

# Trustees Annual Report 2022 - 23

## Reference and Administrative Details

**Company Name:** The Confederation of Community Groups (Newry & District)

**Company Number:** NI22294

**Charity Number:** Registered as a Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC101359)  
Accepted as a charity for tax purposes by HMRC under its reference XR40558

**Registered Office:** Ballybot House, 28 Cornmarket, Newry BT35 8BG

**Directors:** David Cunningham (Chairperson – resigned Oct 22)

Maureen Ruddy (Chairperson – Oct 22)

Rosemarie McDonnell (Treasurer)

Kathleen Lowry

Ewan Morgan

Deirdre Shields

Maureen Ruddy

Anne Woods

Colin Hanna (Vice Chairperson – Oct 22)

**Co. Secretary and CEO:** Raymond Jackson

**Auditors:** Malone Accountants, 12 New Street, Newry BT35 6JD.

**Bankers :** Bank of Ireland, 12 Trevor Hill, Newry

# Structure, Governance and Management

## Governing Document

The Confederation of Community Groups is a company limited by guarantee which was incorporated on 12 January 1989. The company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its Articles of Association. The Articles were amended by special resolution on 30 October 2014.

In the event of the company being wound up members are required to contribute an amount not exceeding one pound.

## Management

The company is managed by a voluntary Board of Directors which is elected from the membership or co-opted by the directors. The Board of Directors are directors of the company under company law and are also charity trustees for the purposes of charity law.

The Board of Directors is elected annually from the membership of the company and consists of up to twelve individual members and not less than four. Up to one-third of the directors retire from office at each Annual General Meeting, those longest in office retiring first. Retiring directors are eligible for re-election if nominated however no director shall serve more than twelve consecutive years.

When new directors are appointed to the Board they receive an induction which briefs the members on their roles and responsibilities as members of the board and company directors and outlines the company's strategic planning process; funding arrangements, project selection policy, staffing structure and policy work.

All members of the Board of Directors give their time voluntarily and receive no benefits or remuneration from the company.

## Directors

The Directors, who are trustees for the purpose of charity law, who served during the financial year running from April 2022 to March 2023 and up to the date of this report were as follows:  
David Cunningham (resigned Oct 2022), Kathleen Lowry, Ewan Morgan, Rosemarie McDonnell, Rosemary Rooney, Deirdre Shields, Anne Woods, Maureen Ruddy and Colin Hanna.

## **Directors' Responsibilities**

The Directors are responsible for preparing the Directors' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the Directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the Directors have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under company law the Directors must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company and of the profit or loss of the company for that year. In preparing these financial statements, the Directors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- 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;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

The Directors are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the company 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 company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

## **Policies and Procedures**

The company has a number of policies and procedures in place to which Directors and staff adhere. These are reviewed periodically to ensure they continue to meet the needs of the company and current legislation and include policies and procedures relating to declaring conflicts of interests; levels of company reserves, risk management; disclosure; fraud; quality assurance; equality, health and safety; the environment, financial procedures and staffing matters.

## **Risk Management**

The company regularly undertakes an assessment of risks to which it might become exposed. It has a Risk Management Plan in place which identifies and categorises each potential risk; the likelihood of the risk occurring, causes and implications thereof and the actions to mitigate the risks. The Directors reviewed and approved the company's Risk Management Plan in March 2022.

## **Related Parties**

The company established a 100% wholly owned trading subsidiary – Ballybot Community Projects - in July 2015. Three directors of the Confederation of Community Groups are also directors of BCP. The trading subsidiary, also a company limited by guarantee, donates its profits to the charity by way of a gift.

## **Objectives and Activities**

### **Objectives**

The objectives of the company - as defined by its governing document - are:

- (a) To develop programmes and services to advance community development, citizenship and education, promote volunteering, relieve poverty and distress, youth and the aged, and for the promotion of good health, and the promotion of racial harmony and diversity.
- (b) To promote and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of charities and voluntary and community groups by the provision and management for such organisations of office accommodation, daycare facilities, conference, training, information, advice, payroll and other facilities, services or support.

### **Activities**

CCG regularly review all activities as part of a strategic planning cycle – we currently have in place a Strategic Plan 2022 - 23 encompassing our stated aims:

- ~~To advance the community / voluntary sector agenda through partnership with all sectors in a range of roles and levels~~
- Promote Community Development within the Newry, Mourne & Down District Council area with a particular focus on areas / communities of disadvantage.
- Promote and develop community projects / services to meet the needs of communities and social groups.
- Promote and develop the Corporate services of the Confederation of Community Groups.

