

## VINEYARD COMPASSION

### TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)

#### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

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

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charity's [governing document], the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (effective 1 January 2019).

#### Objectives and activities

The principal activity of the charity continued to be the provision of social relief within the community.

Vineyard Compassion is a charity based in Coleraine. We aim to support people, "from crisis to full potential", by providing practical support for the poor, whilst empowering them to tackle the underlying root causes of poverty. Our catchment district is primarily the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough. However, our work with the Probation Board and Prison Service helps people from all over Northern Ireland. Our volunteers come from as far away as Belfast and Omagh, although most are local. Poverty in this region is much higher than the Northern Ireland average with 27.5% of people and 30.9% of children living in poverty. Coleraine includes some of the most deprived wards in Northern Ireland.

The most vulnerable people in our community are faced with a complex set of barriers such as long-term unemployment, family breakdown, homelessness, problem debt, mental health issues, ex-offending, low educational achievement and poor self-esteem. For many, these barriers are too big to overcome without support. This can lead to periods of destitution, when people go without the bare essentials such as a home, food, clothes and heating.

Recognising the significant deprivation in the local area and motivated to support the most vulnerable in society, Vineyard Compassion was established. The charity takes a multi-faceted approach to tackling poverty, seeking to maximise the potential for lasting transformation. Its programmes are making a real difference. We have been privileged to see dignity and hope restored to thousands of vulnerable people who were trapped in cycles of poverty. The support Vineyard Compassion offers is available at no cost, to everyone in the community regardless of belief, sexual orientation, race or nationality.

Vineyard Compassion's **vision** is to have:

*"a transformed and thriving community where poverty is unacceptable and uncommon".*

Vineyard Compassion's **mission** in achieving our vision is to:

*"provide people with financial, emotional or practical support at their point of need, while empowering them to tackle the underlying root causes of poverty".*

The charity offers holistic support centred around three core themes:

1. **PROVISION:** we **provide** immediate financial, emotional or practical support at crisis points of need. For example, the provision of food, clothing, emotional support or debt counselling, where individuals lack the resource to meet their own needs.
2. **EMPOWERMENT:** we **empower** people to tackle the underlying root causes of poverty. For example, teaching budgeting skills, building capacity within clients to break the cycle of poverty, moving from dependency towards greater independence.
3. **EMPLOYMENT:** we support people on a journey towards **employment** that is fulfilling. We know that work is the best route out of poverty, not only providing financially, but building confidence and self-esteem, improving mental health and providing greater community.

Staff assisted by a team of over 200 volunteers support the work. Many volunteers are former clients who are now in a position to help others. We were delighted to receive the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in 2018 acknowledging the tremendous contribution made by our volunteers in meeting community needs.

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)(INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)

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The charity works alongside agencies and statutory bodies with the goal of tackling poverty. It receives referrals from and signposts clients to these organisations for specialist support. These include government departments such as Health, Communities and Justice, the Probation Board, Prison Service, Housing Executive and local councils along with many charities including the Simon Community and St Vincent de Paul.

**Our activities include:**

- **The Open Door** drop in café – this provides a gateway and befriending service to access all support services. Clients only have to enter ONE DOOR and go over their story ONCE.
- **Compassion Support** – the Compassion Support team connects with all new clients. Through tailor-made support plans guests are empowered to move beyond crisis point.
- **Causeway Foodbank** – provides emergency food and household essentials. Referrals come from care professionals. We also operate a clothing bank called the **Wear House**.
- **RESET Social Supermarket** – provides six months of low-cost food along with support services, courses and training to enable people to reset their priorities of food, finance and future stability.
- **CAP Debt Centre** – provides debt counselling, support and money management courses.
- **Link Logs** – offers a voluntary work placement designed to increase confidence, skills and employability. This mentor led environment operates within a social enterprise structure. Some referrals come from the Probation Board for community service and prisoners on day release. The Link Logs social enterprise will see a decrease in production from July 2024 and subsequently a reduction in sales the remainder of 2024. This is due having to dismantle and relocate the Link Logs operation from a leased warehouse to alternative warehousing on a site owned by CCV as we were unable to agree a reasonable lease amount. The leased site will be vacated by September 2024. The new location will be much smaller than the previous location and we're anticipating lower production and sales moving forward into 2025.
- **Grow allotment** – gives opportunity for people to grow produce in a supportive environment improving mental health and promoting physical and social well-being
- **Compassion Housing** – provides short-term accommodation for homeless or at-risk people. Referrals come from the Housing Executive, Social Services, Simon Community, Women's Refuge and Women's Aid.

