

Rathfriland and District Regeneration Company Ltd

Company Registration Number - NI028850

Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31 May 2024

The Trustees present their Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 May 2024, which also comprises the Directors' Report required by the Companies Act 2006.

Reference and administrative details

The charity name.

The legal name of the charity is:- Rathfriland and District Regeneration Company Ltd.

The charity is also known by its operating name, Rathfriland and District Regeneration Company Ltd.

The charity's areas of operation and UK charitable registration.

The charity is registered in Northern Ireland with the Charity Commission in Northern Ireland (CCNI) with charity number NIC100924.

The charity does not operate in any overseas jurisdictions.

Legal structure of the charity

The governing document of the charity is the Memorandum and Articles of Association establishing the company under company legislation.

The original Governing Document is dated 21 October 1994 and amended 10 February 2016

By operation of law all, trustees are directors under the Companies Act 2006 and all directors are trustees under Charities legislation and have responsibilities, as such, under both company and charity legislation.

The trustees are all individuals.

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The principal operating address, telephone number, email and web addresses of the charity are:-

25 Church Square
Rathfriland, Co. Down
BT34 5PT
Email Address rathfrilandregeneration@outlook.com

The registered office of the charity for Companies Act purposes is 9-11, Newry Street, Rathfriland, Co. Down, BT34 5PY.

The Trustees in office on the date the report was approved were:-

Patrick Rafferty
Andrew Peters
Catherine Cummings
Margaret Davenport
Sam Faulds
Dorothy James

The following persons served as Trustees during the year ended 31 May 2024 :-

The trustees who served as a trustee in the reporting period, and, if applicable, their dates of appointment or resignation during the year were:-

<i>Name</i>	<i>Appointed</i>	<i>Resigned/Retired</i>
Patrick Rafferty		
Andrew Peters		
Margaret Davenport		
Dorothy James		
Catherine Cummings		
Sam Faulds		

All the trustees are also trustees of the charity.

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Objects and activities of the charity

The purposes of the charity as set out in its governing document.

The charity's purpose as set out in the objects as contained in the company's memorandum of association are:

4.1. the promotion for the benefit of the public of urban or rural regeneration in areas of social and economic deprivation (and in particular in Rathfriland and the surrounding area) by all or any of the following means:

1a) the advancement of education, training or retraining, particularly among unemployed people, and providing unemployed people with work experience

1b) the creation of training and employment opportunities by the provision of workspace, buildings, and/or land for use on favourable terms

1c) the provision of housing for those who are in conditions of need and the improvement of housing in the public sector or in charitable ownership provided that such power shall not extend to relieving any local authorities or other bodies of a statutory duty to provide or improve housing

1d) the promotion of public safety and prevention of crime.

4.2. the advancement of heritage for the benefit of the public by any exclusively charitable means as the Directors shall consider appropriate.

The main activities undertaken in relation to those purposes during the year.

Principal Activities

The company was originally incorporated in 1994 to help regenerate Rathfriland town centre and the surrounding district for the benefit of all citizens irrespective of their class, creed, culture, race or religion

Crummies, 13 Church Square

Initially the company took advantage of funding from the International Fund for Ireland and the Department for Environment for Northern Ireland under the Community Regeneration and Improvement Special Programme (CRISP) to purchase and refurbish 13 Church Square, Rathfriland, a substantial vacant listed former retail shop with accommodation above. Apart from the front facade which was listed, the building was completely rebuilt to provide 6 residential units and two retail units.

The purpose of the redevelopment was to provide one bedroom living accommodation for singles, preferably in receipt of housing benefit or people placed by Social Services usually having slight learning or other difficulties. The two retail units were let at very advantageous rentals and between them have provided continual employment for six people for more than twenty years.

The residential and retail units have enjoyed a high degree of occupancy over the years and have made a significant contribution to the company's finances to enable it to deliver its charitable purposes in other areas. One retail unit has, with the assistance of approximately £5,000 of the Peace IV Grant now been converted to a Sensory Room for use by children with ADHD and similar problems and opened its doors to clients in September 2019. The other retail unit continues to be let as usual.

The Crummies building, as it is known, is now owned outright by the company and is entirely free from any legal charges with all loans and interest charges having been repaid in full. No harm has been occasioned to anyone either during the reconstruction or subsequent use of the building.

