

“In This Together”

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

- Charity no. 108324
- Company no. 680369
- Date registered. 17/09/2021
- Principal Address: 87 Castlereagh Street, Belfast BT5 4NF
- Type of governing document: Memorandum and Articles of Association
- How is the charity constituted? Company Limited by Guarantee and Not Having a Share Capital
- Trustee selection methods: Elected to post
- ITT is not-for-profit and limited by guarantee. Liability of members is limited to £1. Induction for new members covers trustees' legal duties under charity law, as well as the Memorandum and Articles of Association, the committee structure and processes, business plan, and the charity's recent financial performance. Directors are notified of and encouraged to participate in relevant external training opportunities that support them in effectively carrying out their responsibilities.
- Charity Classifications: The prevention or relief of poverty; The advancement of health or the saving of lives; The advancement of citizenship or community development
- The trustees of the board of In This Together have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission of Northern Ireland on public benefit

Objectives and Activities

In This Together is a social supermarket now serving over 1162 clients across East and South Belfast. Its aim is to combat food poverty by providing essential groceries at highly reduced prices while also supporting clients to transition out of food poverty through signposting to wraparound services. Social supermarkets are not-for-profit entities which can help bridge the gap between emergency food banks and mainstream grocery shopping. By distributing surplus food in a retail setting and maintaining a universal access model in terms of income, dignity of clients is upheld and also provides the empowerment of choice. The only restriction to access is that a client must live within an East or South Belfast postcode area.

In the year of review, ITT underwent significant organisational change. The previous founder/Executive Director resigned in November 2024 with a new ED being employed from March 2025. Four board members resigned with a new board of four people (Gareth Wright, Kerrie Milford, Roslyn Preen, Laura McNaught) being finalised at AGM in May 2025. This new board was established with the aim of carrying out a comprehensive governance review, future-proofing the organisational structure and driving ongoing improvement. The needs of the community in tackling food insecurity are front and centre with clearly defined roles within the business to fulfil this principal objective. To this end, a part-time Finance Officer has been employed since June 2025. A new concise employee handbook began to be developed to improve consistency and foster a transparent company culture.

Previous Executive Director: Christina Henderson (resigned November 2024)

Resigned Board Members: Christine Woodrow, Jaele Rollins, Sara McFarland, Lauren Bland

The current staff team comprises of Executive Director, Community Liaison Director, Finance Officer and Social Supermarket Managers. In addition, ITT could not fulfil its vision without its dedicated team of volunteers. In the year 2024-2025, there was a core team of eight volunteers, contributing an average of twenty hours per week, most of whom were current or former service users. This demonstrates the supportive environment that has been fostered in ITT and how the charity has benefited from their lived experience and empathy. We also hosted a weekly cohort of five volunteers from Orchardville, providing an inclusive environment for people with learning disabilities or autism to develop retail and customer service skills.

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025 (cont.)

Throughout the year 2024-2025, ITT grew to be one of the largest social supermarket services in Belfast. As of June 2025, there were 993 households enrolled, an increase of 90 from 903 the previous year. May 2025 was the highest month ever of new registrations to date. The average number of weekly users was 107, receiving food and hygiene supplies alongside referrals to other agencies to build personalised, wraparound support services.

Supermarket income remained steady at approximately £450 per week.

To meet this increased need, extended opening hours were totaled on Monday evenings before being made permanent. As in-work poverty has grown in Northern Ireland, we needed to better accommodate our demographic of working clients by providing more accessible food collection times. The three-tiered system of fees was replaced with a flat rate of £4.50 for 11 items, proving to be fairer and more cost-effective. A new weekly shopping list was also very positively received by clients. To improve accessibility for clients with literacy or language needs, weekly recipe cards are given with food packs which contain photo aids. A streamlined spreadsheet system allowed for better monitoring of client fee payments with flexible and compassionate payment plans set up for those struggling. The stock tracking and monitoring procedures were strengthened to avoid wastage with unpopular items removed

and given away as freebies. A new initiative was adopted to advertise ITT in-store and online as 'First Stop Before You Shop', based on savings on grocery essentials compared to supermarket prices.

