

Annual Report to Trustees for the Financial Year – NI108064

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Ulster Tower Street Community Development Association is a volunteer-led organisation within the Ballymacarrett area of East Belfast. Our overall aim is to contribute to a stronger, more resilient community where everyone can participate and thrive. We are proud of our local heritage and are committed to supporting and strengthening our community by building on its history, identity, and local strengths.

Our mission is to promote community development by providing an inclusive and welcoming environment where individuals and families feel supported, connected, and valued. We aim to reduce social isolation, encourage participation, and create opportunities for people of all ages to engage in positive community activity. We are dedicated to supporting those in need by offering guidance, informal support, and signposting to relevant services.

We also seek to empower our young people by providing opportunities that build confidence, develop skills, and encourage a sense of belonging and pride within their community.

Through partnership working and local engagement, we strive to enhance the social and physical environment of the area, promoting a sense of ownership, respect, and shared responsibility within the community.

For the year in question, the following persons served as Committee members and trustees of
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Janine Layton

Carla Hart

Sarah kemp

Kerri-Lea Mc Connell

John Williamson

Deborah Adair

This Report is for the financial year from 1st September 2024 to 31st August 2025 and a summary of the Associations activities includes;

In the course of the year, we have facilitated a number of activity based events for individuals and families including:

The empowering Tower youth programme funded by PCSP, we engaged 19 young people in the area with activities fostering environmental awareness and community ownership, ASB and community safety workshops equipping the young people with crucial knowledge and skills for a safer community. We visited city hall which broadened their civic understanding and finished off the programme with a celebration event to bowling on completion.

We successfully ran a Two-week summer scheme funded by John Moores Foundation we started this summer scheme off with a Community Fun Day complete with Music Entertainer, Inflatables, Magician, party bags, food and refreshments. We enjoyed Community water fights, Arts and Crafts and planting and greenery, alongside nature walks using the great spaces we have around East Belfast, namely Victoria Park and Titanic Quarter, we took part in some community clean ups also.

We launched our Alleyways project supported by NIHE Community Involvement Grant, This project will help transform our communities alleyways into beautiful thriving spaces that can be enjoyed by everyone in the community, as part of this project we have two power washers along with all accessories needed to loan to residents to tidy up their own properties front and backs.

Janine was successful in a competition ran by Swizzles Sweet Company and was awarded £1000 on behalf of the Association to supply our community with outdoor toys and games that can be placed around the community in the streets, these are extremely resourceful given the lack of space for our young people to play safely, These will be used by our younger residents for years to come.

Our Fit, Move, Thrive programme supported by Apex housing started in July through to October we had 40 children under 10 years registered for this family programme, which consisted of one hour Arts and Crafts and Games facilitated by Linda Armitage, and one hour MMA with Jordan from Savage Martial Arts, we enjoyed a trip to Happytown as part of the programme in August, healthy snack were also provided.

We were successful in being awarded Belfast city Council VE Day 80-year Anniversary funding and collaborated alongside other groups in East Belfast to run Ve Day Remembrance Evening complete with Parade in which our young people dressed as evacuees and war heroes, beacon, entertainment, games and firework display. Over 1000 people were in attendance, this was a great collaboration, and we look forward to working alongside the groups again.

The Association have continued to work on the community garden, with works forecast for the removal of the Tower Street Campus in late 2025, we continue to have an agreement in principle from Maple and May that the site agreed upon by ourselves and Maple and May will be transferred to the Association for Community use), Maple and May have planning permission for this use and will demolish the site and give it as a cleared surface. We may not have to move our community garden to another site now, which is good news. We have also contacted Woven previously Habinteg housing to ask about community usage of the Duke Street Hub.

Our volunteers have worked with our young people within the Community Garden to Plant flowers and keep the garden clean and respectable, we have volunteers who have kept the maintenance of this site, and we are immensely grateful for this support. We have also started a weekly Community clean up with our young people and residents to maintain the cleanliness of the area supported by Belfast City Council. We have had visits from Cllr Ruth Brooks alongside our Senior Youth members around amenities in the area.

The subgroup has continued to meet this year to work alongside elected reps and friends of David Ervine, to provide a new Garden of reflection in memory of David Ervine working towards phase one of the project.

Volunteers have continued to advocate for better services for residents at various meetings across East Belfast, working with partnerships to make sure residents' voices are heard.

Volunteers have continued undergoing various Training.

Built on the working relationships with the following partners: EBCDA, Belfast City Council, Belfast PCSP, NI Housing Executive, Supporting Communities, and various local elected representatives.

Our Public Benefit

The committee members and trustees annually reflect on our activities set against our stated Public Benefits, which are,

Ulster Tower Street Community Development Association provides direct benefit to improve the area for all inhabitants regardless gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, race, ethnicity, or political, religious or other opinion, through improved community capacity, increased volunteering, and a stronger collective voice.

Providing improved quality of life where inhabitants within the area of benefit are thriving, feel valued, included and safer.

The local community is provided with programmes and activities aimed at addressing issues of poverty and particularly those issues affecting people as a result of their age, their state of health

and general well-being. The Association also provides an indirect benefit in assisting other groups in the locality, i.e. statutory bodies, and youth and community groups better target and deliver their services and activities to those in need in our community. Ulster Tower Street Community Development Association also provides a wider public benefit to the wider community in Northern Ireland by providing support, assistance and other benefits to those in need within the area of benefit; it is in the interests of the wider community that Ulster Tower Street Community Development Association continues to help those in need within our area.

The committee, believes that the work of the Association continues to contribute to the public benefit by running activities across the generations, providing access to health and educational resources by providing direct services to those who need it, within our area of benefit and in working together with our partners to provide, promote and enhance services available to local people.

Financial Review

The committee can report that in the period in question the association secured funds of £11,621.54 to run several projects. We benefited through various funding sources.

Janine Layton

(Chairperson).