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Community Centre

In 1996 the company was awarded a total of £600,000 in Grant Aid from Millennium Commission, Banbridge District Council (BDC), the Central Community Relations Unit of the N.I. Department of Finance and Personnel and Rathfriland Pre-School Playgroup to provide a Community Centre on a greenfield site in John Street which was part of the BDC funding and the Pre-school Playgroup's contribution ensured that a separate dedicated facility within the curtilage of the building was provided for that Groups own use. The company took possession of the Centre in May 1998 but by the summer of 1999 it became apparent that the future of the Community Centre depended upon proper full time management and suitable and sufficient working capital. Agreement was reached with all the funding bodies concerned that ownership, control and responsibility for the running and upkeep of the Community Centre should be transferred to Banbridge District Council which has now been subsumed into the new Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council. The Community Centre is still operating and providing much needed employment and leisure facilities for local people. The Playgroup continues to provide vital early learning facilities for the town and district toddlers and some valued spare time to busy mums and dads. No harm has been occasioned to anyone either during the construction or subsequent use of the building whilst in the ownership of the Rathfriland and District Regeneration Co Ltd.

11-13 Main Street

These premises were acquired by the company in 2006 with a view to implementing its strategy of regenerating the town centre in an effort to increase footfall in the local shops. Funding was obtained from the European Union Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland, Border Region of Ireland 2000 - 2004 Peace II (£192,559) and the International Fund for Ireland (£238,500). During building works the builder went into liquidation and the company was left with a partly finished building and no funds to complete it. At this point a local businessman stepped in and offered to complete the part finished building if the company would agree to sell it to him. Due to the nature of the funding involved, and after negotiations with the funders, it was agreed to rent the building in its entirety to the businessman and to give him an option to purchase it in 10 years time. The building was completed in 2007 and under the terms of the agreement the businessman has the option to purchase within 5 years from 1st November 2017 for £95,040. The option to purchase was exercised by the businessman and the business was formally transferred to him on 1st January 2018.

Due to the property crash in 2008 this investment has proved very advantageous to the company allowing it to build up substantial reserves of cash thus enabling it to make further investments in town centre property which is being utilised for the benefit of the people of Rathfriland.

No harm has been occasioned to anyone either during the construction or later use of this building.

Once Again Community Shop

The company decided to open a Community shop with the intention of raising money for local charities and good causes, including the company's own events. Premises in Downpatrick Street were identified as being suitable, rent agreed with the owner and the doors opened for business in August 2012.

The shop sells a mixture of goods donated by the community including adult and children's clothing, furniture, toys and bric-a-brac. It also sells furniture which has been repaired and repainted (upcycled) by volunteers as well as a small amount of bought stock which is mostly restricted to goods not sold elsewhere in Rathfriland.

For the year to 31st May 2024, £500 each from shop surplus was donated to Life and Time and Parkinsons UK. In previous years, our own events to benefit included £2,075 for the August 2013 Fair Day, for the Christmas Lights and Santa visits since 2012 and £2917 for the purchase of the Fire-Retardant curtains in Chandlers House.

Charities that benefited included Click Sergeant, 1st Rathfriland Scout Group, Head Injury Support, The Daisy Lodge Facility of the Children's Hospice, Friends of the Cancer Centre, Mourne Mountain Rescue Team, Macmillan Nurses, Tiny Life, the Northern Ireland Air Ambulance, Parkinsons Support Group Newry, R.N.L.I. Kilkeel, Age N.I. and N.I. Children's Hospice, Cancer Research U.K. - Rathfriland Branch, Northern Ireland Air Ambulance and Prostate Cancer U.K. During the year under review a donation was given to Mr Paul Wright for Prostate Cancer as a 'Thank You' for donating a large part of his late mother's personal items and to the RBHSC Play Department for Christmas gifts to the children in hospital.

The Once Again Community Shop affords people the opportunity to benefit the community and themselves by giving them the opportunity to work in the shop. Younger people can use it as a means to fulfil their service requirements for the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and for older people it gives them the opportunity to offer their services for the benefit of the community. With the relaxation of Covid19 restrictions the shop was in operation throughout the year. Staffing issues had been overcome and the directors again express their thanks to the volunteers who operate the shop so faithfully and effectively.

No one is harmed by any aspect of the shop's working practices.