Key third-sector partnerships throughout this year have included EBCDA, who provided support and guidance during the period of organisational transition. Through EBCDA, our ongoing participation in the Community Development Cafe has granted excellent networking and peer-learning opportunities. We have been an active member of the East Belfast Anti-Poverty Network, whose strategy was launched in October 2024. Since January 2025, we have collaborated with the East Belfast Race Relations Network to distribute Welcome Packs for newcomers to the area. One in four households are referred to other services with Belfast Works Connect and EBIAC in particular having been regular touchstones of cross-referrals. A Belfast Works Connect employee currently hot desks once a week in ITT to promote employability and training services to clients. Arising from this, plans to deliver Level 1 OCN qualifications in Managing Personal Finance to willing clients commenced. It is anticipated that this hotdesking can be offered to other community organisations to promote their services. Alternatives Restorative Justice, local councilors and MLAS, and community mental health services. Through The Community Fund, Nourish the Nation funding covered summer 2025, providing picnic lunch packs for children who usually receive free school meals. To advertise the service, ITT hosted stalls at Eastside Fayres and attended local community groups, parents and tots' groups and libraries.

For food stock replenishment, ITT have good working relationships with FareShare, Lynas, Musgrave, Tesco, Lid1, Brian Hurst Butchers, Allied Bakeries, French Village, Go Pig and Farmview Dairies. Regular stock donations are also gratefully received from Breda Co-op, St. Finnian's Church, St. Andrew's Church, Willowfield Church, Bridge NI and local primary schools.

Financial Review

Balance in June 2025 stood at **£81,348.52** - breakdown below

Full-time salaries x 2 months @ £5,249.99	= £10,499.98 (National Lottery Fund)
Part-time salaries x 3 months @ £1,375.74	= £4,127.22 (Awards for All)
Asda for Halal food	= £800.00
Community foundation for Nourish the Nation	= <u>£10,000.00</u>
	£25,427.20

This leaves a balance of £55,921.32 in unrestricted funds

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025 (cont.)

In This Together total revenue for the year to 30 June 25 was- **£208,692.60**

Successful grant applications in the year totaled- **£184,481.44**

Total revenue from fundraising efforts- **£20,704.93**

Misc. income (VAT refunds) - **£3,506.23**

Total expenditure for the year was- **£182,414.51**

Details of any fund held by the charity that was 'materially in deficit' at the end of the year and steps taken by the charity trustees to eliminate the deficit Funds that are 'materially in deficit". NO OVERSPEND

We do not have an investment policy.

One of our financial aims for the coming year was to ratify a reserves policy of holding six months of operating expenditure. This will provide a vital buffer that is sufficient to cover ongoing operating costs in the event of a short-term financial shortfall.

Following an assessment of how the charity would cope with changes to its main income, this target was chosen based on the following factors:

- The need for financial stability in the event of unexpected income loss or additional expenditure.
- The potential length of time required to secure new funding or generate alternative income streams.
- The overall size, complexity and essential nature of the charity's core purpose operations.

This reserves policy will also inform the subsequent adoption of a fundraising calendar with 6 varied events throughout the year.

The charity continues to face a number of significant risks and uncertainties. Chief among these is the precarious and short-term nature of much of its funding, which limits long-term planning and sustainability. In addition, rising food prices present an ongoing challenge; while the charity seeks to absorb costs where possible, there is an increasing likelihood that some of these pressures will need to be passed on to service users. The broader sustainability of food systems also poses a structural risk, affecting both availability and cost of supplies. At the same time, demand for the charity's services continues to grow. We must always remain alert to the possibility of this outstripping available resources, placing further strain on operations and highlighting the need for stable funding and resilient supply chains.

Signatures

Jill Lamont (Executive Director)

Gareth Wright (Chair of the Board)

Kerrie Milford (Secretary of the Board)

Laura McNaught (Board Member)

Linda McCracken (Board Member)

Date:

5/6/25