



ANNUAL REPORT

2022-2023

3 Brook Street
Coleraine
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Charity No. NIC106079

PREAMBLE

During the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, Age Concern Causeway has gradually recovered from the disruption of activities caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, and are now fulfilling the objectives of our funding from the Big Lottery Community Fund.

There are further steps the Trustees would wish to take towards re-introducing more social events, but the emphasis will continue to be placed on our services for those experiencing early-stage dementia. To that end, they will be working hard to attract continuing funding for that work.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

CHARITABLE OBJECTS

The object of the Association as set out in our Constitution is to enhance and develop the quality of lives of all older people, 50 years and older, and their carers in the Causeway Coast and Glens Council area, irrespective of their different religious beliefs, political opinion, racial group or gender, and to provide a powerful voice on their behalf.

In furtherance of the above object, the association shall seek:

- To empower all older people to express their needs and to provide a strong voice in the appropriate places
- To promote the health and well-being of all older people
- To facilitate, maintain and develop social relationships and networks
- To deliver its services in a professional, efficient and effective manner

Age Concern Causeway aims to be a “user led and volunteer driven organisation”.

PUBLIC BENEFIT STATEMENT

The Trustees of Age Concern Causeway confirm that they have complied with their duty under the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008; and having regard to Charity Commission’s guidance on public benefit (section 4b) confirm that the public benefit requirement has informed the activities of Age Concern Causeway in the year to March 31st.

In evaluating public benefit the Trustees can show that the public benefit has been realised by the range of services detailed in this report, albeit that the work we could do was necessarily constrained by the effects of the pandemic. At all times, our services are based on the identified needs of the local community, and ongoing evaluations by Age Concern Causeway show a high level of user satisfaction.

STRUCTURE GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

CONSTITUTION

Age Concern Causeway is an unincorporated association and is governed by a constitution adopted in September 1977 and last amended on 13th May 2010; this is available at Age Concern Causeway offices 3 Brook St. Coleraine.

MANAGEMENT

The organisation is run by its Board of Trustees which is elected at the Annual General Meeting. Service users are invited to attend the AGM and encouraged to become Trustees. In addition notice is given to the public of the meeting. There is provision in the Constitution to co-opt additional Trustees throughout the year with the agreement of the Board of Trustees.

The operational management of Age Concern Causeway is delegated to the project co-ordinator who is line managed by the Chair of the Board of Trustees. The co-ordinator is in attendance at Board meetings and reports to the Trustees against an agreed work plan and targets. In addition other members of staff can be asked to report on their activities or issues of interest or concern.

The Board of Trustees meets on average every six weeks, when the Chair presents a report of issues that have been addressed on behalf of the Committee. The meetings also offer a forum to review recent activities within our programmes and to plan forthcoming events.

At each meeting the financial adviser presents the latest accounts and these are reviewed against budgets and projections. A policy is in place to identify certain individuals with authority to commit expenditure within set limits. Expenditure above these levels must be agreed at Board meetings.

The Chair and Secretary are authorised by the Trustees to prepare the Annual report for approval at the Annual General Meeting, when service users and the public have a chance to comment.

FINANCIAL GOVERNANCE

Good financial governance is maintained by regular and up to date financial information provided to the Trustees and budget holders. In addition the Board receives independent financial advice and service support which ensures transparency of all transactions. Further details are contained in the body of the report.

Total funds at the end of March 2023 are £85,027 compared to £139,634 at end of March 2022. Unrestricted funds are £64,154 compared to £58,885 in the last financial year. Restricted funds are £20,872 compared to £80,749 at 31 March 2022.

In common with most small, local charities, Age Concern Causeway is dependent to a large extent on outside bodies to finance our services. Our support from the National Lottery Community Fund to support our dementia work will soon expire, such that a lot of work will have to be undertaken over the upcoming months to attract funding for that important work to continue beyond the end of 2023.

STAFF

We are only now able to report that we are employing a full complement of staff as originally planned under the National Lottery Community Fund grant. These are: full-time project leader; full-time lead dementia support worker; and four part-time dementia support workers, whose hours combine to equate to two full-time staff.

ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

BETTER TOGETHER PROJECT

The annual report for 2021-2022 mentioned that the National Lottery Community Fund “planned ... for the number of groups growing to six from the current three, with new groups in Limavady and Ballycastle”. We can now report that there are six active groups which meet weekly, each providing social and crafting activities for a maximum of eight people experiencing early-stage dementia. The groups are based at venues in Coleraine (two groups), Ballycastle, Ballymoney, Limavady and Portrush.

The location of the groups is not set in stone, but can be changed according to demand. For instance, during the year a group was set up in Garvagh which proved to be unviable and had to be abandoned, with clients joining other groups instead. It was also hoped to be able to set up a group based in Bushmills, but demand was insufficient to justify it. On the other hand, in May 2023 we will be opening a second group in Ballymoney, bringing the total number to seven.

One problem with trying to provide this service in a mainly rural area with such a widely dispersed population is distance from the various venues. Clients are picked up at their homes in a minibus, so by necessity must live within a reasonable distance from a venue, otherwise they would spend more time in journeys to and from the event than they do taking part in activities.

