

## **Mid Ulster Volunteer Centre**

(A company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital)

### **TRUSTEES' AND OTHER INFORMATION**

#### **Trustees**

Ms Rachael Jane Jeffers  
Ms Mary Josephine McGuckin  
Mr Gerard Lynch  
Mr Michael Murphy  
Mr Joseph Wilson  
Mrs Mary Devlin

#### **HMRC number**

XR43114

#### **Company Number**

NI040301

#### **Charity Number**

NIC106396

#### **Registered Office and Principal Address**

20 Queen Street  
Magherafelt  
Co Londonderry  
BT45 6AB  
Northern Ireland

#### **Accountants**

R T J Ross & Co  
Chartered Accountants  
44 Molesworth Street  
Cookstown  
Co Tyrone  
BT80 8PA  
Northern Ireland

#### **Bankers**

Bank of Ireland  
11 Market Street  
Magherafelt  
Londonderry  
BT45 6EE

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The trustees present their Trustees' Annual Report and the unaudited financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in Note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the company's Articles of Association, the Companies Act 2006, Part 8 of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008, other applicable law and the requirements of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP), FRS102 and with the financial reporting standards applicable to charities preparing their accounts.

### **GOVERNING DOCUMENT**

The organisation is a private charitable company limited by guarantee, having been incorporated on 28 February 2001. The company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its Article of Association. In the event of the company being wound up members are required to contribute an amount not exceeding £1.

#### **Structure, Governance and Management**

The charity is committed to the principles of Corporate Governance; and through the development of various manuals, will capture all internal and external processes and procedures. The detailing of the company's activities in this way will ensure we follow best practice guidelines and demonstrate appropriate openness, transparency and accountability in all of our business activities.

Embracing Corporate Governance ensures that as an organisation we adhere to the highest standards of integrity in carrying out our business and managing our finances. The company is fully aware of its responsibilities and the need for accountability, particularly in relation to the management of public money.

#### **Management Committee as at the 31 March 2024**

May Devlin  
Gerry Lynch            Vice Chairperson  
Michael Murphy  
Joseph Wilson  
Josephine McGuckin    Treasurer  
Ms Rachael Jane Jeffers Chairperson

#### **Principal Risks and Uncertainties**

The directors have conducted a review of the major risks to which the charity is exposed. Appropriate systems and internal controls are in place throughout the charity's processes and procedures to provide clear accountability and to mitigate those risks which the charity faces.

The company seeks to maintain high standards in the management of risk and the processes in place reviewed annually to ensure their relevance.

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The trustees, who are also the directors of the charity, at the date of this report and those who served during the financial year together with the dates of any changes are set out on page 3 and are listed below.

### **Trustees**

The trustees who served during the year are as follows:

Mrs Mary Devlin  
Mr Gerard Lynch  
Mr Michael Murphy  
Mr Joseph Wilson  
Ms Mary Josephine McGuckin  
Ms Rachael Jane Jeffers

In accordance with the Constitution, the trustees retire by rotation and, being eligible, offer themselves for re-election.

### **Objectives and Activities**

The objects of Mid Ulster Volunteer Centre as set out in our Articles are to advance community development by promoting and providing volunteering opportunities and activities for the benefit of individuals and communities throughout Mid Ulster and by supporting and developing the work of community and voluntary groups and organisations in charitable activity which seeks to improve the quality of life of the inhabitants of the Mid Ulster.

Mid Ulster Volunteer Centre aims to advance education and training for the public benefit by delivering training and mentoring to volunteers, staff and directors / management committee members of volunteering-involving organisations in the area of benefit.

Mid Ulster Volunteer Centre also aims to promote personal development with a view to enabling the community to enhance their social and personal skills and develop and participate in valued roles in the community.

### **Public Benefit Statement**

In setting our objectives and planning our activities for the year the trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit to ensure activities have helped to achieve the charity's purpose and provide a benefit to the beneficiaries.

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### Summary of Main Activities

Mid Ulster Volunteer Centre is based in Magherafelt and Cookstown and seeks to encourage social inclusion by working with the community to help further personal development through volunteering and/or training. The centre is governed by a voluntary management committee and has a dedicated and knowledgeable team of staff who support the work of the organisation.