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The Community Hub, 25 Church Square

This building had originally been the residence and surgery of the late Dr John Shannon and then similarly for his son Dr Ian Shannon. When the medical practice moved to The Health Centre and Dr Ian Shannon moved home the premises became the home of Wilbert and Lily Bingham and it also housed the financial services business of the late Seamus Lavery. In August 2013 following the demise of Mrs Bingham it was purchased by the company for £75,000. It had been the initial intention of the company to turn it into a boutique guest house. By the autumn of 2014 the company had abandoned the idea of a guest house and decided to turn the building into a Community Hub and Headquarters. A Legacy Grant was received from Banbridge District Council for a laptop and other office equipment and furniture. An office was established and the front room and kitchen renovated. Further renovations were undertaken to upgrade the building to comply with the latest Health & Safety and Fire regulations. In 2018 the company was awarded £15,000 of European Union Peace IV Grant and some £10,000 was spent on I.T equipment and a dedicated Computer Suite was established. A memorandum of Understanding was agreed with the Southern Regional College to use it as a venue to deliver I.T based courses. Since then, it has become the company's main meeting place and has, as well, hosted many vocational and recreational classes including conversational French, beginners and improvers guitar lessons, sewing, arts and craft classes, musical rehearsal rooms. The upstairs bathroom has with the benefit of grant aid from the National Lottery Awards for All grant been transformed into a modern toilet area. Grant Aid had been received from the Education Authority for the operation of a Youth 'Drop In' facility and this was proving popular with the young people of the town. The Mens Shed continues its activities in the Hub and maintains its role as a focus for men in the locality while providing plants, manufactured wooden items and other items to the community.

Chandlers House, 27 Church Square

This building was the former Bank of Ireland and a Grade B listed building which the company saw as a community space and the purchase of this building was completed in January 2014 for the sum of £85,000

The Banking Hall was completely renovated with the agreement of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and turned into one large open space for use by the community. The first event to be held in the building was a Polish night organised by the local Policing and Community Safety Partnership followed by a children's Halloween Disco. The exterior was also painted in appropriate heritage colours.

The building was renamed Chandlers House (due to the site having originally been a candle factory) and it was officially opened on 12th August 2014 when the Pride in Places judges attended. The company had been entered into the competition by Banbridge District Council but were unsuccessful in obtaining a prize.

In late 2014 having received a proposal from Kathy Wilson a two-year lease was granted to her to run a café and bistro named Katie Banks. The café closed in October 2018 and the company decided to retain the space for community use. Further extensive renovations took place including the installation of a small kitchen, stage lighting, sophisticated audio-visual facilities and a sound desk using some of the remaining parts of the former bank's counter. Further Fire and Health and Safety measures were undertaken to enable the company to obtain an Entertainment Licence which was granted by the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council on 1st March 2020. The company runs very successful upholstery and sewing classes and Rathfriland Bridge Club holds its weekly meeting in the building.

The major project to construct four apartments in the building and to renovate and enhance the ground floor area for use as a cultural and musical space was completed. The total cost of the project to the company was £746,103. Funding had been received from, The Garfield Weston Foundation, Department for Communities Village Catalyst Fund, Ulster Garden Villages and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive with a loan from the Architectural Heritage Fund. The former toilet block in John Street was demolished to permit proper access to the rear of the building and to the proposed community garden to be developed at the rear.

The apartments are now fully let and the ground floor hosts a wide variety of musical and cultural events which are widely supported by locals and those from further afield alike.

The Sensory Room (Molly Moos)

In February 2017 one of the retail units in Crummies building became vacant and was used as a pop-up shop by ONCE AGAIN. After much thought the company decided to turn the premises into a Sensory Room for children with ADHD and other behavioural issues. Extensive research and visits to similar projects was undertaken and with the assistance of British Telecom and part of the PEACE IV grant the company opened the doors of Molly Moo's in September 2019, the name having been used with the permission of the family of a local young girl who unfortunately passed away before she could benefit from the use of the facility. The Sensory Room proved very successful in addressing many of the problems which affect these children. The Sensory Room had been closed during the period of the Covid19 restrictions but following a thorough cleaning programme was deemed fit for reopening. Guidelines for the use of the facility were revised and uptake of the room was very encouraging.

