

LARNE LIGHTHOUSE TRUSTEES REPORT 2023 - 2024

The trustees present their report along with the financial statement of the charity for the year ended 5th April 2024. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies and comply with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Charities Act (NI) 2008.

Larne Lighthouse was formed in 2018 by a group of committed Christians from several different churches.

PUBLIC BENEFIT STATEMENT/OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

1st Aim - The aim of the charity is to proclaim the gospel of Salvation and Deliverance of our Lord Jesus Christ, among people of all ages and without geographical or sectarian limitations.

2nd Aim The Advancement of Health or the saving of lives.

The “advancement of Religion” was fulfilled in several different ways.

The Drop-in is open Tuesday to Friday and occasionally Saturday. Usually from 10am to 3pm.

During these sessions aspects of religion would be discussed as they related to every day events in the community. For example when one of the attendees was attacked and badly beaten the issue of how to forgive the perpetrators was discussed in some depth. This then widened to how to forgive family members and friends for the hurt they had caused. The drop-in leader was able to bring the subject round to how we are forgiven through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and as we forgive others so we are forgiven. .

During the year we started to provide a simple breakfast of tea and toast, occasionally boiled eggs or porridge as supplies were donated. A couple of elderly men would attend early morning mass then call into the Lighthouse for breakfast. As we ate breakfast together they would share the sermon delivered by the priest and how it related to our daily lives. This was an opportunity for these elderly men to contribute to the spiritual life of the centre.

Bridge for Men is a men’s group meeting on Monday evenings. Between 14 and 20 men are regular attenders ageing between mid-twenties and 70’s.

The programme includes discussions on current subjects, board games, music, quizzes, light snacks and a GOD slot. This “slot” takes various formats, it may have a visiting speaker who had responded to Christ’s command to serve those in need as in Matt. 6., it may be one of their own sharing their faith journey, it may be an exposition of a relevant verse of Scripture or it may be a Christian organisation such as CAP or Prison Fellowship talking about their work.

The Bridge for Men “God Slot” is always well attended and respectfully listened to. The men are invited to ask questions and give their personal views. Personal prayer is always available.

Another aspect of how we advanced religion was our encouragement to our members to attend a church of their own choosing. Those who indicated that they would like to attend a particular church we did our best to arrange transport for them. Several folk have attended Larne Christian Fellowship on a regular basis and have been accepted as part of the church family.

The advancement of religion, which is faith in Jesus Christ, pervades every aspect of the work of Larne Lighthouse: it permeates our relationships with those who use our service, it often inspires our conversations, and it infuses our service to them: every cup of tea, every hot meal is served flavoured with the love of Jesus.

Advancement of Religion for the public benefit also includes, personal discussions on faith topics, informal group discussions and Bible studies

Larne Lighthouse further promotes the “Advancement of Religion” by encouraging Christians to fulfil their Biblical duty of services as in 1 Peter 4: 10 “Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms”.

The 2nd purpose “Advancement of Health or the saving of lives.

The advancement of health means so much more than simply physical. For us it means supporting people physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually, it means reaching the lost, rescuing those in need and helping to restore the broken hearted. It means seeking out those in our community who are socially isolated and /or marginalized and loving those who have given up on themselves. Their condition may be as a consequence of the misuse of drugs, alcohol dependency, mental health issues or loneliness.

REACH We seek to reach the lost by connecting with individuals in need of help and support through the drop-in and the various groups we run. We believe love is an action word so when we see a need we do our best to meet that need whether it’s by prayer, providing a listening ear, a cup of coffee, a hot meal or an emergency food supply. We can and do provide emergency clothing from our charity shop. If necessary we may be able to provide emergency transport to the hospital or support for a court hearing. If we don’t have the resources ourselves we refer people to other groups in the community, e.g. the Food Bank, CAP (Christians against poverty), local churches, Mental or Housing services.

RESCUE - We seek to provide emotional and spiritual support to those who are struggling or are in crisis. We try to build genuine relationships with people helping them find and make healthy choices for themselves. Through how we relate and support them we seek to show God’s power to change lives, how they can move from crisis to Christ.

As CT Studd wrote “We are a rescue shop within a yard of hell”. This is where the light from Larne Lighthouse needs to shine brightest and if we can pull one person out of the jaws of hell to a physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually healthier state we will have fulfilled the ministry GOD has given us.

RESTORE For those who use the Lighthouse while we would seek to restore hope in a better, healthier future, a future where individuals feel fulfilled and secure in a healthy community ultimately restoration is when we fully acknowledge our own sin and helplessness and put full faith in Christ trusting in His saving work at Calvary on our behalf.

While we accept of course that there will be those who reject the good news nevertheless we will continue as the Holy Spirit leads to offer folk all the support we can ensuring their rejection of Christ in no way inhibits them from receiving the same measure of acceptance, support and love they would otherwise receive..

Larne Lighthouse provides a men only group once a week and a drop-in centre 4 days a week for all adults in the community regardless of political or religious affiliations, gender, ability, race or financial status etc. During the year 2023/2024 the average attendance at the drop-in would range from 28 to 35 mostly men with ages ranging from 18 to 80 approx. Many of those attending could be described as being or in danger of becoming lonely, socially isolated and or marginalized.

In the interests of health and the saving of lives and to promote the mental, physical, social and spiritual life of attendees the trustees provide a warm welcome, someone to talk to, refreshments, emergency food parcels, help and support as necessary.