The Volunteer Centre is a registered Umbrella Body with Access NI, and has been providing a discreet, professional vetting service for volunteer involving organisations since Access NI was introduced in April 2008. The Volunteer Centre adopts an ethos of empowerment, believing this is fundamental for improving health and wellbeing and increasing individuals' and communities' control over their lives and their health.

In addition to recruiting, placing and supporting volunteers with a range of community-based organisations across Mid Ulster. The Volunteer Centre works in partnership with the Northern Health and Social Care Trust to provide an alternative to traditional day-care. 'The Base', which is a project for local people with learning disabilities which empowers them to access local community services and facilities and facilitates social inclusion and the development of friendships.

The 'Forever Young' Project, uses a comprehensive programme of activities to promote positive health and wellbeing among older people. It also aims to create awareness of the risks presented to older people as well as to provide support for caregivers.

We were delighted to receive the Strategic Community Development Grant from Mid Ulster District Council. This grant has been invaluable to us in supporting us keep a presence in Cookstown.

All the work would not be possible without the support of our funders:

- Department for Communities
- Garfield Weston Foundation
- Halifax Foundation NI
- Mid Ulster District Council
- National Lottery Community Fund
- Northern Health and Social Care Trust
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A special appreciation goes out to the committee and volunteers for their unwavering dedication and support this year, their input is crucial.

None of the management committee received remuneration or other benefit from their work with the charity.

Mid Ulster Volunteer Centre also appreciates the continued and invaluable support from InVOLve (NI).

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### Achievements and Performance

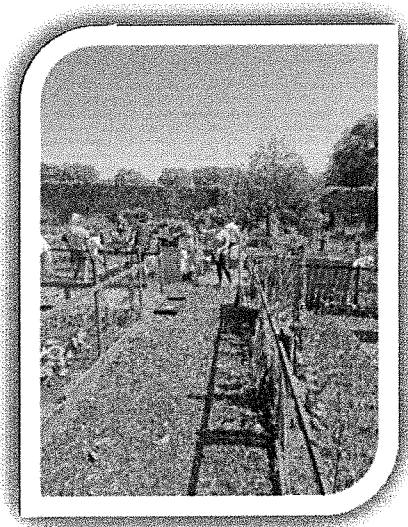
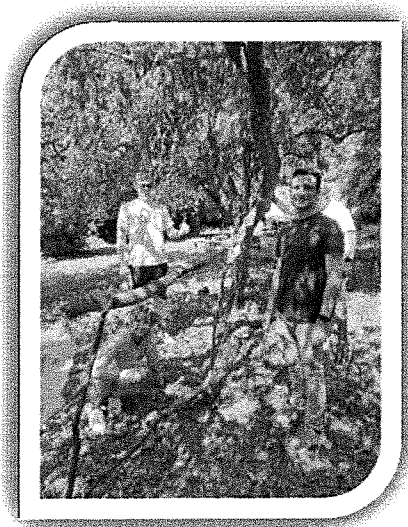
The following is an update on what Mid Ulster Volunteer Centre has achieved during 2023 - 2024.

- 301 new volunteers were registered
  - Assisted and supported volunteering placement organisations
  - Organised 7 "turn up, take part", volunteering opportunities that provide one off opportunities for people to volunteer
  - Promote opportunities for volunteering
  - Participated in events recognising the value of volunteering in the Mid Ulster area
  - Actively aim to increase the number of volunteers from under-represented groups including persons with a disability; older people; and people from the most disadvantaged areas
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- Provide advice to Volunteering Placement Organisations
  - Offer training and health checks to all new volunteer placement organisations
  - 214 Access NI's were processed during this year
  - Organised 3 Corporate Volunteering Days

Mid Ulster Volunteer Centre continued to promote volunteer opportunities during this time, as well as offering organisations help with policies, volunteer management, procedures and any concerns an organisation may have. We continue to support organisations with information and guidance and refer them to other organisations such as NICVA, RCN, CWSAN, CiNI when required for example regarding risk assessments, funding and training etc.

### EPIC Awards

Our new EPIC (Empowering People In Communities) Volunteer Awards initiative, in conjunction with Volunteer Centres NI rewards volunteers who make a commitment of at least 50 hours within any 12 month period. We think that our volunteers make an EPIC contribution to the community, and that's why we have set up an initiative to reward volunteers of all ages and across all sorts of organisations. Volunteering is vital to community life; it is the heart of our community with people giving their time freely for the benefit of others.



