

The Hermitage Trust

Charity Registration Number NIC 106130

Trustees Annual Report

Year Ended 5th April 2024

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: In the year under report the principal activities of the public benefit objectives continued as previously, and were (1) relief of distress and poverty leading to, in a number of instances, improved living conditions with additional education, promotion of health initiatives & employment opportunities and (2) the advancement of the Christian faith, through which many poor people and others are freed from bad habits such as drug taking, alcohol misuse and immoral & criminal lives.

Objectives and Activities: Objectives were achieved by awarding small grants/donations/loans, channeled mainly through G B and N I registered charities. During the year some £42,207 in donations and grants were distributed to 16 organisations in pursuit of the above Activities.

Achievements and Performance: The trustees are satisfied that such awards during this financial period were in accordance with the principal objectives of the Trust. Those who benefited have, in consequence, been able to demonstrate positive outcomes emanating from tangible helpfulness.

Delivery: 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, some vital grant assistance has been delivered. In line with objectives donations were made to charitable, relief & caring organisations which already were predominantly established UK and NI registered charities and Churches that are involved in active Christian aid / relief ministries. All of these operations are proactively engaging with the general public and leading, in many instances, to good outcomes through 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 experienced continued awareness first hand regarding a number of these young people whose lives have, as a result, literally been turned around.

Funding/ Income: Very sadly, our normal income ceased during the year as a consequence of the misfortune of The Hermitage Trust banking account having been unilaterally closed down, thus leaving the work of the Trust most uncertain. The only revenue received during the year represented the repayment of a Loan granted during the previous financial year to assist a new poverty related charity that failed to materialise. Nevertheless, there are still fairly good cash reserves available, albeit dwindling faster than previously envisaged.

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Financial Responsibilities: The Trustees are accountable for keeping proper financial records and are dependable for the continued safeguarding of the assets through the prevention of fraud or in the unlikely event of any other such irregularity. However, 'our Banker's unilateral policy decision to withdraw banking facilities without explanation, in this case a banking relationship of impeccable loyalty that had extended as far back as almost four decades, is undoubtedly having far reaching consequences for our concerned Trustees. Very sadly, un-necessary financial and administrative hardship has been inflicted upon our aged and weary voluntary charity officials who are on the verge of just giving up.

In this regard we were very supportive of your CCNI well-timed and succinct joint appeal dated 15th November 2023 to all U K Bank Chief Executives in regard to Charity Banking Access and Customer Service. Not being aware of any effective follow-up we would be interested to know what has been the outcome, if any? Whilst we appreciate the effort and intent in your letter to the CEO's of U K Banks, it is felt that we continue to be left in a state of limbo and we are very concerned that many effective and professionally run small and local Charities are still struggling to exist with predominantly zero support from most banks.

Consequently, we would like to see the Charity Commission and others doing more to highlight and help relieve this unwanted anomaly and are rather discouraged that, apparently, there has not been any real outcome to date !

Financial Review: During the year no Trustee claimed any personal expenses or any financial benefits or remunerations of any kind, whether direct or indirect.

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

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

Signed

Daphne Wright (Mrs)

Daphne Wright (Mrs) - Trustee
15th January 2025