### **Public Benefit**

In planning and directing the work of the company the Board of Directors has considered and understands both elements of the public benefit requirement — that is that there are direct benefits which are identifiable and are available to the public or a section of the public.

The company has identified the benefits for people and community groups as:

- Increased numbers of volunteers and volunteering opportunities, the empowerment of individuals, an increase in social investment /activities, a more inclusive society, a reduction in the fear of crime and an enhanced quality of life.

- Increased effectiveness of local charities, community groups and associations and their effective use of charitable resources, an increase in community infrastructure and facilities, an increase in partnership work and increased engagement with statutory bodies
- Sustaining and increasing individual and collective knowledge and the development of individual capabilities, competences, skills and understanding through community education and life-long learning.
- Awareness raising of existing and emerging needs within communities, the enabling of people to overcome barriers to services and the identification of new services to meet gaps in provision

The beneficiaries of the company's services are the Community & Voluntary sector and people living in Newry and its environs and the wider region in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Any private benefit is incidental and necessary to ensure the benefit is provided to our beneficiaries.

### **Main Activities, Achievements and Performance**

During the year we provided high quality projects and services and combined this work with our role as a sub-regional network and community development support organisation. We collaborated with a wide range of partners, hosted a number of seminars and responded to a range of consultations. We continued to advocate on behalf of the Com/Vol sector in relation to economic development, community infrastructure, health & wellbeing and Community engagement. Despite dealing with restrictions stemming from the Covid 19 pandemic (and recovery) we were able to adapt systems and provide our services throughout the year.

Through our social enterprise (**Ballybot House and An Stóras**) we delivered affordable office accommodation, retail, day-care and, due to Covid, limited venue hire/conference facilities. These revenues together with other generated income in our Resource centre and back-office generated approximately 52% of total "normal" revenues (excluding covid recovery / cost of living funding) in the period.

We provided capacity building, advice and support to a wide range of local community groups in areas such as :

Assistance with drafting Constitutions

Guidance on organizational structure and development

Internet access and training

Risk assessments and Insurance,

Financial control and management,

Grant-tracker advice and help with grant applications for project activity,

Access N.I. Enhanced Disclosure Checks.

Through the **Neighbourhood Renewal Programme** the Confederation has been able to offer weekly support to community associations in the most deprived areas of Newry City. This work has seen continued improvement in governance structures within local groups and has facilitated the delivery of a varied range of services and activities in local areas.

Outside Newry City we worked with a wide range of additional community and sporting groups in 2022/23 including; Kilkeel COI Seeds of Hope, Moneydarragh Community Hub, VOCAL (Victims Of Conflict Arriving Locally), Caring Coins Association, FIT Club, Well Lane Warriors, Newtownhamilton Men's shed, U3A, Rural Health Partnership, Davina's Ark, Silvery Light Sailing, Newry & Mourne Enterprise Agency, Forkhill pre-school Playgroup, Newry & Mourne Community Transport, Polish Families Community Association, Autism Families, Larchmount Residents group, Derramore Men's Shed, Brookvale Youth club, SNAP (Special Needs Autism Project), Rathore School Parents & Friends Group, Young LGBT Group, New Town Together, SWAGAT - Indian Families Association

We assisted 14 groups in relation to **Charity Registration**, accounting, reporting and compliance. We provided additional training, operational planning and sourcing of funding with a large number of groups. We continued to take an active role in Community Planning (in particular with the engagement process between the statutory bodies and the com/vol sector) through our membership of local DEA groups.

We delivered 10 Community Development courses focusing on good governance and compliance issues to 15 groups / 60 participants. We also delivered two face-to-face courses in Safeguarding Training for more than 30 people from 4 separate groups and facilitated an Emergency First aid training in January for 20 community participants from across the Newry & Mourne Area

Unfortunately, our annual "**Shining Light**" celebration event for volunteers had to be again postponed due to Covid concerns however we held a number of small scale events for our volunteers throughout the period. Our GM /GN volunteers also undertook the following training in this period: RNIB (adaptations and awareness), Autism experience Bus, Basic Awareness safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, Dementia Awareness (Alzheimer's Society) and IT Training on new system (30 volunteers).

We developed our cross – border "Circle of Learning Programme" in conjunction with Cooperation Ireland. As part of the project CCG identified four groups that would benefit from involvement in the Project and provided mentoring support to them. These included: SWAGATH Indian Families Association, New Town Together, SNAP and the Crisis Café.

