

# **MORNING STAR HOUSE**

## **MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT**

### **FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

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The Management Committee present their report and the audited financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2024. The Management Committee have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" (FRS 102) in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the Charity.

#### **Management Committee of the Charity**

In accordance with the Constitution approved in August 2018, responsibility for the Management of the Morning Star House rests with the Morning Star Management Committee. The Management committee discharges those responsibilities in accordance with its Constitution.

The Management Committee comprises members nominated by the Morning Star Praesidium of the Legion of Mary along with general appointments for the purposes of addressing periodic skills shortages, etc. It has 4 office bearers: a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary supported by several other members.

#### **Changes to membership of the Management Committee during the year ended 31 March 2024**

Committee membership is as follows:

R Culbert - Chair (appointed 16 May 2023)  
HA Fitzsimons- Chair (resigned 3 October 2023)  
J Cassidy -- Secretary  
R Dowey -- Treasurer  
T Flanagan - Committee member (resigned August 2024)  
C Faulkner - Committee member (appointed 16 May 2023)  
M Lewis - Committee member (resigned August 2024)  
P McIlvenny - Committee member (appointed 16 May 2023)  
M McCurley -- Committee Member (resigned 6 December 2022)  
G McGuigan -- Committee Member (resigned 1 April 2022)  
SR R Curran -- Committee Member (appointed 6 June 2023)  
L McCann - Committee Member (appointed May 2024/Resigned September 2024)

#### **STRUCTURE GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

##### **Constitution and objects**

Morning Star House is a not-for-profit hostel with charitable status that provides for and works with homeless men in Belfast. It is managed by the Management Committee in accordance with its constitution. The Hostel has as its objectives: to support the homeless through Provision of Temporary Accommodation, Assistance and Capacity Building towards the Betterment of the individual.

We are constantly working to improve our Governance and have strengthened our Management Committee with New members who have considerable experience in areas of Governance and the needs of homeless in Northern Ireland. This has been welcomed by both the CCNI and NIHE.

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## **MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT (CONTINUED)**

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### **Recruiting and Appointing of New Management Committee Members**

The constitution requires that the Committee has a minimum of 4 Management Committee members. New members must be approved by the Management Committee from time to time provided that the prescribed maximum 12 is not exceeded.

### **Decision-making**

The responsibility for the management of the hostel is discharged, on behalf of the Morning Star Praesidium of the Legion of Mary by the Management Committee. A minimum of four members must be present for any decisions to be deemed valid. Members are responsible for the legal and financial- management of Morning Star House.

### **Relationship with other charity or organisation**

The charity supports the ethos of the Legion of Mary. It aims to work in conjunction with partner charities, other homeless hostels and bodies offering all those in need the best support available. The charity also works in conjunction with Council for the Homeless, Tar Anal, Extern etc. The Charity has been working closely with the Charity Commission NI to improve governance and administration systems and to enhance the standing of the charity.

### **Statement of Risks**

The Management Committee is committed to ongoing assessment of risks to the achievement of Morning Star House objectives while complying with any impacting regulation and legislation. It also considers external factors e.g., funding reductions while recognising these are outside its immediate control.

The new formalised, structure means of risk assessment and assurance was developed the previous year. The outworking's of this was captured in a risk register which also identifies mitigations. Main risks ongoing are:

- Loss of funding through non-compliance with conditions of funding and/or being considered incapable of handling public funds effectively
- Recruitment and turnover of staff

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## **MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT (CONTINUED)**

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#### **Lack of capacity to engage**

Staffing levels have increased throughout the year and with improved standards of quality assurances we have been able to increase the capacity of the staffing team moving forward. We remain impacted by the sector wide staffing crisis within Health & Social Care.

#### **OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES**

The principal activity of the charity is to carry on for the benefit of the community the provision of accommodation for men of 18 years and over who are homeless upon terms appropriate to their means. In particular, the Hostel shall provide accommodation for homeless men who suffer other disadvantages, inter alia, addiction to alcohol, drugs, gambling that render them unable to secure other accommodation. The ethos of Legion of Mary, as encapsulated in the Constitution, is pivotal to that support service we provide.

#### **History of the Hostel**

The legion of Mary has provided temporary accommodation to homeless men since 1938 at the Morning Star Hostel 125 Divis Street Belfast. On 11 February 2002 a fire at the building led to the death of 2 of the hostel residents. The fire also rendered the hostel premises unusable. The Morning Star Hostel was without premises until 28 July 2004 when the current hostel opened.

The hostel is a refuge for homeless men, many of whom have a history of rough sleeping and alcohol or substance misuse and frequently present challenging behaviour. The premises can accommodate up to 39 guests in 24 bedrooms on the wet side, 7 bedrooms on the dry side, 4 self-contained apartments and 4 emergency beds. Other support and recreational facilities are available.

