

DONAGHADEE HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMPANY

Trustees' Annual Report for 2021

The Company

1. Donaghadee Heritage Preservation Company ('the Company') is a company limited by guarantee registered in Northern Ireland (No. NI 635831) incorporated in 2016. It is also a charity registered with the Northern Ireland Charity Commission (No. NIC 105987).

Reporting year

2. The Company's reporting year is the calendar year. In this report 'the year' means calendar 2021.

Trustees

3. The Trustees of the Charity and Directors of the Company in the year were:

Officers

Joan Smith, Chair to October 2021

Alan Couser, Vice Chair, Acting Chair from November 2021

Patricia Burgess, Treasurer

Kit Chivers, Company Secretary

Other Directors

John Caldwell

Jack McComiskey

Wesley Martin

Shirley Cochrane

Murdo Murray

Ryan Wheeler

4. Joan Smith stood down from the Chair temporarily in October 2021 on account of her personal circumstances but remained a Director of the Company.

5. The 2021 Annual General Meeting was held by Zoom on 30th March 2021. The Board's monthly meetings were also held by Zoom until June 2021, when face to face meetings resumed, with due precautions, in the Donaghadee Methodist Church Hall.

The purpose of the Company

6. In accordance with its Memorandum of Association, the Company seeks to advance education and promote heritage and culture within Donaghadee and the surrounding area. In particular:

- a) to acquire, protect, restore, preserve, promote and exhibit for the public benefit the Sir Samuel Kelly Lifeboat and other boats, forms of transport, historical artefacts, ancillary equipment and property of historical and educational interest;
- b) to establish, maintain and manage a museum and educational resource centre for the acquisition, restoration, preservation, archiving and public display of artefacts and documents of educational, historical and cultural interest and other items illustrating the history and heritage of the Sir Samuel Kelly Lifeboat and associated memorabilia;
- c) to advance education and encourage appreciation within the area of benefit on all matters relating to Donaghadee and the history of the Sir Samuel Kelly Lifeboat through exhibitions, workshops, lectures and other forms of educational medium.

The Activities of the Company

- 7. The activities of the Company can be divided into two categories:
 - a. Taking forward the Company's strategy for
 - i. Building a shelter for the Sir Samuel Kelly;
 - ii. Conserving and restoring the lifeboat; and
 - iii. Creating a Heritage Centre for Donaghadee of which the lifeboat will be the focal point.
 - b. Raising funding for the project and providing public information in support of those objectives.

Support from Ards and North Down Borough Council

8. In 2017 Ards and North Down Borough Council acquired the Sir Samuel Kelly from the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum and offered to lend it to the Company under a 25-year licence. The Council also granted a 5-year lease of the plot of land on which the lifeboat stands. In 2018 the licence and lease were agreed, and a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Council and the Company under which the two parties agreed to cooperate to achieve the Company's strategic objectives.

9. In 2021 the Mayor of Ards and North Down, Cllr Mark Brooks, nominated the Company to be one of the Mayor's official charities during his term of office.

Preparation of a Masterplan for the Donaghadee Commons

10. In September 2021 the Council appointed consultants AECOM to advise on the development of the Donaghadee Commons. In October the Company made a submission to the consultants explaining its objectives and suggesting a permanent site for the proposed Heritage Centre housing the Sir Samuel Kelly. Following discussion, the consultants prepared a draft Masterplan for the Commons which, at the time of writing, is out for public consultation.

11. The Company sought the endorsement of elected representatives for its proposals and a letter of support was signed by the MP for North Down, the five MLAs for the constituency and five of the six local Councillors (the one exception being debarred by virtue of the office he holds within the Council). The Company wishes to record its sincere thanks to all of them.

12. With the help of the MLAs, the Company also approached the Departments of Communities and the Economy to register the importance of the project both from the Heritage perspective and from the point of view of attracting tourism and strengthening the local economy of Donaghadee and the Ards. The Company also made contact with various charitable bodies which might be possible contributors to the funding of the proposed Visitor and Heritage Centre.