Many of those who use Larne Lighthouse have lost confidence in themselves, often neglecting their personal hygiene and how they present themselves. As they get to know us and learn to trust us oft times it becomes noticeable that their clothes are cleaner, they wash and shave more frequently and they become more communicative. . Some have begun to support the work, for example they will offer to go to

the store for food supplies, "S" had been a decorator and he painted the centre, "R" fixed dripping taps and a major leak under the kitchen sink, "B" unblocked toilets whilst others filled and emptied the dishwasher. Sometimes people would offer to peel potatoes or prepare the vegetables whilst others would act as hosts when we had newcomers. We actively encourage people to take ownership of the service believing as we help each other we ourselves experience restoration.

At Larne Lighthouse we encourage people to learn new skills believing that simply trying something new will support their mental health and give them a sense of achievement.

This year we have run 4 courses, namely, photography, cookery, fly fishing and woodwork.

1. The photography course 6 sessions, led by a professional photographer, encouraged the 7 participants to:

- a. Learn how to use their phone camera
- b. Learn what makes a good picture
- c. Print their shots on our printer
- d. Discuss the experience.

One of the participants was identified as having very real talent and eventually joined the local photography club. The others enjoyed the course and were pleased with the suggestions and comments made by the instructor.

Cookery 3 sessions.

This small group of 4 men. concentrated on making a variety of pizza. Ready-made bases were purchased. Toppings were chosen, purchased and prepared by the participants and the finished pizzas were shared and voted on by the rest of Bridge for Men.

Fly Fishing This twelve person group was led by a qualified instructor. The course included basic gear setup, essential knots, casting techniques, fly pattern selection and assembling and understanding the environment and fish. Opportunity was given to practice techniques and trips to the club lake was arranged, the final event of the course was an all-day fish with a barbecue. Many of the participants became club members and regularly go to the club lake.

Woodwork

This group met on Thursday evening. It was a joint venture with Willerby Fly Fishing club who were trying to encourage birds to nest around their lakes. This club is well known to Larne Lighthouse attendees as we regularly hold barbecues and fishing days there. The club had asked if Larne Lighthouse would build bird boxes for their site. The woodwork group led by an experienced carpenter met for 8 weeks, the first week concentrating on previous experience of participants, health and safety issues, use of tools and the importance of clearing up after each session. Eventually 9 boxes were finished to varying standards and taken to the fishing club grounds.

It's well known that there are multiple benefits when people eat together: Benefits such as promoting better communication, reducing stress, fostering a sense of belonging and building trust. Furthermore it helps to break down social barriers reducing perceptions of mistrust and building community cohesion.

To this end Larne Lighthouse provides a light breakfast and a hot meal at lunch time at no cost to attendees. We give thanks to God and to our supporters for the donations of food.

Refreshments consist of a light breakfast, usually consisting of tea and toast with occasional extras like boiled eggs, fruit or yoghurts. The frail elderly are served whilst the more able help themselves. A hot dinner (e.g. chilli con canni, chicken and chips, chicken pasta bake, shepherd's pie to name but a few) is

served around 12.30pm. Desserts are provided occasionally. Coffee, tea and biscuits are always available on a help yourself basis. We do not charge for these meals although a donation is always welcome.

The public benefit can be seen in the noticeable decline in disruptive behaviour both in the centre and in the community from those who regularly attend and this year no-one has received a custodial sentence from the courts. There has also been a marked reduction in the misuse of alcohol and illegal substances leading to a lessening of depression and improved physical health. Several people have stepped up to help the volunteers, e.g. helping breakfast preparations in the morning, doing the shopping, painting, minor repairs and clearing up to name but a few. Overall these improvements have led to fewer demands on the health service and fewer pick-ups by the police.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The trustees have considered the major risks to which Larne Lighthouse is exposed and established systems and procedures to manage those risks.

Fiduciary – all cheques and online payments must be signed by 2 authorized signatories. Annual accounts have been independently examined and the examiners recommendations for improved procedures have been implemented.

Larne Lighthouse has a child and vulnerable protection policy in place. This is reviewed annually.

Larne Lighthouse carries insurance for Public Liability, Employers Liability and buildings,

Larne Lighthouse has the building inspected for fire, gas and electrical safety and conducts periodic health and safety checks. We remodelled the washroom, painted it. (aesthetics). put in a electric hand dryer (hygiene), added disability hand rails around the comfort height toilet and by the sink, and a cupboard for supplies. While the Lighthouse purchased the supplies all labour was donated by attendees from the drop-in.

Larne Lighthouse has a Food Hygiene rating of 5***** from Mid and East Antrim Borough Council for its kitchen facilities and practices and everyone helping with food preparations have an up to date Food Hygiene Certificate,

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Larne Lighthouse has in the past relied mainly on fundraising activities such as organising car-boot sales, craft shows, women's events etc. Small donations from individuals were gratefully received. However these events were time consuming, exhausting and financially unreliable so in 2023 we opened a charity shop next door to the drop-in. This has provided us with sufficient funds to improve the work. For example where previously we had provided hot toasties for lunch we are now in a position to provide a proper hot nutritious meal at no cost to the attendees. A significant amount of food is donated to the centre through CAP (provided by Asda), individuals such as our postwomen, friends and our trustees.

Some of Larne Lighthouse attendees also donate food. For example "M" purchases pizza and biscuits, sufficient for 3 days every month. ; "J" donates biscuits and canned food every week while "P" brings a large carrier bag filled with everything from tinned peas and baked beans to canned chicken and mince. A lady "B" provides sufficient for 2 complete meals every week. The meat for our Christmas day meal was provided by our post lady and desserts by women from a local church. We give thanks to God for all those who support the work of Larne Lighthouse.

A copy of the latest accounts is attached.