Vineyard Compassion's values supports people in a process of transformation from dependence to independence. The different values build upon each other: you need worth to have hope. You need hope to have meaningful relationships. You need relationships to deal with the range of complex issues in your life. You need a holistic solution to be fully empowered.

- **Worth** – ALL people are welcome, are valuable and deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.
- **Hope** – we believe that there is hope for the future for everyone, no matter how difficult the situation might appear.
- **Relationships** – we believe individual growth and healing happen as we spend time in community with people who care about us.
- **Holistic** – we recognise and seek to meet the needs of the whole person – financial, emotional, practical and spiritual – not just their presenting problem.
- **Empowerment** – we encourage people to develop skills that equip them to meet their own needs and break the cycle of poverty - moving from a place of dependence to independence.

## VINEYARD COMPASSION

### TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)(INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

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#### **Achievements and performance**

Throughout 2023 the Cost-of-Living Crisis has continued to impact more and more families across the community. A growing number of families are facing financial crisis for the first time, while others are being pushed further into poverty and despair. Those with very low incomes have experienced a substantial reduction in their disposable income. This leads them to face impossible decisions on whether to eat or heat their home; pay the electricity bill or cover unexpected costs such as repairing a washing machine or fixing a boiler. Many working families who previously were able to live comfortably are now living under the immense financial pressure, with mortgage or rent arrears and genuine fear of losing their home.

During 2022, Vineyard Compassion experienced an unprecedented surge in demand for its services. This momentum continued into 2023, with our Foodbank and Clothing bank serving more than double the number of individuals in need compared to the previous year. Additionally, our Open Door drop-in sessions attracted nearly twice as many participants, totalling an incredible 4872 visits over the past 12 months.

2023 also marked a significant shift as the first group of asylum seekers arrived on the North Coast. Initially, these individuals were housed in a hotel in Portstewart, followed by families being accommodated in a hotel in Portrush. Many others have been dispersed across Coleraine and beyond. Vineyard Compassion has the privilege of supporting these individuals and working alongside statutory and community/voluntary agencies to deliver coordinated support.

Collaboration and working in partnership are key values for Vineyard Compassion to ensure that clients receive the very best support. For this reason, Vineyard Compassion hosts and participates in several effective partnerships in the local area with various statutory agencies and community/voluntary organisations.

Vineyard Compassion seeks to avoid duplication in service provision whenever possible, and where gaps exist or current provision is unable to cope with demand, Vineyard Compassion looks for ways to launch projects that meet genuine needs in a sustainable and effective way.

In a recent survey, 92% of clients described Vineyard Compassion's support as "life transforming" or "a great help". 97% said since working with Vineyard Compassion they were "hopeful", "more confident" and "able to face their problems".

Two clients surveyed stated:

*"If it hadn't been for the help and support I received from Vineyard Compassion, I would either be dead or in jail."*

*"The support I received has given me light at the end of the tunnel. I'm making good progress with paying off my debts and improving my mental health."*

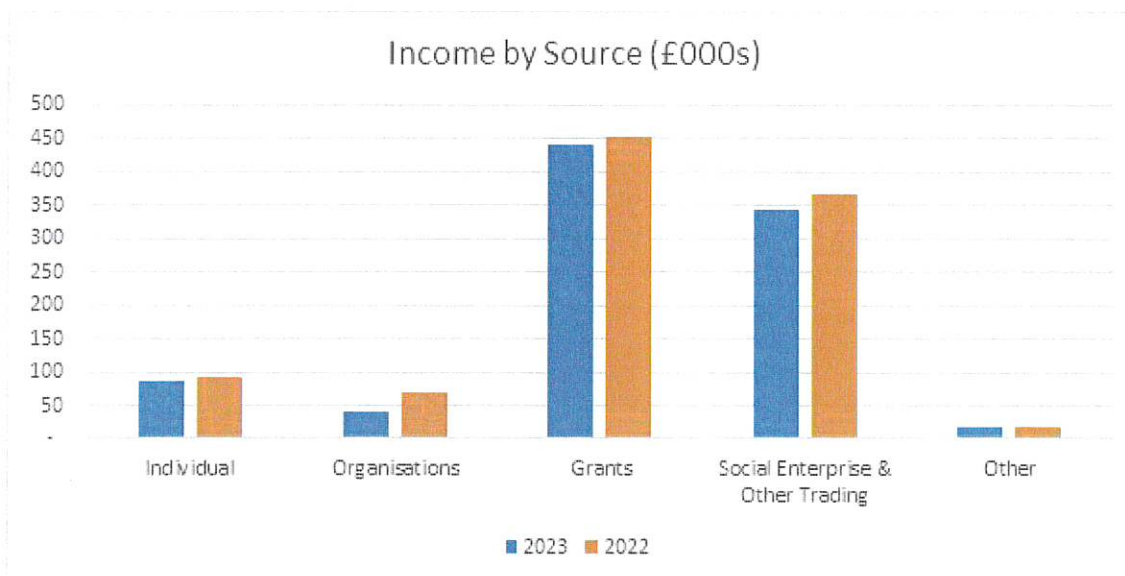
**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)(INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

**Financial review**

The results for the year are set out on page 13.

