

The Bridge Christian Fellowship
Charity Registration Number: NIC101044

9 Derry Rd Strabane Co Tyrone BT82 9DT

Annual Trustees Report
Financial Year: 1/04/22-31/03/23

The purpose of the Bridge Christian Fellowship is to advance the principles of Christianity for the benefit of the public in accordance with The Bridge Christian Fellowship statement of faith.

The direct benefits which have flowed from this purpose during the period indicated above include the provision of a place of worship in Strabane where The Bridge Christian Fellowship have met each Sunday morning. (Due to flood damage in the building between August and December 2022 meetings took place in Strabane Academy). These meetings have served to raise awareness and understanding of beliefs based on the Bible and were open to anyone to attend. The Sunday meetings have been advertised on the Facebook page which is open to anyone to access.

Special events such as an Easter family service followed by a BBQ and Easter Egg Hunt on 17th April 2022 and a 'Christmas Carol Service' on 18th December 2022 were also advertised on Facebook and open to all from the community. The benefits of these meetings also included an identifiable positive, beneficial, moral and ethical framework which we seek to promote and live by as set out in the Bible.

Further to this the church partnered with Exodus to work with KS4 classes at Strabane Academy on 15th December 2022 to introduce the young people to reading the Bible for the first time. The church provided each pupil with a Book of Matthew and led the pupils in how to read this book. The benefits of this were to raise awareness and understanding of beliefs based on the Bible and promote a positive, beneficial, moral and ethical framework by which to live by as set out in the Bible.

During this period the organisation has supported missionary and outreach work both locally and internationally. Support of local missions work includes financial support of an 'E3 Schools Project' in the North West run by Scripture Union.

Support of international missionary work involved ongoing financial support of Christian work in Asia given to the charity 'Asia Link' along with an information event hosted on 23rd October 2021 in which attendees learned of the work of the charity. Further support of international missions included ongoing financial support to missionaries in Italy. The benefits of this include the funding of projects which address those most impacted by poverty and persecution in Asia and the advancement of Christian teaching in Italy. The benefits of the support include an identifiable positive, beneficial, moral and ethical dimension in the areas supported.

Further to this the church sponsors three children through 'Compassion UK'. The benefits of this have been proven through independent research which shows that compassion-sponsored children are more likely to be employed as adults, and to become leaders in their communities and churches.

Children of primary school age have benefited from 'Bridge Kids', Sunday School meetings held weekly and open to all children and a 'Kids' Week' which was advertised on Facebook. This provided primary school aged children with the opportunity to come together, have fun, play games, sing songs and learn about the Bible over the course of a week from 21st – 25th August 2022. The benefits

of these are demonstrated through feedback from members of the Bridge and their families, comments on Facebook and letters of thanks expressed by those who have benefited from The Bridge in some way.

Opportunities to address the social and spiritual needs of women within the Strabane community included the organisation of a women's event on Friday 10th June 2022 on 'The Life Changing Power of Prayer' and an 'Adorned' event on 11th November 2022 which were both advertised on Facebook and open to anyone. The benefits of these events included social interaction and the promotion of spiritual welfare.

To address the social needs of the men in the community a Men's Surfing Event at Benone beach was organised on Saturday 25th June 2022. During this event men had the opportunity to experience a surf lesson followed by a bbq on the beach. The benefits of this event included social interaction and the promotion of a healthy lifestyle as it enabled men of different ages and backgrounds within the community to get together and try something new, having fun together.

A Church Family Day was held on 4th September 2022. This involved teaching delivered by a guest speaker from '20 Schemes' in Glasgow along with a BBQ lunch for all attendees. The event was advertised on Facebook and available to anyone who wished to attend. Benefits of this included developing the attendee's social, moral and ethical framework which we seek to promote and live by as set out in the Bible. In addition, this provided social interaction for those connected to the church.

A Children's Ministry Training Day was delivered by 'TnT' ministries on 1st October 2022. Benefits of these events include encouraging, equipping and enthusing those involved with working with children so that children's ministries in the Bridge Church effectively encourage children to live by a positive, beneficial, moral and ethical framework as set out in the Bible.

This was followed by a workshop on 'Gospel Centred Parenting' on 2nd October 2022. The benefits of this training were to raise awareness and understanding of how to parent children in light of what the Bible teaches.

In December 2022 the organisation supported the work of 'Samaritan's Purse' charity by collecting shoeboxes filled with gifts to contribute towards the 'Operation Christmas Child' shoe box appeal. This benefited children in regions of Africa, Eastern Europe and Central Asia by providing children with a Christmas gift and information about the Christian faith which is in line with our purposes as a charity.

Outreach has been both on a spiritual and practical level. In accordance with living as the Bible teaches, we recognise the social needs of our community and seek to provide opportunities to support those in need. The benefits of meeting social needs within the community have included assistance with transport to hospital appointments, hospital visitation, painting and garden maintenance on houses of vulnerable people within the community, ongoing befriending and support to those in need within the community. In addition £1000 was donated to partners in Moldova to support refugees affected by the war in the Ukraine.

In recognition of the hardship our community are facing, a soup lunch was provided to the local community of Sion Mills on Saturday 10th December 2022, 7th January and 4th February 2023. The benefits of this included the provision of a meal for those in the community who may have been in need, as well as social interaction for those who may have been isolated.

The organisation ran a “drop-in” centre on the majority of Fridays from April-June 2022 and January–March 2023 which was open to anyone in the public from 10am-2pm. This provided free tea/coffee and buns and a free lunch to anyone who wished to avail themselves of it. The benefits of this were in the provision of a meal for those in the community who may have been in need, as well as social interaction for those who may have been isolated. This service was accessed by a broad range of people from within the community.

Further to this the community has benefited through making our building available, free of charge, for the use of counselling conducted by qualified counsellors from “The Koram Centre” in Strabane.

The organisation also ran ‘Elevate’ youth club regularly throughout the year for young people with Special Educational Needs as meetings with Knockavoe Special School staff identified that these young people’s social needs were not being fulfilled. This also included special family events such as a BBQ. The benefits of this included social interaction for those who attended, and who may otherwise be isolated, as well as raising awareness and understanding of beliefs based on the Bible.

In addition to advertising activities and events on Facebook many are also signposted on the website for additional information.

It is important to note that at all times the trustees have had regard to the NI Charity Commission’s Public benefit requirement statutory guidance.

In regard to the financial position of the Bridge Christian Fellowship, the charity began the financial year with a balance carried over of £42,243. During the period (01/04/22-31/03/23) the organisation has received moneys totalling £79,136 and has had expenditure totalling £74,330 resulting in a balance of £47,049 at the close of the financial year. At no time has the organisation been in deficit during this period. Further details of the Bridge Christian Fellowship finances are available in the end-of-year receipts and payments report.

This report has been prepared by the trustees of the charity: Sarah Margaret Johnston, Annie Mary Smyth and Stephen Aiken

The Trustees of the Bridge Christian Fellowship were appointed on 03/03/13. Governing documents include the Trust Deed and Bridge Christian Fellowship Constitution