

**Belfast Healthy Cities Project Limited**  
(A company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital)  
**DIRECTORS' ANNUAL REPORT**  
for the financial year ended 31 March 2024

The trustees (who are also directors of the charity) present their Directors' Annual Report, combining the Directors' Report and Trustees' Report, and the audited financial statements for the financial year ended 31 March 2024.

The financial statements are prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2006, FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their financial statements in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

The Directors' Report contains the information required to be provided in the Directors' Annual Report under the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) guidelines. The directors of the company are also charity trustees for the purpose of charity law and under the company's constitution are known as members of the board of trustees.

In this report the directors of Belfast Healthy Cities Project Limited present a summary of its purpose, governance, activities, achievements and finances for the financial year 31 March 2024.

The company is a registered charity and hence the report and results are presented in a form which complies with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 and, although not obliged to comply with the Statement of Recommended Practice (Charities SORP effective January 2019), the organisation has implemented its recommendations where relevant in these financial statements.

The company is limited by guarantee and as such doesn't have any share capital. The liability of each member is limited to £1.

**Reference and Administrative details**

The company Belfast Healthy Cities Project Limited is limited by guarantee, not having a share capital, incorporated on 24 June 1996, and has charitable status. The company registration number is NI031042. Its principal and registered office is 3rd Floor, Gordon House, 22-24 Lombard Street, Belfast, BT1 1RD. The company registered with the Charity Commission Northern Ireland on 16 September 2014 and its registration number is NIC 100587.

**Principal Risks and Uncertainties**

The trustees have a risk management strategy that comprises:

- A quarterly review of the principal risks and uncertainties that the charity faces;
- Establishment of policies, systems and procedures to mitigate those risks identified in the annual review; and
- Implementation of procedures designed to minimise or manage any potential impact on the charity should those risks materialise.

This work is ongoing to identify that financial sustainability is the major financial risk for the charity. A key element in the management of financial risk is a regular review of available liquid funds to settle debts as they fall due.

Attention has also focused on non-financial risks arising from fire, health and safety of artists and participants, staff and food hygiene. These risks are managed by ensuring accreditation is up to date, having robust policies and procedures in place and regular awareness training for staff working in these operational areas.

At Audit and Risk Committee and Board meetings remedial action is taken, if necessary. Appropriate insurance cover is in place where required.

**Directors**

The Directors who served during the year are as follows:

Mr. Michael Boyd  
Dr Karen Casson (Resigned 28 December 2023)  
Prof Ian Montgomery  
Mr Nigel McMahon (Resigned 28 December 2023)  
Mr Daniel McQuillan  
Dr Elizabeth Mitchell  
Mrs Carol Ramsey  
Mr. Alistair Beggs  
Dr Elizabeth Pinkerton  
Prof Ruth Hunter  
Ms Linda Armitage  
Mr John Tully  
Dr Martin Cunningham (Appointed 28 December 2023)  
Professor Jonathan Wallace (Appointed 28 December 2023)  
Ms Mary Palmer (Appointed 1 March 2024)  
Dr Susan Christie (Appointed 1 March 2024)

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**Objectives and Activities**

The objects of the charity are:

- To promote the public benefit in and around the City of Belfast (the Project Area) good practice in public health and primary healthcare
- To relieve poverty, hardship and distress associated with poor health for all those living and working within the Project Area
- To advance education relating to the benefits of good health and to the implications for all those living or working within the project area of poor health amongst individuals, agencies, authorities, voluntary and community organisations, academic institutions, companies, firms and trade unions

The Charity's goal is to shape and develop healthy public policy and practice that delivered through partner organisations. It also aims to introduce new concepts, evidence and ways of working, through participation in the WHO European Healthy Cities Network.

Belfast has been a member of the World Health Organization for almost 35 years, and in that, time the city has learnt much from participating in the network that includes cities from across WHO Europe. The WHO Network carries out its work in 5-year phases, and the priorities for the Phase VII period agreed at the International Healthy Cities Conference in Belfast in October 2018 are: People; Place; Planet, Peace; Prosperity; and Participation. The themes facilitate cities to take forward action on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals that the United Nations have set to achieve globally by 2030.

The agreed themes align closely with city and regional priorities as set out in the Belfast Agenda, Making Life Better and Programme for Government. Belfast Healthy Cities works closely with decision makers in government departments, the public sector as well as the voluntary and community sectors to deliver programmes in relation to these themes.

**Belfast Designated to WHO European Healthy Cities Phase VII (2019 - 2026)**

Belfast was designated as a World Health Organization European Healthy City in 2021. The WHO Healthy Cities Network is a global collection of cities that pledge to improve the health of citizens and reduce health inequalities, particularly among vulnerable groups. Commitment to the Phase VII WHO European Healthy Cities Network was gained with the key Stakeholders and Funders in the City (Public Health Agency, Belfast City Council, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust and Northern Ireland Housing Executive) on 2 April 2019. A key value of membership of the WHO European Healthy Cities Network is the introduction of new concepts, availability of evidence and the ability to learn from the experience of other network cities.

