

Comhaltas Uladh: Trustees' Annual Report 2024

(01/01/24 - 31/12/2024)

Charity Name: Comhaltas Uladh

NIC No. 107709

Address: Gaeláras Mhic Ardghail, Cnocán Phádraig Naofa, Chapel Street, Newry BT34 2DZ

Purpose

Comhaltas Uladh's principal objective is the promotion and development of the Irish language throughout the province of Ulster. The organisation achieves this through the delivery of language classes, the organisation of school-based competitions and festivals, and the provision of financial support for Gaeltacht scholarships.

A wide range of Comhaltas Uladh language classes are available across Ulster, catering to learners at all levels. The organisation also supports summer courses in the Donegal Gaeltacht for both adult and teenage learners, ensuring continued access to high-quality immersive Irish language experiences. Comhaltas Uladh further contributes to the promotion of Irish by supporting the publication of Irish language literature and general reading material. This initiative aims to encourage and stimulate literacy and lifelong engagement with the Irish language.

Through its network of local branches, Comhaltas Uladh provides structured and graded courses alongside a variety of formal and informal learning opportunities. These programmes are designed to support the growth of the Irish language, with a particular emphasis on engaging young people, newcomers to Irish, and those returning to education.

Public Benefit Statement

The public benefit arising from the purposes of Comhaltas Uladh is wide-ranging and well documented. Participation in our activities promotes the proven cognitive and social advantages of bilingualism, encourages engagement in community and group-based initiatives, and fosters a deeper understanding and appreciation of shared heritage and cultural awareness. Our work also contributes to increased employment opportunities within the Irish language sector and provides meaningful opportunities for social interaction and communication across diverse communities.

In addition, the provision of structured language instruction can lead to formal educational qualifications, while also supporting the inclusion and visibility of the Irish language community within the broader cultural context of Northern Ireland and beyond.

The benefits of membership and participation in Comhaltas Uladh's programmes are evidenced through regular qualitative and quantitative assessment. This includes annual involvement in school and Feis competitions, registration and feedback data from lessons, courses, and events, as well as photographic and press documentation, recordings, and audited annual accounts. Public engagement and feedback are further demonstrated through active participation on our social media platforms and regular representation in regional and national media outlets such as BBC, RTÉ, and Raidió na Gaeltachta.

There is no harm arising from any of Comhaltas Uladh's activities, and no private benefit flows from the pursuit of its charitable purposes.

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Beneficiaries

The beneficiaries of Comhaltas Uladh are the general public across Northern Ireland and in the neighbouring counties of Monaghan, Louth, and Donegal. This includes affiliated branches of Comhaltas Uladh, as well as both the primary and secondary education sectors within Northern Ireland.

Beneficiaries encompass a wide range of age groups, notably the 12–18 age group and learners of Irish from all stages of life, from beginners to advanced speakers. The benefits are delivered through a variety of schemes and activities, including annual competitions for young people aged 12–18, and the provision of online learning materials designed to support Irish language acquisition and use.

All activities conducted bilingually are clearly advertised as such, ensuring inclusivity and accessibility. In cases where a working knowledge of Irish is required—such as in projects associated with Irish-medium education—this requirement is explicitly stated in all promotional materials.

Comhaltas Uladh also engages regularly in initiatives that promote reconciliation and support the growth of Irish-medium education, reflecting the organisation's ongoing commitment to inclusivity, cultural understanding, and community cohesion.

Comhaltas Uladh also maintained its commitment to the development of Irish language literature and the creation of high-quality learning resources. The organisation provided support for specialised language courses aimed at GCSE, AS, and A2 level students, with a focus on improving spoken Irish and enhancing understanding of local linguistic heritage, including Irish language place-names and surnames.

Publications, including *Faigh Fáinne*, *Caith Fáinne* (*Get a Fáinne*, *Wear a Fáinne*), were also developed and circulated widely throughout the branch network and beyond.

Comhaltas Uladh further strengthened its online presence through voluntary efforts, significantly expanding its reach and enhancing the range of facilities available to promote the use and enjoyment of spoken Irish across the communities.

Activities and Achievements 2024

In 2024, Comhaltas Uladh continued to oversee the voluntary administration of its Gaeltacht Scholarship Scheme. This was carried out through a programme of visits to secondary schools and branches across Northern Ireland, promoting the Gaeltacht summer colleges and offering students the opportunity to participate in a range of competitions to win scholarships. Over 1,000 students took part in these competitions, with a significant number of scholarships awarded to participants aged 12–18.

Comhaltas Uladh also continued to contribute to the development of Irish literature and to the provision of language-learning resources. The organisation supported a series of specialised language courses aimed at GCSE, AS, and A2 students, designed to enhance both their spoken Irish and their understanding of local linguistic heritage — including topics such as Irish-language place-names and surnames.

A centenary edition of *An tUltach* was produced during the year — a full-colour publication of over 120 pages — alongside smaller publications such as *Faigh Fáinne*, *Caith Fáinne* (*Get a Fáinne*, *Wear a Fáinne*). These were distributed widely throughout the branch network and beyond.

Further voluntary development of the organisation's online presence greatly expanded its reach and strengthened its capacity to promote spoken Irish. Comhaltas Uladh continued to coordinate Irish language classes through its extensive voluntary branch network, with over 2,000 students attending classes regularly.

Financial

Total costs for the year exceeded total income by £15.7k. The Trustees consider that the overall financial position at the end of the year is stable and no issues of concern have been raised. Comhaltas Uladh had no debts at the end of the reporting year.

Statement of compliance

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 to ensure that the activities have helped to achieve the charity's educational purposes and provide a public benefit.

Trustees 22/11/25

N. Comer

Ú. Cregan

S. Mac Dhaibhéid

Signed on behalf of the Trustees

