

# G-OLD COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP TRUSTEES REPORT

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023**

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

## **Background**

Sure Start projects are targeted at the 0-4 age group in areas of deprivation, measured in terms of the current impact on children's life chances and the shortfall in fulfilling children's potential. Sure Start projects work with parents and children to promote the physical, intellectual, social and emotional development of children - particularly those who are disadvantaged - to make sure they are ready to make the most of opportunities when they get to school.

The G-old Community Partnership Sure Start Initiative has been in operation since February 2001.

## **Structure, governance and management**

The organisation is a charitable company limited by guarantee. The company was established under a Memorandum of Association, which established the objects and powers of the charitable company, and is governed under its Articles of Association.

The appointment of trustees is in accordance with the charity's Articles of Association, whereby the trustees of the charity shall comprise of no more than one person from each of the organisations/agencies/bodies represented.

The trustees can also appoint representatives from other organisations as trustees if the organisation supports the objects of the charity and have an interest in the area of benefit, providing that a resolution for such an appointment is approved by not less than 75 per cent of the trustees holding office at that time.

## **Objectives and activities**

The objects of the charity are to promote the benefit of the inhabitants of Oldtown, Gortallowry, Killymoon, Ardboe, Dunamore, Pomeroy, Maghera and Town Parks East and in particular but not exclusively children under four years of age and their families, without distinction of sex, age, race, or political, religious or other opinions by associating together with the said inhabitants, local authorities, public agencies and voluntary and other organisations in a common effort to relieve poverty, preserve and protect health, advance education and provide facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation and leisure time occupation with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants.

It aims to achieve these objects by:

- improving health by supporting parents in caring for children and promoting children's health and development;
- improving the ability to learn by encouraging stimulatory play, improving language skills, and the early identification and support of children with learning difficulties; and
- improving social development by supporting the development of early relationships between parents and children, good parenting skills, family functioning, and early identification and support of children with emotional, learning and behavioural difficulties.

## **Trustees**

The trustees (who are also the directors for the purposes of company law) who held office during the year and up to the date of signature of the financial statements were as follows:

Frances McKenna  
Martina Watson  
Sharon Burnett  
Riognach Murphy  
Judith Searle

(Appointed 6 April 2022 and resigned 23 May 2023)

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**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023**

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## **Achieve and performance**

G-old Community Partnership – Surestart charitable activities have experienced some changes due to the impact of the ongoing COVID 19 Pandemic. However, activities continue to benefit of the inhabitants of Gortallowry, Oldtown, Killymoon, Ardboe, Dunamore, Pomeroy and Maghera wards. In August 2021 additional funding was provided to roll out services in an additional ward -Town Parks East, Magherafelt.

During 2022-2023 G-old Community Partnership had an increase in registrations with 1404 children and 1396 parents registered. Service uptake by families was 64%, an overall decrease of 3% on the previous year however uptake by antenatal parents was 82%. Staff vacancies and recruitment difficulties did significantly impact on service delivery in particular the availability of SLT and crèche-based activities for families.

The Surestart Developmental Programmes for 2–3-Year-Olds were delivered to 97 children across 6 sites, i.e., 2 programmes in both Ardboe Resource Centre and Cookstown Primary School, 1 programme in St Joseph's, Killeenan, St Mary's, Dunamore, Rowantree Centre, Pomeroy and The Lurach Centre, Maghera. As with every year some programmes were oversubscribed with a waiting list in place. Staff worked flexibly across all sites to ensure programmes kept open, but it was necessary in Nov/Dec to close each programme for a week to cope with staff shortage. These sessions were subsequently made up later in the year.

Gold Community Partnership along with the other SureStart projects in the Northern Trust area successfully achieved UNICEF Baby Friendly Stage 3 Gold Award for promotion of Breast Feeding.

The implementation of the new Surestart Go database has had significant teething problems and it has been extremely time consuming for admin staff to upload data however the developer is working to resolve these issues for projects. Staff shortage in admin and finance due to staff vacancy and sick leave added to workload pressures.

Inspections of all registered sites were carried out by NHSCT Early Years Social Work team in January and February 2023 with a very positive outcome.

Practical support for parents through Barnardos Crisis Fund with delivery of food hampers, food vouchers, fuel stamps etc. Support was also available from other charitable organisations including Baby Basics, Antioch and Liberty Churches, SVP and HALO.

The past year did see 5 new staff join the service ,5 existing staff take up new posts, SLT return from a career break and there were 3 resignations. In addition, 3 staff were on long term sick leave and there are 4 vacant posts which need to be recruited. It has been another very stressful year for the staff team and sincere appreciation is extended to all who worked with commitment and passion to support families.

Recruitment delays and vacant posts together with long term sick leave and resignations created significant underspend in salaries. However, approval was given by DE to use underspend for significant repairs to the deteriorating external façade at St Marys, Dunamore.

Absence of confirmation of budget for 23/24 means planning activities for the year ahead is very difficult.

Gold Community Partnership Management committee continues to support staff and provide effective oversight of the programme delivery and accountability for use of funds. Changes in membership due to resignations and maternity leave has not impacted on the function of the committee.

Despite the challenges outlined Gold Community Partnership has offered substantial support to families throughout the past year and signposted to other agencies for additional support.

# **G-OLD COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP TRUSTEES REPORT**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023**

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## **Future Plans**

- Increased programme delivery to children and their families to increase uptake of service.
- Increase service delivery in Town Parks East 2, Magherafelt.
- Pilot Approved Home Carer Support for families.
- Develop more effective online evaluations tools to measure impact of service delivery.
- Recruit staff for vacant posts in Admin, Outreach Support, Childcare and Team Manager post.
- Training for staff in use of Surestart GO Database and social media.
- Secure appropriate accommodation for Developmental Programme for 2-3 Year Olds in Cookstown.

## **Financial Review**

The bulk of the charitable company's income is funded by the Department of Education via the Health and Social Care Board, and this is matched by expenditure in the year to achieve a break-even result. This is in line with the conditions of the funding provided by the Department of Education (via SPPG) and does not allow the company to accumulate reserves

## **Auditor**

The auditor, David Lyttle + Co Ltd, are deemed to be reappointed under section 487(2) of the Companies Act 2006.

## **Statement of directors' responsibilities**

The trustees are responsible for preparing the annual report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under company law the trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company and of the surplus or deficit of the company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

## **Statement of disclosure to auditor**

So far as each person who was a director at the date of approving this report is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the company's auditor is unaware. Additionally, the directors individually have taken all the necessary steps that they ought to have taken as directors in order to make themselves aware of all relevant audit information and to establish that the company's auditor is aware of that information.

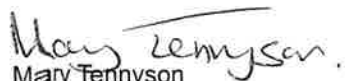
This report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies entitled to the small companies exemption.

# G-OLD COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP TRUSTEES REPORT

*FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023*

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By order of the board



Mary Tennyson

**Secretary**

14 September 2023