

Belfast Butterfly Club (NIC 100045)

Trustees' Annual Report 2023 – 24

Introduction

This is the annual report of the Trustees of the Belfast Butterfly Club (NIC 100045) for the financial year from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

Registered address of the charity: 98 University Street, Belfast BT7 1HE

Trustees: John Kenny (Chair), Sonia Everest, Fiona McFerran, Walter Murray and Michelle Thompson.

The Belfast Butterfly Club is governed by its Constitution dating from its inception in September 1991 as amended following consultation with HMRC in 1993. The charity is managed by a committee, comprised of permanent trustees and annually elected volunteers, which meets on a regular basis.

Purposes of the charity

- (i) To relieve the emotional stress of all persons who are affected by transvestism and transsexualism.
- (ii) To advance public education in respect of transvestism and transsexualism.

The potential direct benefits to our clients which flow from Purpose (i) are an improvement in overall mental health and well-being leading to an improved quality of life, a reduction in social isolation and marginalisation, improved self-confidence and self-acceptance as a result of the easing of fears and concerns about gender identity issues, a reduction in drug and alcohol addiction, depression, self-harm and suicide arising from the provision of practical information and advice. These benefits are evidenced by the feedback which we receive from our clients both in person and in writing as well as in surveys carried out independently. There is no harm accruing to anyone which is attributable to this purpose. The charity's beneficiaries in relation to this purpose are transgendered people (i.e. transvestites and transsexuals), their families and friends in Northern Ireland, including those who volunteer to help the charity achieve its purposes. No distinction is drawn between our members and other service users (who choose not to become members) in relation to access to our services. There is no private benefit to our trustees or others flowing from this purpose as our trustees are not transgendered, we have no paid staff and our volunteers are included in our target group of clients.

The potential direct benefits which flow from Purpose (ii) are a greater awareness of gender identity issues and more informed understanding of transgendered people within society in general, leading to less irrational fear which can be the cause of threatening and anti-social

behaviour towards transvestites and transsexuals. These benefits are evidenced by the powerful message of social inclusion and equality which appears to have got through to key persons in government, government agencies and even the media, challenging prejudice and starting to remove obstacles to acceptance and respect. Changes in legislation over recent years are evidence of this, leading to a gradual transformation in the prevailing social environment to one that is supportive and inclusive of transgendered people with an eventual reduction in the scope and frequency of unfair treatment of people who are transgendered, including discrimination in the workplace, barriers to access to a wide variety of health services and a denial of basic human rights. There is no harm accruing to anyone which is attributable to this purpose. The charity's beneficiaries in relation to this purpose are the wider public which makes up society as a whole in Northern Ireland, including the media, health professionals, politicians and those who work for public authorities and have a part to play in furthering the equality and social inclusion agendas. There is no private benefit to anyone flowing from this purpose other than the incidental benefit of being able to live in a better informed and more inclusive society.

Financial commentary

During the financial year under review the Belfast Butterfly Club's income from members' donations totalled £630 while expenditure on the provision of services was £456. Since £720 had been carried forward from the previous year a surplus balance of £894 is carried forward into the 2024-25 financial year.

Activities

The principal methods used to deliver on the organisation's purposes are the running of a telephone helpline service and a programme of monthly and weekly meetings designed to give people the opportunity to express their transgender status in a supportive and non-judgemental environment. This is supplemented by the provision of an attractive website, Facebook page and e-mail response service to deal with specific information queries.

Having obtained a free hosting service for a new website, repeated attempts to recruit a web designer willing to work with WordPress software on a pro bono basis proved unsuccessful. The lack of a web presence did contribute to a huge jump in the number of calls to the helpline as people sought information they would have previously found online. Eventually in January a club member donated a paid-for website to fill the year long gap without a web presence. Unfortunately the basic package did not include web statistics but the club hopes that the attractive design will gradually lead to more people making contact over the coming year.

The programme of guest speakers at the monthly open meetings again attracted interest though the weekly get-togethers have been less frequent than previously.

Renewed efforts to engage the membership and bring in new members in the months ahead will be needed if the decline in involvement is to be reversed and new initiatives introduced.

The full commitment of all active members will be necessary in order to build on the work done to date.

Statistics 2023-24 (in brackets 2022-23)

Total attendance -	83	(157) ↓
Number of meetings -	18	(24) ↓
Duration -	60.30 hrs	(83.45hrs) ↓
Donations -	£ 630	(£680) ↓
Number of calls -	300	(37) ↑
e-mail items -	251	(704) ↓
Website statistics -	N/A	

Achievements

In many ways it has been a disappointing year for the club although the behind-the-scenes work continued unabated and the creation of a new website and some interesting discussions at meetings have been important highlights.

Conclusion

In preparing this report the Trustees of the Belfast Butterfly Club have had due regard for the guidance on public benefit from the Northern Ireland Charity Commission and other documentation produced by the Commission and are of the view that the club is operating in full compliance with its duties as a charity.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees : *J. Kenny*

25 September 2024

John Kenny

Chairman