We assisted each group with the completion of a Baseline Skills Audit and Action Plan which helped us chart where the group was at the start of the project, what issues each group would like help with and what the group would like to do for its Social Action Plan. We then assisted them in addressing key development issues and offered them a chance to design a social action project. Each social action project which was delivered complimented the thematic pillars of the Reconciliation Fund enabling groups to address issues of peacebuilding, networking and growing connections.

#### **Older Peoples Community Programme:**

Our **Good Morning Service** volunteers provided 1875 hours of engagement with older people throughout the year. Our volunteers were able, with the support of our staff, to provide the service from their homes or from within Ballybot House following a major overhaul of our services. We now have a fully functional cloud- based volunteering

platform. Our **Caring Neighbour Volunteer Service** delivered calls to “cared for” people and their informal carers resident in the Southern Health and Social Care Trust.

Our **Good Day Good Carer** service provided a confidential telephone support service for older carers offering ongoing support and a listening ear. The service provided information, advice and signposting to other services such as respite breaks, benefit entitlement, aids and adaptations, housing matters and health and wellbeing. Our dedicated volunteers provided 1340 hours of calls to carers in the community.

In 2022/23 the project also helped deliver the Millennium Volunteer programme locally in partnership with VNOW in 4 schools with 29 participants actively engaged in a Summer Scheme.

### **Covid Recovery & Emerging Issues:**

We continued to act as com/vol sector representatives on NMDDC’s Community Coordination Hub (CCH) and have engaged with statutory departments and others to help coordinate the response to the Covid 19 recovery and more recently the cost-of-living crisis.

CCG, together with SSF colleagues, were able to coordinate an additional £100k DfC Covid Recovery / Cost of Living crisis funding (allocated via trusted partners in the com/vol sector and targeted at the most disadvantaged in our community) and £80k for a pilot Social Supermarket scheme (SSM delivered by our partner Clanrye Group). We demonstrated the capacity to deliver quickly “on the ground” and the ability to deal with emergency situations as they arise.

We continued to engage with the com/vol sector in the Newry, S Armagh and S Down area including food banks, SVdP etc. We helped coordinate the 6 week Norbrook “We care at Christmas” programme and follow up distribution of donated food Feb/Mar 23. We also agreed to coordinate a £25k funding programme for people struggling to pay utility bills (funded by Newry Credit Union) which started Jan 23.

We attended NICVA’s Cost of Living crisis (Sep 22) and a further meeting of Com/Vol sectors “Emergency Leadership Group” with Minister Hargey (27/9/22) re emerging issues, funding concerns, lack of govt and cost of living crisis. We also met with the Head of NI Civil service (Jayne Brady) in Nov 22 to discuss Cost of Living (COL) crisis and issues affecting com/vol sector and attended further COL meetings between Jan – Mar 23.

### **Financial Review Principal Funding Sources**

The company secured both core funding and project funding from a number of sources during the period covered by this report. Core Funding was received from: DfC - The Department for Communities, NMDDC - Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, SHSCT - Southern Health & Social Care Trust

It earned income from Ballybot House & An Stóras (its social enterprise) from the provision of office accommodation, day care facilities and venue Hire and from its resource center, back office support and facilitation.

## Reserves Policy

The Directors have assessed the main risks to the organisation and designated funds needed to meet these. They have established a policy whereby the unrestricted funds not committed or invested in tangible fixed assets held by the charity should be between three and six months of the annual expenditure. Expenditure for the year 31 March 2023 was £618,211 and therefore the target is from £154,553 to £309,105 in general funds.

The reserves are needed to meet the working capital requirements of the charity and the Directors are confident that at this level they would be able to continue the current activities of the charity for some time in the event of a significant drop in funding. Whilst unrestricted funds stand at £1,571,413 a designation of £1,265,219 reduces the reserves available to the charity of £306,194 (Free Reserves figure as at 31/3/23 equates to £291,674) which is in line with the target level.

## Plans for Future Periods

The Confederation of Community Groups will continue to provide its community development, community work & education and capacity building and support services to disadvantaged people and communities.

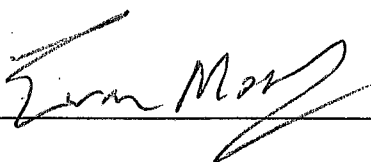
The Company has also secured funding and income from a number of sources to enable it to develop its older peoples programme and to continue its work to support its Community Planning and community engagement activities.

## Declaration

This report was approved by the Board at its meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2023 and thereafter signed on its behalf by:



Maureen Ruddy  
Chairperson



Ewan Morgan  
Director