Conservation of the Sir Samuel Kelly

13. Conservation work on the boat continued during 2021 despite the constraints imposed by the pandemic. The wooden hull was judged to have dried out enough to allow a first coat of paint to be applied, and careful trials were made for caulking the seams and further painting. The metal stanchions and chains were removed from the deck and sent off for re-coating.

The shelter

14. The PVC-covered shelter which provides a temporary home for the lifeboat was damaged by a severe storm in December 2021. One side of the PVC skin was torn away and the mesh covering the seaward end of the shelter was also torn. The suppliers of the shelter were contacted to arrange the necessary repairs, but at the time of writing they had not yet been carried out. The cost will be considerable, and insurance was not available because of the position and mode of construction of the shelter, so an appeal is being made to Members and other supporters to contribute towards it. Despite this, the boat continued to be protected by the shelter and suffered no damage itself.

Visitors to the shelter

15. Four Open Days were held, attracting in total nearly 1,000 visitors from all over the island of Ireland and beyond. In addition, the Company hosted pre-arranged visits by a number of groups, and the boat served as the end-point for numerous walking tours around Donaghadee. The Company wishes to record its gratitude to Dr Robert Neill, who organised many of the tours.

16. In view of the number of visitors and the time it may take to build a permanent home for the boat, the Company explored the possibility of placing a prefabricated unit in front of the shelter to serve as a temporary reception and exhibition space. The Council indicated that it would be willing to consider such a proposal, subject to planning permission, once decisions had been taken in relation to the Masterplan for the area currently in preparation.

Communications

17. The Company maintains a website for public information and uses social media to keep interested parties informed. There is a Sir Samuel Kelly project group on Facebook www.facebook.com/sskproject/ with 725 followers, and a Donaghadee Heritage (Sir Samuel Kelly Project) Group which at the latest count had 384 members. The local papers, the *County Down Spectator* and the *Newtonards Chronicle*, gave appropriate coverage to its affairs.

Finance

18. None of the Company's usual activities to raise funds for the project were able to take place on account of the pandemic, though it was able to take part in certain events organised for the benefit of the Mayor's official charities. However, as the accounts show, contributions continued to come in to offset the costs the Company incurred. The Company was grateful to receive a Community Development Grant of £1800 from the Council. In January 2021 the Company invested half of its reserves in the Charities Official Investment Fund, which yielded a gain of £1640 in the course of the year.

Summary of the achievements of the Company in 2021

19. The main achievements of the Company were to survive the pandemic, to keep the boat safe and press on with its conservation, and to press the case for the proposed Visitor/Heritage Centre. The Company maintained its public profile, attracted a large number of visitors to the shelter, made representations to the consultants advising the Council on the future of the Donaghadee Commons and enlisted strong, cross-party political support for the project.

20. The Board wishes to record its thanks to Heather McGuicken, Director of the North Down Museum, for her advice and support; to Piran Harte, the Company's professional maritime conservation adviser; and to Quinton Nelson of the Copeland Marina for his advice and practical assistance.

Formal declarations required by the Charity Commission

(i) Public benefit

21. The Trustees have complied with the duty to have regard to the guidance issued by the Northern Ireland Charity Commission under Section 4(b) (the Public Benefit Requirement statutory guidance). The public benefit created by the Company in the year has been by way of the pursuit of the long-term objectives of the Company, which will be of benefit to the people of the Area of Benefit as defined in the Articles of Association, namely Donaghadee and the surrounding area.

(ii) Any harm caused by the Company

22. So far as the Trustees are aware, no harm has resulted from the activities of the Company in the year.

(iii) Any private benefit resulting from the Company's activities

23. So far as the Trustees are aware, no private person or body corporate has obtained any benefit from the activities of the Company in the year.

Financial report and accounts

24. The Company's accounts for calendar 2021 are attached.