#### **ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE**

##### **Explanation of the Main Objectives for the Year**

The primary objective for the year was service provision and resettlement support to the homeless. This necessitates securing adequate and additional income to continue to provide a safe, secure, and compliant support service to our guests. Our secondary objective was to Pass the Supporting People Quality Monitoring Tool Inspection. We passed this for the first time in the history of the Morning Star Hostel.

The hostel's range of services is extensive and includes signposting frontline outreach, hostel and supported temporary and longer-term accommodation, but also includes life-skills coaching, education, counselling, and training. We are ideally placed in the community to further develop these services for those in need.

Morning Star House acknowledges that its services should be directed towards assisting those homeless men, who are unlikely to be able to resolve their homelessness problem without intervention of skilled support staff. It aims to encourage and foster a spirit of self-help and self-reliance.

The Hostel still has several volunteers who give their time and effort to help out in the hostel, particularly in the evenings and the weekends. This was built back up after the pandemic caused the use of the volunteers to be suspended. All volunteers have been subject to Access NI checks.

Bed occupancy has been at capacity for most of the year.

# **MORNING STAR HOUSE**

## **MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT (CONTINUED)**

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### **Principal Policies to Achieve Objectives**

Morning Star Management Committee still recognises that to achieve our objectives, we must work in partnership with a range of organisations and individuals and must develop innovative and effective policies and procedures to assist those who end up on the street and to prevent homelessness to those that are vulnerable to homelessness. Work continued this year on creating Policies and procedures and formalising these within the Morning Star Hostel. These are shared with staff once introduced and work is ongoing.

### **FINANCIAL REVIEW**

Morning Star House receives funds from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive for support of its guests and for maintenance and support of the building. Funds also are received from a charge to guests and from Charitable donations from time to time.

Income received during the year from Supporting people, Housing benefit, charges, charitable Donations and investment income amounted to £854,342. Expenditure during the year was £1,536,140 resulting in a net deficit of £4,189 in the year, reflecting net expenditure in restricted funds of £355,961 and net expenditure in unrestricted funds of £325,837.

### **GOING CONCERN**

The Charity is dependent on funding from the NIHE which is also the primary source of client referrals. Without this funding the charity would not continue to function.

Thankfully the Trustees are in regular contact with the NIHE to ensure the organisation meets the funding conditions set by the NIHE and a good relationship has been established.

### **ISSUES THOROUGHOUT THE YEAR**

- New manager took up post 7<sup>th</sup> April 2023
- Disciplinary processes with Senior staff led to a tumultuous period within the service but this is now in process of being resolved.
- High levels of sickness absence throughout the staff team have led to heavy use of agency staffing for support roles which, as this cannot be offset against other cost centres and has led to a detrimental impact on service budgets.

### **Meeting the Public Benefit Requirement**

The principal activity of the charity is to carry on for the benefit of the community the provision of accommodation for men 18 years and over who are homeless upon terms appropriate to their needs. The Hostel shall provide accommodation for homeless men who suffer other disadvantages, inter alia, addiction to alcohol, drugs, gambling that renders them unable to secure other accommodation.

The problem with homelessness continues to grow along with it, there is growth in areas such as addiction and mental health difficulties. The provision of this service helps address this issue and benefits our guests and society as a whole.

The CCNI has issued comprehensive guidelines on Annual Reporting requirements and the Management Committee confirms that they are aware of these and have had due regard of the guidance in all our deliberations.

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## MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT (CONTINUED)

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### Statement of Management Committee responsibilities

The Management Committee are responsible for preparing the Management Committee Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulation.

Company law requires the Management Committee to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the management committee have prepared the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom accounting standards, comprising FRS 102 "The Financial reporting standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland", and applicable law (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice). Under company law the management committee must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the incoming resources and application of resources, including their income and expenditure, for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Management Committee are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- Observe the methods and principles in the statement of recommended practice: Accounting and Reporting Charities (2015)
- Make the judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent; and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that they will continue in business

The Management Committee are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Hostel 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 hostel and hence forth taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detections of fraud and other irregularities.

### Disclosure of Information to Auditors

To the knowledge and belief of the Directors, there is no relevant information that the company's auditors are not aware of, and the directors have taken all the steps necessary to ensure the directors are aware of any relevant information and to establish that the company's auditors are aware of the information.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice ('Accounting and Reporting Charities') and the special provisions applicable to companies subject to the small company's regime within Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

The Management Committee report was approved by the Board of the Management Committee.

R Culbert

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**Rory Culbert (Chairperson)**

Trustee

Dated: 30/01/2025