

The Trustees Report Jan 2024 – Coalisland & District Community Food Bank

The trustees present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2023.

Background

Coalisland & District Community Food Bank was formed from the Covid Emergency response Group established in Coalisland in 2020. The direct benefits flowing from the organisation's purpose include the prevention of hunger and relief of poverty among beneficiaries leading to improved health and quality of life. The benefits may be capable of being evidenced through feedback from the beneficiaries. The Foodbank's beneficiaries are: anyone in food poverty or short term food poverty. We are based in St Patrick's Hall, barrack Street, Coalisland and have signed a 10-year lease in 2023.

Objectives and activities

The Foodbank was established to assist in the Relief of Poverty in the Coalisland & District area.

- a) Procure and/or assist in the procurement of food & provisions for the relief of poverty in our area.
- b) Provide training designed to carry out the objects of the Association.
- c) Provide or secure the provision of welfare information of social services and other statutory & voluntary groups who offer advice and assistance which will assist those in Poverty in our area.
- d) Organise and/or assist in organising meetings, talks, classes and exhibitions, and publish or assist in publishing reports, with the importance of data collected.
- e) Publish information collected via books, websites, digital and/or social media platforms.
- f) Obtain collect and receive money by way of grants, donations, collections, fundraising activities, bequests, legacies, and/or other lawful method PROVIDED that the Association shall not undertake any permanent trading activities and shall conform to any relevant requirements of the law.
- g) Purchase/take on lease or in exchange, hire or otherwise acquire any real or personal property and any rights and privileges necessary for the promotion of the above objects and maintain and alter any buildings or erections which the Association may think necessary for the promotion of its objects.
- h) Subject to any consents as may be required by law receive money on deposit or loan and borrow or raise money in such a manner as the Association shall think fit and to charge all or any part of the property of the Association with repayment of money so borrowed.
- i) Recruit, monitor and train employees with relevant skills to carry out the objects of the Association.
- j) Recruit and train volunteers with relevant skills to carry out the objects of the Association.
- k) Promote and organise networking and co-operation in the achievement of the above objects and to that end to work in association with local authorities, statutory agencies and voluntary organisations engaged in the furtherance of the above objects in the area of benefit.

- l) Do all such other lawful things as may be necessary for the attainment of the above objects or any of them.
- m) Organise and promote activities, lectures/talks, workshops, within the area of benefit for local schools and community groups.
- n) Lobby and work with Mid Ulster Council, Local Foodbanks, Fareshare, Local Schools, Local Churches, and any other groups/organisations on alleviating the objects of the association.
- o) Organise a safe and caring environment for members, visitors and customers and provide learning to support confidence building and social skills and positive lifestyle choices which are attributed to the objects of the association.
- p) Organise and participate in training topics relating to our activities within the Association.

Achievements and performance

Coalisland & District Community Food Bank charitable activities remain to assist in the Relief of Poverty in the Coalisland & District area. We have successfully provided food support to everyone in our area who requested it. We are now an integral part of our community and rely mainly on the goodwill of our community to provide financial and food stuffs to allow us to deliver our program. In 2022 we received a Community Fund NI grant to employ a full time Manager and this role was filled in January 2023. The Manager ensures the daily management of the Foodbank and helps other small community (not for profit) groups, this assistance includes a Minute Secretarial service, assistance with completing grant applications and other reasonable duties. We also received Awards for All grants, and this allowed us to renovate our upstairs room, completely upgrade our heating and boiler, part renovate our main Foodbank Hall and upgrade one set of toilets. In 2023 we opened our Social Café, and we provide a warm space, with internet connection, for anyone to call in and avail of a free cuppa and a snack and if desired a listening ear. We use this space to hold events and offer it for rental to other groups.

We work with many other organisations in our area, and we signpost people to the various agencies who can assist them. Some of our trustees/volunteers are qualified Counsellors and are often on hand to offer advice when needed, free of charge. We would hope to get funding to provide a regular Counselling service for people who are seeking assistance and mental wellbeing.

In 2023 we decided to rebrand our name as Coalisland Community Hub & Foodbank aka 'The Hub', as this would be more inline with the many new activities we are offering to our community.

Financial review

The trustees conduct annual reviews of the appropriate level of unrestricted reserves. The purpose of this reserve is to provide stability for the charity to ensure that it can honour existing obligations, to cover unforeseen events beyond the organisation's control and to be able to continue its operations in the unlikely event of a significant fluctuation in expenditure and income. We aim to have general reserves of £20,000 to cover any unforeseen events such as Covid.

The present level of reserves available to the charity is considered more than satisfactory.