A possible way to approach this might be for more geographically isolated people who cannot access group activities to be offered one-to-one visits in their own homes. However, this would mean attracting both extra funding and more staff.

Now that we are fully staffed, our current one-to-one service has been expanded over the year for clients who cannot attend groups, either due to a deterioration in their condition or another reason. Twenty clients have visits each week, and are offered various activities or, if they prefer, just a friendly ear to listen to their reminiscences.

ADVOCACY AND INFORMATION SERVICE

Requests for advice and for assistance in accessing benefits continued to be received on a regular basis. Staff endeavour to provide assistance, even if this only amounts to providing a signposting service to other organisations.

Efforts to reactivate our advocacy group has so far met with no success, but the Trustees still hope to encourage others to take on the work.

ACTIVE AGE PROGRAMME

The Active Age programme has always been designed to promote active and healthy aging, stimulating both body and mind, planned by older people themselves. However, financial restraints mean that we are only able to promote self-financing activities. Over the year under review staff have been fully involved with dementia support work, so little time has been available to consider resuscitating our pre-Covid programme.

One project has been launched with great success. A monthly lunch club, with seed funding from WH&SC Trust but intended soon to be self-financing, has been launched with the cooperation of a cafe in Limavady, and negotiations are currently under way with a business in Coleraine for the idea to be replicated there.

FUNDRAISING

Over the years, fundraising events have raised both money and the public's knowledge of the charity and its services. During 2022-2023, for various reasons, it proved impossible to arrange our usual events (backpacks and collections at supermarkets, street collections, table quizzes, etc), but it is hoped to do so during 2023-2024.

AGE CONCERN SHOP

The shop is an important source of funds for the charity. In common with many other charities, we have found it difficult to attract volunteers and there is often just one person on the till where ideally we would like there to be two, if only for company during quiet periods. The volunteers we do have do a tremendous job, and the Trustees appreciate the time and effort they put in to their work on the charity's behalf.

The Trustees would like to express their thanks to all those who support Age Concern Causeway as customers of, or donors to the shop, and often both!

PARTNERSHIPS

Age Concern Causeway has links with the following organizations.

Public Bodies: Causeway Coast and Glens BC; Community Mental Health Team for Older People; Community Access Support Worker; Community Navigator; Dementia Navigator; GP Multi-Disciplinary Teams Social Workers; GP Multi-Disciplinary Teams, Mental Health Teams; Hospital Social Workers; NHSCT (Contracts); NI Housing Executive; Road Service.

Voluntary and Community Organisations: Alzheimer's Society; BRAKE; Causeway Rural and Urban Network; Causeway Volunteer Centre; COAST; Community Advice Causeway; Community Development Health Network; Connected (Causeway Loneliness Network); Dementia NI: Limavady Community Development Initiative; Linking Generations NI; Oasis; Spring Social Prescribing; SVP Coleraine/Portrush; The Olive Branch; Watt Fun Community Playgroup.

Businesses: Abbeyfield House Ballycastle; Asda; CPS Handy Park; Habinteg; Henderson Group; Kenny's Spar Garvagh; Local Pharmacies; Local Veterinary Practices; Savers; Spar Kilrea; Rothesday Court Coleraine; Tesco; Tullaghmurphy Fold Portstewart.

FUNDING AND DONATIONS

Our major funder since 2020 has been the National Lottery Community Fund, and their representatives have been extremely supportive to us in our struggles to cope with the impact of the pandemic on the development of the dementia support project. Unfortunately, that funding will come to an end before the end of 2023, and the Trustees will be working hard to find further funding so that this important work can continue.

We have also received smaller grants during the year under review from the following:

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council
Causeway Rural and Urban Network
Community Foundation NI
NH&SC Trust
NRPB Culture, Arts and Heritage
The Honorable the Irish Society
WH&SC Trust

We were also fortunate enough to receive various unsolicited donations from individuals, as well as from collection boxes in local shops. In particular we would like to thank North Antrim Vintage Club for their generous donation.

THANKS

Our work can only continue with the financial support of our funders, and we are grateful to all of them, be their contributions large or small.

Our volunteers are absolutely essential to ACC. It is no exaggeration to say that nothing would happen without them, and they can be assured that the Trustees fully appreciate all they do. To those who left during the year we would like to extend our thanks for their contributions while they were with us. It has proved hard to replace those no longer with us, and we would encourage anyone who has a few hours to spare to support our work to contact us: we can always find a niche for someone who wants to help.

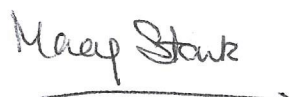
Finally, but far from least, thanks to our staff. There have been many changes during the year, and they have responded to every challenge with enthusiasm and always with the good of the charity and a wish to support our clients in mind. With a full complement of staff, we are sure their committed contribution to the charity means that we can look forward to a bright future.

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BOARD OF TRUSTEES, 2022-2023

Chair	Cllr William McCandless
Secretary	Mrs Morag Stark
Trustees	Ms Samantha Boswell (resigned during the year) Mrs Thelma Dillon Mr Tony Hegarty (co-opted) Mrs Mary McNichol (resigned during the year) Mrs Ann McNickle Ms Lydia Watton

Financial Adviser: Mrs Olive Wallace



Secretary
Board of Trustees