



The School for Social Enterprises in Ireland

Trustees' report for the year ended 31 March 2023

The Trustees, who are also the Directors under the provisions of the Companies Act 2006, submit their annual report and the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2023.

Reference and administration details

Registered office address: Brookfield Business Centre, 333 Crumlin Road, Belfast, Co Antrim, BT14 7EA

Structure, governance and management

Governing Document

The School for Social Enterprises in Ireland is a company limited by guarantee governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association incorporated on 7 March 1995.

Trustees

Trustees are currently members of the Trust. Current Trustees were appointed by The Flax Trust and Ulster University (Ulster Business School) – SSEI in its present form having been created as a strategic alliance between both organisations. All trustees are guarantors of the Trust with a maximum liability of £1. The trustees of the company who were in office during the year and up to the date of signing the financial statements are set out below:

Rev. Myles Kavanagh

Robert McNeill

Professor Kenneth O'Neill (Chair)

John Patterson

Sister Mary Turley

Trustee induction and training

The School ensures that appropriate induction and training is given to all Trustees. The Trust

ensures Trustees are aware of their responsibilities on Corporate Governance. Trustees have attended governance training.

Organisation

The Trustees manage all business decisions and meet on a regular basis. The School was registered as a charity by The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland on 23 January 2015

Risk management

The Trustees are responsible for ensuring that an effective system of internal financial control is maintained and operated by the Trust. The system of internal financial control is based on a framework of regular management information; administrative procedures; and a system of delegation and accountability and is designed to provide reasonable assurance that:

- the School is operating efficiently and effectively;
- its assets are safeguarded against unauthorised use or disposition;
- proper records are maintained and financial information used within the company or for publication is reliable;
- the School complies with relevant laws and regulations; and
- the School's systems of financial control are designed to provide reasonable, but not absolute assurance against material mis-statement or loss.

The major risks to which the School is exposed, as identified by the Trustees, have been reviewed and systems have been established to mitigate those risks.

Objectives, activities and public benefit test

The School's main objectives and activities for the year were to promote the following purposes for the public benefit:

- greater knowledge of the nature, role and potential of the social economy to decision-makers and influencers in the public and private sectors
- the advancement of education, training and skills of actual and potential employees in the social economy and of persons seeking to work in support of the sector
- such other exclusively charitable purpose according to the law of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland as the Trustees may from time to time decide.

School policies and procedures

The School uses funds donated by the Flax Trust and other sponsors/donors) to:

- provide discretionary (according to ability to pay) scholarships to meet the cost of personal and organisational development programmes designed to meet the needs of participating individuals
- organise and deliver Masterclasses, roadshows, information sessions and other means of communicating with its target market either directly or in partnership with appropriate / likeminded organisations
- provide such other learning activities as are deemed relevant to improved performance of the social economy

Eligibility to apply for a Flax Trust scholarship:

To be eligible to apply for an award students must meet all the following criteria:

- Be a registered student of the School or organisation delivering the programme of learning;
- Have met all the assessment and financial responsibilities related to the course;
- Be at least 18 years old by the application closing date;
- Be a UK or EU citizen and/or hold legal residency status;
- Obtain a written endorsement for proposed activity from course tutor; and
- Sign an agreement with the School related to scholarship activities.

Public benefit test:

The School Board believes that it has made the advancement of students' education and development possible by offering and part-funding the Advanced Diploma in Social Enterprise (ADSE), delivered on its behalf by Ulster University Business School, and awarding bursaries to students based on the criteria listed above as well as current and/or future job role and previous experience. The objective is to advance the management and entrepreneurial knowledge and skills of participating students and the sustainability of their employing organisations through the Advanced Diploma on Social Enterprise.

The School in recent years has delivered a series of Master Classes aimed at improving the understanding and knowledge of social economy organisations and the effectiveness of persons working in, for or associated with the sector. These Masterclasses bring examples of best practice in the sector to decision-makers and influencers in the public and private sectors as well as to the social economy/third sector itself. In addition the Transform participants were invited to take the opportunity to join in with on-line seminars and conferences being run by the Management & Leadership Network as were the SSEI Alumni via the SSEI e-zine.

Achievements and performance

The School has been the vehicle for recruiting participants for a flagship programme of learning each year for the past 15 years normally operating as The Advanced Diploma in Social Enterprise. In 2018 this programme underwent an extensive internal review and remodelling which rebranded to become The TRANSFORM Social Business and Community Development Programme. The programme itself is up for external validation in 2023 and arrangements are already being made to fulfil the Academic Requirements for this significant assessment.