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Christmas Events

As in previous years grant aid was received from ABC Council to assist with the provision of selection boxes to local schoolchildren and for use in Santa's Grotto. The 2023 Christmas Light Switch On and Santa event benefited from assistance provided by the ABC Council and the company greatly acknowledges this additional help meaning several hundred children and adults experienced an enjoyable evening. The, by now traditional, Horse and Carriage rides proved as extremely popular as ever.

Levelling Up Fund Application

Extensive work was carried out in submitting an application to the Government "Levelling Up" Fund. Meetings were held with relevant stakeholders and a detailed and comprehensive proposal submitted for development of the community garden and ancillary works. Despite very positive feedback being received from the Levelling Up department, ultimately the application was unsuccessful.

Charity Commission for Northern Ireland

Like all other Charities operating in Northern Ireland the company came under the regulation of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland (CCNI) and was called forward for formal registration in late 2014. Registration proved to be a long and somewhat arduous process since the company's existing Objects Clause in its Memorandum from 1994 was deemed to be not exclusively charitable. Eventually a meeting with CCNI was arranged and representatives from the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA) were invited to be present. This meeting proved to be very productive and led to NICVA drawing up a new Objects Clause which was incorporated into a new set of Articles.

The company made application to CCNI to formally adopt the new Articles and the CCNI issued its consent on 19th January 2016 and this enabled the company to pass the necessary Special Resolution adopting the new Articles at its meeting on 10th February 2016. A copy of the new Articles was deposited with Companies House and the CCNI formally registered the company as a charity with the registration number NIC100924 with effect from 1st April 2016.

The trustees have had regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit in managing the activities of the charity.

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The main activities undertaken during the year to further the charity's purpose for the public benefit.

In relation to objects 4.1 (a), (b), (c) & (d), our activities include offering youth training programmes in partnership with the Education Authority and the Southern Regional College as well as private tutors. The development of the Community Hub and Chandlers House has enabled the company to offer several rooms of various sizes (in the Community Hub) and a large open space (in Chandlers House) to a variety of clients for a multitude of purposes. We have organised, either ourselves or with independent facilitators craft classes, French classes, guitar classes, creative literary classes, Fire Safety lectures, maths for parents classes, yoga and Relax Kids activities. We also organise the Christmas Lights Switch On and associated Santa visit and have made our premises available for exhibitions and presentations. All of these activities contribute to the social and community inclusion and regeneration of Rathfriland and district.

We offer opportunities for volunteering and work experience for young people involved in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. Young people will have the opportunity to build CV skills, interview techniques and gain increased confidence in their ability to enter the workplace. We also collaborate with the local Policing and Community Safety Partnership and the Neighbourhood Policing Team in delivering good driving habits courses and drugs awareness courses. The benefits that accrue are better social skills, happiness and physical health and employers will gain better skilled employees. We can demonstrate these benefits from the feedback from the young people themselves, their parents and their employers.

We have established a Men's Shed where men of all ages can meet on a regular basis and share skills and support each other through social intercourse and practical activities. A direct benefit is the reduction in social isolation among the male population and the promotion of health and wellbeing.

We also have social housing in Crummies building consisting of six one-bedroom flats where we provide low cost housing for vulnerable adults and single persons. The benefit is that by providing shelter to individuals we ensure they live independent lives and have a home to meet their needs at an affordable price whilst enabling them to live in and be part of the community. Similar outcomes have been shown following the completion and letting of the residential units in Chandlers House. Social and cultural activities are carried on in Chandlers House. The benefits can be demonstrated through direct and indirect feedback from tenants and participants as well as the fact that both complexes have enjoyed a very high level of occupancy since their respective openings.

It is the company's intention to actively seek and talk to relevant funders to enable it to turn the gardens behind the Community Hub and Chandlers House into a green area for the benefit of the residents of Rathfriland.

In relation to Object (4.2) we have established Sister City status with Armstrong B.C. Canada through the shared history of Rathfriland resident Catherine O'Hare who emigrated to America in 1846 aged 16. There she married Augustus Schubert and moved to Canada where they joined the overlanders of 1851 in their trek over the Rockies to British Columbia. There they eventually settled in the City of Armstrong. In 2018 we had a visit from around two dozen Armstrong citizens including a number of direct descendants of Catherine which has forged lasting friendships and connections between us. We now have frequent visits from Armstrong citizens who are holidaying in Europe and the U.K. and these are reciprocated by visits to Armstrong by Rathfriland folk holidaying in Canada. Some of our members have given awareness talks and presentations to various organisations - Women's Institutes; Historical Societies; etc on the life and times of Catherine.

