

# **DONAGHADEE HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMPANY LTD**

## **ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR 2023**

### **Report of the Trustees**

#### **1. The Company**

Donaghadee Heritage Preservation Company is a not-for-profit company, incorporated in 2016. It registered in Northern Ireland as a company limited by guarantee (no. NI 635831) and registered also with the Northern Ireland Charity Commission (no. NIC 105987).

#### **2. Reporting year**

The Company's reporting year is the calendar year. In this report 'the year' means calendar 2023.

#### **3. Directors/Trustees**

The Directors of the Company and Trustees of the charity in the year were:

Alan Couser	(Chair)	Wesley Martin	(Vice Chair)
Patricia Burgess	(Treasurer)	Kit Chivers	(Secretary)
Anthony Skeats		Shirley Cochrane	
Quinton Nelson		Murdo Murray	
Noel Johnston		Ian Kirkpatrick	

The Board met monthly through the year. Arlene Matthews, Director of the North Down Museum, attended meetings of the Board as an observer.

#### **4. The purpose of the Company**

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.

#### **5. The activities and achievements of the Company**

The Company can report considerable progress in 2023:

1. With financial help from the Kelly Family, the exterior painting of the boat was completed, including the re-galvanising of the stanchions and chains. We are indebted to John Moore for his work on the sealing and painting of the hull. The boat is now in a good state of conservation, although there is more work to be done on the interior and, for example, cleaning the engines and fitting out the cockpit.
2. With the help of a £10,000 grant from the Garfield Weston Foundation, we were able to install new displays around the interior walls of the boat shelter and a raised walkway from which visitors are able to view the boat at deck level. The design work was done by Mark Thompson and the displays themselves supplied by Black Sheep Ltd. The raised walkway was supplied by carpenter Andy McGuire.
3. A number of new volunteers were recruited in the summer, including five new Tour Guides trained to escort visitors round the boat.
4. Opening hours were increased in the summer, and openings continued on Sunday afternoons late into the autumn. Visitor numbers, including tours by appointment, doubled to over 2000 in the year.
5. The Company began to experiment with branded merchandise, and early sales of mugs, tea-towels, pens, fridge magnets etc were encouraging.
6. In September, the Company learned that it had been awarded a grant of £90,000 over two years, with three main purposes:
  - a. To put a new fence round the SSK compound;
  - b. To install and fit out a 10m x 3m temporary building – the Exhibition Room – in front of the boat shelter and
  - c. To employ a part-time paid worker – a ‘Heritage Outreach Officer’ – to promote the SSK project in school, colleges and in the local community. That worker was appointed in January 2024.

Arrangements have been made for the Heritage Fund project to be carefully evaluated.

7. In December the Council confirmed its willingness to grant the Company a new 5-year lease for an expanded site to accommodate the Exhibition Room and, potentially, one or two of the Project 24 pods (glass-fronted containers) which used to be on the marina front in Bangor.
8. The Board has continued actively to explore options for a permanent home for the Sir Samuel Kelly and the eventual permanent Heritage and Visitor Centre for Donaghadee.
9. In addition, the Company has continued to engage with the public, running exhibitions and Open Days (including commemoration of the Princess Victoria disaster), raising funding for the project and providing public information in support of the objectives of the project.
10. An event was held in May, to mark the unveiling of the new displays, which was attended by our member of Parliament, three members of the Legislative Assembly, the Mayor and Councillors and the leading Officers of the Council. Ards and North Down Borough Council continues to give the project its unstinted support.

## **6. Statutory declarations**

### **a. Public benefit**

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 major part of 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.

**b. Any harm caused by the Company**

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

**c. Any private benefit resulting from the Company's activities**

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.

**7. Financial report**

The company's accounts for calendar 2023 are attached.