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### *Volunteers' Week 2023*

We launched Volunteers' Week with a Volunteer Recognition Reception for EPIC Volunteers and Organisations hosted by Chair of Mid Ulster District Council Councillor Córa Corry.



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Friday 2 June, we hosted at Lissan House an Afternoon Tea Party and House tour, working alongside volunteers from Lissan. We were delighted to have Linda McAuley MBE from BBC Radio Ulster attending and speaking with volunteers and finding out more about volunteering in Mid Ulster. Her chats with volunteers featured on her Volunteers' Week programme which aired the following Saturday helping promote volunteering, the organisations and hopefully inspired potential volunteers.



## Training

110+ volunteers received training on Safeguarding, Good Governance, Induction to Impact, Basic First Aid and Food Safety. Proper training equips volunteers with the necessary skills and knowledge to perform their roles effectively, fostering confidence and commitment. Well-trained volunteers are more likely to engage meaningfully with the community they assist, leading to better outcomes for the projects they support. Ultimately, investing in volunteer training not only empowers individuals but also strengthens the overall effectiveness of organisations and community initiatives.

## The Base



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Throughout the year Magherafelt and Cookstown Base members, NHSCT Day Opportunities Service Users and Volunteer Centre Staff and volunteers took part in group volunteering with various organisations.

In November members of the Base Cookstown and Volunteer Centre staff enjoyed a morning volunteering with Sunflower Support NI at their allotments based at Springhill



In December during International Volunteer Day and the theme for 2023 being "If everyone did..." the Base Magherafelt started their annual wrapping challenge for Hope Magherafelt's Christmas Appeal. They wrapped over 300 pairs of Pyjamas which were then donated with food hampers to families in need in our local area over Christmas. Members of the Base Magherafelt also helped during December with the annual Christmas Lunch for our Forever Young project for those over 60. During the last week before Christmas break, Cookstown Base teamed up with The Hub BT80 in Cookstown to make and donate 240 pieces of shortbread to be used and given to those attending The Hub BT80's Christmas lunch on Christmas Day.



Throughout the year we continued to work fortnightly on our Kindness Rock Garden based at Maghera Walled Garden. We have two regular volunteers from Day Opportunities and also both Cookstown and Magherafelt Base members helped to create Kindness Rocks. During the summer we planted and harvested potatoes, cabbage, tomatoes, broad beans, onions, lettuce, kale, courgettes and broccoli.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank all volunteers for their commitment and contribution in their support of The Base service users in Cookstown and Magherafelt.

## Forever Young Project



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This is the first year of the Forever Young project funded by National Lottery Community Fund. A new Project Leader and Project Assistant were appointed for this 4 year programme. Over the course of the year, we have continued to run an extensive schedule of classes and activities that reflect the needs and wishes of the members.

This has been trial and error when introducing new classes however using taster sessions and activity questionnaires has helped to gauge what the community want to engage in.

As the demographics are changing and we have an ageing population, the age to join is now 60+ with some wavering made to those under age bracket whom may be facing social isolation, loneliness, mental illness or disability.

The programme continues to see consistent numbers attending the classes; luncheon club, chair exercise, crochet, talks/information sessions. The talks included scams, TAKE 5 steps to health and well-being, STEP on benefits and budgeting, energy efficiency and home safety delivered by the Council and gut health. These were received positively and had on average 20 in attendance in each of these workshops. These will continue to occur throughout the following year to include topics that are relative to older people.

We also had 2 cooking sessions '7 days 7 dinners' pilot by Public Health Agency (PHA) which was funded by PHA. These had great interest; we had hoped for people to receive 2 sessions however because numbers were high, we had to split among 2 sessions. We would be keen to continue these workshops based on the interest and health/educational benefits.

A part of the funding application was to start up a Men's Group. We held a celebration morning in November 2023 where we cooked a fry and gauged ideas and thoughts of what a men's group would look like for them. We had 20+ in attendance and got new registrations. We have held men specific sessions including prostate cancer talk, visit from wartime memorial, cooking session. AGE NI's Good Vibrations (men's programme) came to talk to the men on health and well-being. We have also worked in partnership with Sperrin's Men Shed which a few of the men enjoyed planting some vegetables and others built a bench and some planters. This is something we plan to develop further. It has been difficult engaging the men on a consistent basis and we will need to look into this further to see how we can overcome this challenge.