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Structure, governance and management of the charity

The methods used to recruit and appoint new charity trustees.

The trustees of the Charity are the directors and they, who according to the company's Articles must already be members of the company, are elected at each Annual General Meeting by all the members of the company. The company actively seeks new members by utilising local press articles, Facebook appeals and personal approaches.

The charity's organisational structure.

The Charity is a limited liability company with different classes of membership. Only individual members have the right to vote. These members vote in a Board of Directors at each Annual General Meeting and these directors take the statutory decisions that are required by law. The company has always been a member driven company and all other normal and non controversial decisions are taken by the members at each monthly meeting and any other meeting called for a particular purpose. If the members consider that any non statutory decision should be taken by the directors then the directors will meet for that purpose.

The charity's relationships with related parties.

Other than the Trustees and those persons connected with them there are no individuals who are related parties. Details of transactions with related parties are shown in the notes to the financial statements if applicable.

The trustees' bankers and advisors

Bankers	Bank of Ireland, Banbridge & Ulster Bank, Newry
Solicitors	Gordon Bell & Son, Newry Street Rathfriland

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Financial review

The charity's financial position at the end of the year ended 31 May 2024

The financial position of the charity at 31 May 2024 and comparatives for the prior period, as more fully detailed in the accounts, can be summarised as follows:-

	2024	2023
	£	£
Net (expenditure)/ income	31,262	1,902
Unrestricted Revenue Funds available for the	561,594	521,004
Restricted Revenue Funds	3,027	12,355
Total Funds	564,621	533,359

Financial review of the position at the reporting date, 31 May 2024 .

The trustees consider the financial performance by the charity during the year to have been satisfactory. Shop sales and rental income have increased during the year.

The total reserves at the year end stand at £564,621 (prior year £533,359)

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Policies on reserves.

The company is limited by guarantee and therefore has no share capital. As part of the Business and Development planning the priority for the Charity is to build enough unrestricted reserves to cover all future running costs.

Availability and adequacy of assets of each of the funds

The board of trustees is satisfied that the charity's assets in each fund are available and adequate to fulfil its obligations in respect of each fund.

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Details of The Auditor

Mr Ben Reynolds ACA

Fitzpatrick & Kearney Ltd

Chartered Accountants & Statutory Auditor

10c Marcus Square

Newry

Co. Down

BT34 1AE

Statement as to disclosure of information to auditors

The trustees state that so far as each of the trustees at the time this report was approved are aware:-

- a) There is no relevant audit information (as defined by section 418(3) of the Companies Act 2006) of which the auditors are unaware, and
- b) The trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

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Statement of the Directors Trustees' Responsibilities

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the terms of the Companies Act 2006, the Charities (Northern Ireland) Act 2008, as amended and The Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

In particular, the Companies Act 2006 and charity law require the Board of Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity as at the end of the financial year and of the surplus or deficit of the charity. In preparing those financial statements the Board is required to :-

- to prepare the accounts in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law).
- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business;
- state whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;

The law requires that the trustees must not approve the accounts unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the surplus or deficit of the charity for the year.

The Trustees are also responsible for maintaining adequate accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and which are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006 and comply with regulations made under the Charities Act. 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.

The Trustees are also responsible for the contents of the Trustees' report, and the statutory responsibility of the auditor in relation to the Trustees' report is limited to examining the report and ensuring that the report is consistent with the figures disclosed in the financial statements.

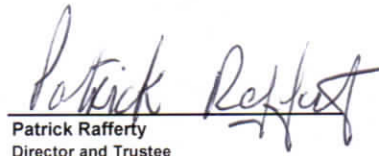
Method of preparation of accounts - Small company provisions

The financial statements are set out on pages 17 to 31.

The financial statements have been prepared implementing the FRS 102 SORP (Statement of Recommended Practice for Accounting and Reporting by Charities) 2015, (as amended by the Bulletin issued in October 2018 and applicable to all accounting periods beginning on or after 1st January 2019), (The SORP), and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard 102, (effective 1st January 2016)

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions in Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006, applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

This report was approved by the board of trustees on 21 March 2025.



Patrick Rafferty
Director and Trustee