In 2022 some 16 persons enrolled in the ADSE /TRANSFORM PROGRAMME. Following on from the experience of the previous programme where the content was delivered online (due to Covid restrictions) it was deemed desirable to continue to offer this programme as a 'hybrid' experience i.e., where participants attended at least one day of each of the six modules with the other day being available 'on-line'. The year-end review indicated that participants really welcomed the face-to-face opportunities to network and peer to peer learning, as well as appreciating the benefits of learning 'at home' or in the office. The overall

experience was very well received. Without exception all participants acknowledged that they would not have been able to take up this opportunity if it had not been for the Flax Trust Bursary. All participants were able to fund or get funding to pay for their individual contribution to course fees.



The 2022 TRANSFORM programme commenced in January 2022 and continued on into early 2023 for graduations in Summer 2023.

TRANSFORM is a highly focused and interactive programme designed to enable individuals to gain the knowledge and skills required to start or build social enterprise activities as a means of social regeneration, community development and financial sustainability.

The TRANSFORM programme is specifically designed for Individuals engaged in one or more of the following activities:

Community development and regeneration e.g. Housing Associations

Social entrepreneurs

Members engaged in existing Social Enterprises

Board members of Social Enterprises engaged in economic development through Social Enterprise

Charitable organisations looking to develop Social Enterprise activities

Individuals who are self-employed or unemployed, who wish to pursue social enterprise activities are also considered.

The programme content and approach is designed to provide knowledge and practical applications that will enable participants to develop and grow through a blend of; Theory, Best Practice, Case Studies, Site Visits and presentations from Exemplars & Practitioners. By the end of the programme participants will have the knowledge to start or grow a sustainable social enterprise which can lead to real transformation within their community and beyond.

The TRANSFORM programme continues to be delivered by the Ulster University on behalf of SSEI and remains fully accredited through the achievement of the Advanced Diploma in Social Enterprise.

In March 23 a Social Enterprise Masterclass 'On Purpose' was held in partnership with SSEI, Flax Trust, Belfast City Council, BETTER and Work West in St Comgalls Conference Centre (a social enterprise venue). Amongst the speakers was Chara Clarke a graduate of the ADSE and award-winning social entrepreneur.

Over the course of the programme participants were also invited to attend a range of events covering social enterprise topics such as the MLN Leadership Summit, Breaking Boundaries (Belfast City Council) and the MLN Masterclass series.

Financial review

Turnover for the year to March 2022 was £0. There was a net negative movement in funds of £650 and reserves at the year end were £1178, all unrestricted. (Note: Fees/bursaries were paid directly to Ulster University and not via SSEI)

Investment policy

The Trustees have the power to invest in such assets as they see fit.

Reserves policy and going concern

The Trust's current policy is not to embark on activities/initiatives without the working capital in its current bank account to meet the value of awards and any costs incurred for the year. The Trust is in the process of developing a plan to increase income and extend its bursary and awards to students. Reserves are negligible and the School does not have any employees working instead through third parties and volunteers.

The Trustees have reviewed the financial statements and have reviewed future projections and are confident that the charity has sufficient funds to be signed off as a going concern.

Plans for future periods.

The Trust's objectives are noted above under **Objectives, activities and public benefit test** and may be summarised as:

'To advance the understanding knowledge, training and skills of persons in or related to the social economy sector with a view to enhancing the sustainability and effectiveness of the sector'

The School will achieve this mainly by providing funding and assisting in the provision of facilities, educators, trainers, speakers, role models and other expertise as well as bursaries.

Its strategic targets are:

- to raise the profile of the School locally, regionally, nationally and internationally;
- to expand the School's range of activities and reach thereof through, inter alia, fundraising activity;
- to use the School to add value and enhance the quality of management and collaboration in and by social enterprises.
- to assist the attainment of the above targets by working closely with past students to facilitate the formation of an alumni association if they feel it will add value to their activities, ambitions and organisations.

It will therefore work to:

- increase its public profile and public awareness and will actively market its activities;
- seek the support of past students and staff and business community to attract donations to increase its funds;
- maintain its support to current students;

- work closely with other organisations involved in supporting the sector to avoid overlap or wasteful competition.

Looking ahead there are discussions taking place to integrate the emerging themes of sustainability and environmental impact aligned with the social enterprise agenda. Further work will be carried out to establish relevant and approved content with the University and other stakeholders prior to any changes proposed.

Statement of trustees' responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also directors of the School for Social Enterprises in Ireland for the purposes of Company Law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the trustee to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustee is required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustee is responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. The trustee is also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Statement of disclosure of information to auditors

So far as each of the trustees in office at the date of approval of these financial statements is aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware; and
- they have taken all the steps that they ought to have taken as trustees in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charitable company's auditors are aware of that information.

Small companies' exemption

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions relating to small companies within Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

Independent auditors

The auditors, Moore Stephens NI LLP, have indicated their willingness to continue in office, and a resolution concerning their reappointment will be proposed at the Annual General Meeting.

On behalf of the Board

Ken O'Neill (Prof)

Chairman