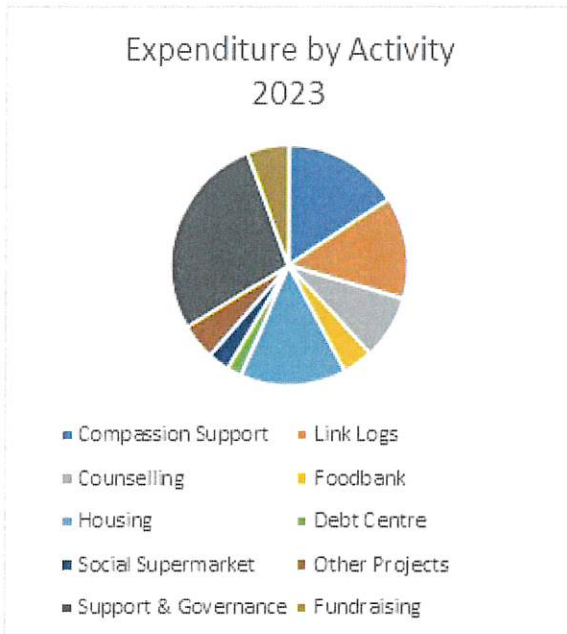
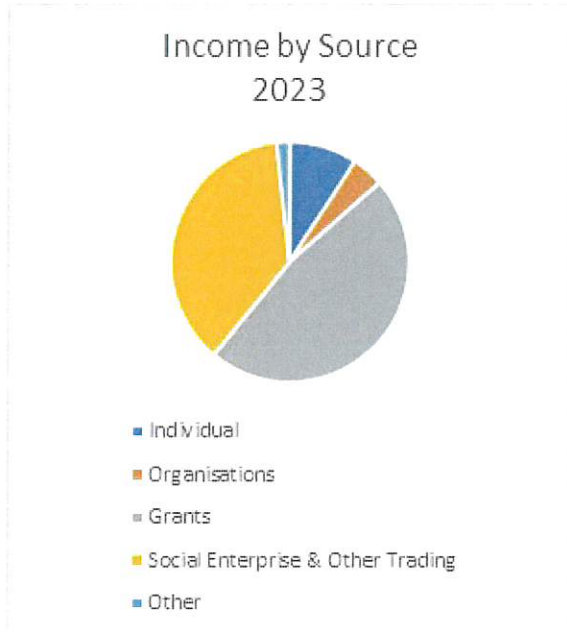
The charity returned net outgoing resources for the year of £182,273 (2022 – net incoming resources of £198,392). At 31 December 2023 the total funds of the charity amounted to £1,466,672 (2022 - £1,648,945) comprising restricted funds of £191,113 (2022 - £215,865), and unrestricted/designated funds of £1,275,559 (2022 - £1,433,080).

The spread of income and expenditure by source is shown in the following graphs:



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The principal risk faced by the charity continues to be the potential of receiving insufficient funds to continue its activities. The charity seeks to mitigate this risk in the following ways:

- Unrestricted reserves are held which are sufficient to cover: the continuance of operations given a 25% reduction in unrestricted and project income, for a period of 3-6 months, and any specific liabilities which are outside of the normal scope of activities;
- Wherever possible, projects are developed and structured to be self-sustaining and therefore have the potential to continue for the long term without external funding;
- The charity is continuing to develop its fundraising strategy to continue to diversify core funding sources and therefore avoid any over-reliance on a small number of funders.

## VINEYARD COMPASSION

### TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)(INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)

#### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

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Total unrestricted reserves (comprising of cash and debtors, less short-term liabilities) were £46,801 (2022 £314,538)

Based on the 2024 budget, the range of reserves considered by the trustees to be adequate (as calculated above) is between £122K - £245K. Unrestricted reserves are currently below this range. Trustees focus in budgeting and planning going forward is to build the unrestricted reserves towards the 3 month run rate.

