



MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

FOR YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2024

The Committee present their report and the audited financial statements for the year ended 31st March 2024.

Reference & Administration Details

The reference and administrative details of the charity are as shown on page 1.

Structure, Governance & Management – Organisational Structure

The organisation was established as an unincorporated organisation and is governed under its constitution.

The organisation is government by a Management Committee. Any person wishing to become a committee member must apply in writing prior to the AGM. A vote is then taken at AGM as to whether they are to be appointed.

Mission Statement

“The Association aims to establish and promote benefits of the inhabitants of the Falls area without distinction of age, gender, race, political or other opinion by engaging with Statutory Authorities and Voluntary Organisations in a common effort to advance education and provide opportunities relating to social welfare for health, recreation and leisure with the object of improving the conditions of life of all inhabitants”

Organisational Development	
Charity Status	Falls Residents Association gained its charity status in August 2022 (NIC108789) following a lengthy delay due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
From Covid 19 to Cost of Living Crisis	<p>Following a lengthy spell of lockdowns and uncertainty our organisation continues to be impacted by the daily struggles faced by some many in the locality.</p> <p>The Covid-19 pandemic greatly impacted on our community and when the light at the end of the tunnel was clearly visible we were hit without another wave of misfortune with the cost of living crisis. This has impacted on us as an organisation as we continue to try and support as many local residents as possible.</p>

	<p>We have worked in partnership with our partner groups to help address this easy and ease the burden on many households. We have worked with Bryson Charitable in the delivery of the Fuel Hardship Scheme as well as Belfast City Council to deliver support to those most in need.</p> <p>Like many others our organisation is impacted also by the cost of living crisis with rising fuel costs putting extreme financial pressure on our ability to pay expensive electricity and fuel costs.</p> <p>We will do our best to continue to deliver quality services to those who use our organisation as well as the wider community. It should be noted that these uncertain times are continuing to impact on our organisation, individuals, families and many others.</p>
CiT Community Safety	<p>The Residents Association continues to take lead on the Communities in Transition Community Safety and Policing Programme. This programme is administered through The Executive Office Tackling Paramilitary Programme which aims to build confidence in policing and prevent paramilitary groups from getting a foothold on communities.</p> <p>The Community Safety Co-ordinator engages with PSNI Neighbourhood Teams as well as West Belfast Community Safety Forum and other Statutory Agencies to deal with all issues relating to community safety.</p> <p>We are seeing more and more people fall foul to those who borrow from illegal money lenders due to the cost of living crisis. As well as this many are turning to crime in order to survive daily living.</p>
Community Development Worker	NIHE continues to fund the Community Development Worker post and funding is secured for the period 23/24 and 24/25.

Physical Infrastructure / Improvements	
Pairc an Lonnain (Divis Back Path)	This site opened to the general public in July 2021 after being handed over from BCC. Falls Residents Association continues to carry out operational management of the site including bookings, programme activities, events and promotion of the site. We manage a small budget that allows us to run community programmes and activities.
St Comgalls	Falls Residents continues to support Falls Community Council promoting the newly refurbished site at St Comgalls as well as involvement in activities and programmes.

Ross Street / Roumania Rise	<p>Falls Residents Association fully engage with Radius Housing on the new housing development at Ross Street. The development is due to be completed at the end of Summer 2024. Kelly Brothers Building Contractors were awarded the contract from Radius</p> <p>The redevelopment of Roumania Rise has also commenced in line with the Ross Street development. These 2 projects are under the same contract and are scheduled to be completed by end of Summer 2024.</p>
General Area Improvements – Open Spaces	<p>There have been multiple green spaces improved through Falls over the last 12 months. This includes the removal of railings and planters to visually improve the area. The sites were located at:</p> <p>Cullingtree Road Clonfaddan Crescent Falls Road Abercorn Street North Finn / Fingals Townsend Street</p> <p>NIHE are due to commence a bathroom and kitchen scheme in April 2024. FP McCann are the lead contractors for the works and they will be based at the bottom of Albert Street along the Westlink and Devonshire. This site is owned by Choice Housing and has been occupied by various contractors which has assisted the community in having this site turn into a space used for ASB and criminal activity.</p>
Distillery Street	<p>Tina Black continues to push for this site to be redeveloped and a recent feasibility study has been carried out. Multiple consultations have also taken place with local residents. This work is being progressed through the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy.</p>

Community Engagement	
Partnership Working	<p>Falls Residents continues to carry out essential work through our continuous engagement as a co-equal partner of the Falls Partnership Initiative. Examples of the work are set out below:</p>
Intergenerational Programmes	<p>This vital work has brought together residents from Cullingtree Meadows and Cullingtree Fold with local youth groups in the area. This included woodwork, cookery, art projects, sports days, film clubs and seasonal events including Christmas and St Patrick's day.</p>