**Programme 1: Promoting Healthy Transport:** The 'Walking Bus' initiative continues with 4 more schools in north, south and east Belfast taking part in pilots weeks. Walking routes were again developed alongside a member of the Ministerial Advisory Group for Architecture and the Built Environment. Previous schools continuing the programme and noted a reduced number of cars taking children to school as well as a number of other social and well-being benefits to the children.

**Programme 2: Greening the City:** A Greening the City Advisory group established to support this programme is co-chaired by a BHC Board of Director and QUB, as part of the Groundswell project. Member organisations include Belfast City Council; Department for Infrastructure; EastSide Partnership; Northern Ireland Environment Link; Queen's University Belfast; Social Farms & Gardens; and West Belfast Partnership Board.

A Grey to Green demonstrator project from the GtC Advisory Group Action Plan saw the establishment of the Belfast Urban Garden site in Belfast city centre which is managed by The Conservation Volunteers with funding from Belfast City Council.

**Programme 3: Community Prosperity:** Belfast Healthy Cities continues to play an active role in the Care Zone, supporting its work to improve their local community in north Belfast. A facilitated workshop was held with the Care Zone Membership Group to review the programmes and consider the action plan going forward.

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#### **Programme 4: Capacity Building**

**1. Health Literacy Schools Resource (Self-care and Pharmacy):** The Pharmacy Schools Programme developed by Belfast Healthy Cities, in partnership with the Department of Health. The aim of the Programme is to promote self-care as the best choice to treat common childhood ailments and to equip children with the knowledge and skills they need to use medicines safely throughout their lives. It also aims to highlight the role of community pharmacy services to treat common childhood ailments such as colds, head lice and hay fever.

Training session held with 45 teachers in Dungannon, Belfast and Derry. Promotion of the programme was issued to all Primary Schools in Northern Ireland and as a result an additional 60 schools registered to deliver the programme during 2023/2024.

A case study on the health literacy approach and the Pharmacy Schools Programme was presented at the WHO Healthy Cities Annual Business Meeting in Utrecht, Netherlands in November 2023.

Belfast Healthy Cities hosted a health literacy seminar series developed with the UK Health Literacy Group.

**2. City Health Profile:** Following the production of the city health profile, Profiling Health, Well-being and Prosperity, in 2022, a further 6 chapters were produced to consider the impact of COVID-19 on the health indicators – 'Has COVID-19 changed our city?' A launch event saw the Chief Medical Officer, Professor Sir Michael McBride give the welcoming address and the chapters presented by the author, Erica Ison.

**Programme 5: Maximising Learning and Knowledge Exchange:** Belfast Healthy Cities participate in number of groups across WHO Europe and UK and share the learning with local groups as well as organising a series of seminars with speakers from WHO and other European Healthy Cities on key public health issues.

The **Belfast Healthy Cities Information Service** continue to provide direct links to Departmental press releases, relevant WHO research findings as well as selected other information, particularly from other Healthy Cities and Belfast Healthy Cities' partners.

#### **WHO Explorer Bursary Awards 2023:**

Clare Flynn, Belfast Health & Social Care Trust; travelled to Stockholm focusing on reducing alcohol harm programmes

Jacqueline O'Hagan and Caleb Armitage, EastSide Partnership; travelled to Utrecht to visit Greening the City initiatives.

#### **Financial Review**

The results for the year are included in Page 12 of the financial statements.

##### **Reserves Policy**

It is the policy of the charity to hold a level reserves to cover specific future programme costs as well as general running costs, administration costs and wages. This Reserve figure has been set at the equivalent of 3 months programme costs and 6 months running / administration and wages costs. In addition, there is a further reserve to fund the future development of the charity. The total reserve figure has been calculated as £287,548 and can be seen in note 10 to these financial statements.

#### **Financial Results**

At the end of the financial year the company has assets of £310,177 (2023 - £313,529) and liabilities of £22,638 (2023 - £29,366). The net assets of the company have increased by £3,385.

#### **Compliance with Sector-Wide Legislation and Standards**

The company engages pro-actively with legislation, standards and codes which are developed for the sector. Belfast Healthy Cities Project Limited subscribes to and is compliant with the following:

The Companies Act 2006

The Charities SORP (FRS 102)

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**The Auditors**

The auditors, Muldoon & Co, (Chartered Accountants) have indicated their willingness to continue in office in accordance with the provisions of Section 485 of the Companies Act 2006.

**Approved by the Board of Directors on 4 November 2024 and signed on its behalf by:**

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**Michael Boyd**

**Director and Chair**