

The Hermitage Trust

Charity Registration Number NIC 106130

Trustees Annual Report

Year Ended 5th April 2023

Governing Document: The Hermitage Trust is a charitable organisation which was set up with HMRC Tax Exemption on 15th January 1987, under a Declaration of Trust as its governing document. Full U K charitable status was granted on 4th March 2015 by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, ref NIC 106130.

Public Benefit: The principal activities of the public benefit objectives continued during the year and were (1) relief of distress and poverty leading, in many instances, to improved living conditions with additional education, promotion of health initiatives & employment opportunities and (2) the advancement of the Christian faith, through which many beneficiaries are freed from bad habits such as drug taking, alcoholism and immoral & criminal lives.

Objectives and Activities: Objectives were achieved mainly by awarding small grants/donations, channeled through G B and N Ireland registered charities.

Achievements: The trustees are satisfied that the awarding of grants during this financial period, albeit drastically reduced in number by 50%, was in accordance with the principal objectives of the Trust. Those who have benefited have, in fact, in consequence been able to demonstrate positive outcomes and tangible helpfulness.

In relation to the main purposes of The Hermitage Trust, viz the relief of distress and poverty generally, coupled with helping to raise awareness and an understanding of the Christian faith, vital grant assistance has been delivered in line with objectives by donating to various UK charitable relief & caring organisations as well as to UK and NI registered charities and Churches that are involved in active Christian aid and ministry within their communities.

All of these operations are proactively engaging with the general public and many include programmes that really have made a difference, such as having a positive impact on the lives of young people, regardless of ethnic, social or religious background. As Trustees, we personally have continued awareness first hand regarding a number of these young people whose lives have, as a result, literally been turned around.

Funding/ Income: The main income source during the year resulted from assisting a related Charity in the winding up of its affairs (for disbursement of funding) upon retirement of its senior trustees. There was not any gift aid able income to record on this occasion, other than HMRC refund relating specifically to previous year's income. Nevertheless, there are presently good cash reserves directly as a result of the aforementioned disbursement donation but, sadly, the ongoing impasse with our local Banks towards small charities is likely to affect future income even further.

Risk Management: The Trustees examine future strategy including any operational risks that the charity might face.

Financial Responsibilities: The Trustees are accountable for keeping proper financial records and are responsible for the continued safeguarding of the assets through the prevention of fraud or in the unlikely event of any other such irregularity. However, the Ulster Bank's unilateral policy decision, to withdraw banking facilities from this Trust without explanation, in our case a banking service that had extended as far back as almost four decades of impeccable loyalty, will undoubtedly have far reaching consequences for our concerned and benevolent Trustees. Very sadly, un-necessary financial and administration hardship have been inflicted upon our aged and weary voluntary charity officials, much of which we have felt obliged to assiduously document and record, as our elderly trustees were needlessly put to the trouble of having to source alternative banking facilities and, at the same time, having to significantly reduce our normal goodwill funding activities. Penalised, for what? we respectfully continue to ask.

Financial Review: During the year, other than a very nominal figure as an 'exceptional' expense, no Trustee claimed any personal expenses or any financial benefits or remunerations of any kind, whether direct or indirect. The rather small 'exceptional' administration cost charged does not give any indication whatsoever of the true cost of all the rather pointless and hurtful dealings that our trustees have encountered both financially and physically in relation to the outcome of our recent banking relationship. In this regard we commend your very timely joint appeal last month to all U K Bank CEO's in regard to Charity Banking Access and Customer Service.

Statements of Compliance: In order to ensure that activities are helping to achieve objectives and provide benefit to beneficiaries the Trustees continue to give regard to the CCNI Guidance on Public Benefit. There is not any harm flowing from the purposes of the Foundation.

Signed

Daphne Wright (Mrs)

Daphne Wright (Mrs) - Trustee
24th December 2023