 2026), one for the period 2023 – 2026 and 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.

## **EAST BELFAST COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

### **TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

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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:

Annie Cook	(Resigned 11 November 2025)
Rachael Davison	
Samuel Douglas	
Mervyn Gibson	
Bernadette McConnell	
Liz Oslon	
Catherine Purdy	
Gareth Wright	
Samuel Robinson	
Richard Williamson	(Appointed 11 June 2024)

#### 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. £325,951 (2024 - £300,576) was received and distributed during the year and no balance was held in relation to these monies at 31 March 2025.

# **EAST BELFAST COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

## **TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

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### **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.


### **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.

  
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**Catherine Purdy**  
Director

Dated: 12/12/25  
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