#### Plans for future periods

Following the COVID pandemic, Vineyard Compassion has been developing various partnerships and collaborative projects. A key milestone was the initiation of an Anti-Poverty Network of which Vineyard Compassion is a founding member and one of the main delivery agents. This network was spearheaded by Causeway Coast and Glens Council with input from the Department for Communities NI and is now chaired by Ricky Wright, Vineyard Compassion's Chief Exec. A detailed action plan has been developed which will be outworked in the years ahead. This will be a key emphasis for Vineyard Compassion, to work strategically in partnership with other local organisations with the shared goal of tackling poverty and social deprivation. A consortium has been created among network members to offer holistic wraparound support to people in crisis, which was piloted in 2021 and will continue into 2024.

Vineyard Compassion piloted a new 'mobile' support service in late 2021 to offer crisis support and signposting to rural locations where barriers to engagement are higher. The 'Mobile Open Door' drop-in service has continued throughout 2022 and 2023 and provides a needs assessment, emergency provisions (Foodbank), Social Supermarket, one to one support and signposting to other services. We aim to review and evaluate its success during 2024 with the aim of expanding its service if feasible.

During 2022 our supported housing project transitioned formally into a new Emergency / Temporary Housing project in partnership with Northern Ireland Housing Executive. During 2024, this project will take significant focus of our senior staff team to develop the project, ensuring it will be sustainable financially, while effectively meeting the needs of clients who need crisis accommodation.

We also be developed a new 'Outcomes / Impact Framework' to better identify the positive changes within people's lives that we support. This will help us to capture our impact and provide the most detailed answer to "what does success look like?" for the organisation. This will be integrated into a new bespoke client case management IT system that will be developed and launched during 2024.

We will also continue to grow and develop our Fundraising Strategy so that there is greater stability. We aim to secure multi-year grants to give greater security in grant funding and widen the variety of our funders. We will also continue to develop the number and amount of our individual donations, while growing our social enterprises to form a larger percentage of our overall income. We are confident that these plans will be realised.

#### Structure, governance and management

Vineyard Compassion is a company limited by guarantee and was incorporated on 1 August 2012. The company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objectives and powers of the company and is governed by its Articles of Association. The liability of its members is limited in that every member of the company undertakes to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 in the event of the company being wound up.

The trustees, who are also the directors for the purpose of company law, and who served during the year and up to the date of signature of the financial statements were:

Mr R Kelly (Resigned 20 October 2023)

Mr A R Lynas

Mr P R Lynas

Mr D P Wright

Mr N A Young

(Resigned 29 October 2023)

Prof. K C Hutchinson

## VINEYARD COMPASSION

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New directors are appointed when appropriate. Suitable candidates are considered on the basis of their skills, experience and sympathy with the aims of the charity. New directors will be agreed at a board meeting before being invited to join and will receive appropriate induction and relevant training.

Trustees are responsible for setting the organisation's pay scales following the NICVA matrix and benchmark and ensuring that these are adhered to. Vineyard Compassion was birthed from Causeway Coast Vineyard church (CCV) and has the same trustees.

The trustees have paid due regard to guidance issued by the Charity Commission in deciding what activities the charity should undertake. New trustees will receive appropriate induction and relevant training.

We have a risk management assurance framework in operation. This covers areas such as safeguarding processes for children and vulnerable adults, staff training and development, health and safety for staff and public around the site as well as HR, IT and financial risks (covered by our reserves policy) Two of our board members sit on a risk management sub-committee alongside the Operations Director. Any risks are raised, discussed and measures put in place to mitigate the risk. Risk is a standing agenda item on our board meetings and the risk management assurance framework is reviewed formally at the board meeting every six months.

#### Reference and administrative details

The day-to-day management of the charity is overseen by Ricky Wright (Chief Exec), David McCracken (Operations Director) and Victoria Moore (Finance Manager).

#### Statement of trustees' responsibilities

The trustees, who are also the directors of Vineyard Compassion for the purpose of company law, are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company Law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that year.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and 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 charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity 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 charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

#### Auditor

In accordance with the company's articles, a resolution proposing that IDS Chartered Accountants LLP be reappointed as auditor of the company will be put at a General Meeting.

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**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

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**Disclosure of information to auditor**

Each of the trustees has confirmed that there is no information of which they are aware which is relevant to the audit, but of which the auditor is unaware. They have further confirmed that they have taken appropriate steps to identify such relevant information and to establish that the auditor is aware of such information.

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

The trustees' report was approved by the Board of Trustees.

*Peter Lynas*

Peter Lynas (Sep 10, 2024 14:33 GMT+1)

**Mr P R Lynas**

Trustee

Dated: 3 September 2024