Other things we have held over the past year has been; chair yoga, line dancing, wreath making workshop, craft workshops, painting classes, trip to Portstewart, Christmas pantomime, Christmas dinner (we had the pleasure of having pupils from local school's carol singing during this), coffee mornings and afternoon tea.

The consistent numbers attending classes/workshops each week demonstrates the need for the programme and through evaluations it is evident the benefits it has to our members.

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*Have met new friends at the Tuesday luncheon club and look forward to going as much as I can."*

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*"A very welcome addition for all people in the area. Good variety of classes."*

*"The different classes provided give an opportunity to try new things e.g painting/line dancing – they provide stimulation of the mind and physical exercise in a fun way. Opportunity to meet new people is also invaluable."*

*"The Forever Young Project has given me faith in others again, knowing that other people care about my overall health means so much to me as I am my husband's main carer, his health really put our lives on hold, I felt I was only existing but the project has changed that for me."*

*"As a pensioner I enjoy the social side of the class."*

*"I have learned a new skill."*

*"I think it is great to go to these things I would be lost without the project."*

*"The class has increased my interest and my desire to get out. Meeting people and learning to do something worthwhile like crochet and many different things."*

*"It is vital that the project continues."*

*"Great to get out of the house and meet new people."*

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The project's aim is to combat loneliness and reduce social isolation and it is clear that this is actively being achieved with members reporting they have met new friends, feel less isolated and lonely, gives them a reason to go out and improved mental health. In addition, the extensive range of classes, workshops/talks and lunches supports and promotes the aim of the project to improve overall health and well-being.

We will continue to provide a variety of activities ensuring we are reaching the needs and interests of all beneficiaries whilst ensuring they are beneficial to improving overall health and well-being and/or reducing loneliness and cost effective.

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In 2023/24, total incoming resources were £248,689 (2022/23 £243,027)

During the year the charity was fortunate enough to receive support from a number of sources including Northern Health and Social Care Trust, Mid Ulster Council, Department for Communities, The National lottery Community Fund and Tesco bags for help.

Total expenditure for 2023/24 was £238,667 (2022/2023 £230,651)

The Charity was in a healthy financial position at the year-end, with net current assets of £129,934.

The trustees confirm that since the year-end, it is not aware of any events that would have a material detrimental impact on its position.

### **Reserves Policy**

The trustees of Mid Ulster Volunteer Centre have set a reserves policy which requires:

The charity to maintain a level of reserves which meets the needs of the project both at the current time and in the foreseeable future. The level of reserves held are based on the need to fund unexpected expenditure and to ensure that it can fund any shortfalls in income, should income not reach expected levels.

The Board of Directors will be responsible for monitoring the level of reserves on a monthly basis.

### **Principal Funding Sources**

The principal funding sources for Mid Ulster Volunteer Centre is currently by way of grant and contract income.

### **Related Party Transactions**

None of our trustees receive remuneration or other benefit from their work with the charity. They are only reimbursed for charitable expenses. During the year none of the trustees were reimbursed.

## **STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES AND DECLARATION ON UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

### **General responsibilities**

The trustees are responsible for preparing the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the trustees as the directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under charitable company law the trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the net income or expenditure of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP.
- state whether the Charities SORP (effective January 2015) in accordance with FRS 102 has been followed;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with, and all Regulations to be construed as one with that Act. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

### **Trustees' declaration on unaudited financial statements**

In relation to the financial statements comprising the Statement of Financial Activities (incorporating an Income and Expenditure Account), the Balance Sheet, the Accounting Policies and the related notes:

The trustees approve these financial statements and confirm that they are responsible for them, including selecting the appropriate accounting policies, applying them consistently and making, on a reasonable and prudent basis, the judgements underlying them. They have been prepared on the going concern basis on the grounds that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees confirm that they have made available to R T J Ross & Co, Chartered Accountants, all the charity's accounting records and provided all the information, books and documents necessary for the compilation of the financial statements.

The trustees confirm that to the best of their knowledge and belief, the accounting records reflect all the transactions of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2024.

### **Special provisions relating to small companies**

The above report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions relating to small companies within Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

### **On behalf of the Board**



**Ms Rachael Jane Jeffers**

**Date: 18<sup>th</sup> November 2024**