	Falls Residents are currently in the process of developing further initiatives that will enhance the connectivity between all members of the community.
Falls Youth Providers	Planning for the year ahead has already taken place with Falls Youth Providers to schedule a calendar of events that will take place throughout the year and Falls Residents will continue to support these projects to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our young people as well as acquiring adequate funding to support such projects.
Cross Community	<p>The Residents Association has continued its ongoing partnership through the Falls / Shankill Forum in addressing issues of mutual concern to both communities. In light of the unfortunate isolated incidents that took place at the interface gates Falls Residents will continue to work towards alleviating any potential threat of violence occurring.</p> <p>We continue to build on ongoing positive dialogue and communication through cross-community events such as the carol service that took place in December 2023 at the Northumberland Street gates alongside new Life City Church. This was followed by a human chain through the peace gates in March 2024. This coincided with a Ceile dance and bus run to Downpatrick.</p>

Advocacy / Lobbying	
Falls Residents continues to engage with Statutory Agencies on matters that impact the lives of the people in the Falls area. We continue to work with other community and voluntary sector organisations through our involvement in the HCN Structure and many other forums.	
Housing	<p>The demand on the Residents Association is at an all-time high and we continue to engage with NIHE and other Housing Providers on behalf of those registered as homeless or seeking alternative accommodation.</p> <p>We assisted approximately 600 families over the course of 2022 in dealing with various housing issues such as points, allocations, maintenance, rent arrears, evictions and welfare rights.</p>
Benefit Advice	<p>The impact of the cost of living crisis has seen a substantial rise in the need for benefit advice. This advice ranged from the completion of forms to assistance with appeals procedures and applying for grants and loans.</p> <p>We have also seen a noticeable increase in the number of new citizens requiring local support and assistance from the Residents Association. This has required the provision of interpreters and translations services which have been provided by the Migrant Centre.</p>

	<p>We have been fortunate to have the support of Falls Community Council in dealing with more complex cases.</p> <p>We continue to signpost families and individuals to the relevant agencies to seek additional support.</p>
Community Safety	<p>The provision of the CiT Community Safety Co-ordinator has proven extremely beneficial to the ongoing resolution to various incidents and issues within the Falls Ward.</p> <p>This has assisted in providing mediation in highly volatile situations including the interface issues and more recently the increase in ASB.</p> <p>Through CiT there have been multiple partnerships developed / improved on since the introduction of the CS Forum in April 2020.</p> <p>The CS Co-Ordinator engages with PSNI, BCC and ASB Officers on a regular basis in order to deal with car crime and the removal of vehicles from the area which poses a threat to the safety, health and wellbeing of local residents.</p>

Community Events / Response	
Communication Strategy	<p>3000 leaflets were distributed to households in the Falls area providing details of our emergency contact number and various agencies that could provide support.</p> <p>A 24-hour phone line was set up to reassure the community that help was at hand if required as well as daily updates across all social medial platforms which allowed for online interaction.</p> <p>Liaison with the local schools and family support workers to help identify those at an early stage those who may require support.</p> <p>This led to the creation of a database identifying those families and induvial that required support whether this be assistance with food, utilities or medical supplies.</p>
Utility Vouchers	<p>Utility vouchers were distributed to 1000+ households that met the criteria as set out by BCC and Bryson Charitable.</p>
Health	<p>Falls Residents Association along with our partner groups have provided opportunities for local residents to become involved in a range of activities that addresses both physical and mental health needs. This included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home Safety Packs

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Menopause & Women's Health sessions • Physical activity classes for all abilities • Self-defence classes • Personal Training (Small Group)
Interconnectivity	A partnership was formed with Vodafone Services to help families without online services. Packages were provided to households that did not have access to internet services that would facilitate online services that helped address isolation and loneliness.
Community Events	<p>Holiday events were arranged throughout the area to help boost community cohesion and engagement. Street parties, sporting events, family fun days and many other activities were arranged to help overcome social isolation and loneliness.</p> <p>Christmas, Halloween and Summer events were a major success in 2023/24. These events were carried out in conjunction with Feile and the Falls Partnership to help the community in times of uncertainty.</p>

Monitoring and Evaluation

Falls Residents is subject to both internal and external inspection and review. We have an internal programme of service development and reviews involving all staff, committee members and volunteers.

Additionally, we are subject to periodic reviews and from our funders including BCC, NIHE and TEO. All programme and funding monitoring and evaluations are completed within the specified timeframe.

Financial Review

The organisation is a charitable organisation and keep up to date management and audited accounts which is carried out by Divis Joint Development Committee. HMRC payments are paid monthly and all income and expenditure are checked and vouched.

Responsibilities of the Management Committee

The Committee are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards. The financial statements for each financial year give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable organisation and of the incoming resources, including the income and expenditure of the organisation for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the committee are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the organisation will continue to operate.

The Management Committee are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the organisation and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2008. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the organisation and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Statement of Disclosure of Information to Auditor

In so far, the Management Committee, who held office at the date of approval of these financial statements, are aware;

- There is in no relevant audit information of which the company's auditor is unaware.
- The Management Committee have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the audit is aware of that information.