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## Trustee Report

### 2023 Year of Diversity

The year has been one of diversification within existing programmes and achievement of several key area regeneration plans. It is arguable that need has increased, the lockdown years have influenced community issues and altered societal aspirations, as well as creating a back log of demands. For Grosvenor Community Centre this has meant increasing programming, changing some services to more specialist provision and fostering investment into area and health development initiatives.

2023 has been a successful year in terms of achieving outcomes, sustaining high numbers and inclusivity. The organisation has also continued a focus on engagement with wider Belfast and city regeneration aims and has achieved some really positive decisions regarding capital investment in and around the Grosvenor community.

The organisation has dedicated time to looking forward with a long lens at improved urban planning and reconnecting the 'Grosvenor' community to city core and wider Belfast in physical and economic capacity terms. Whilst simultaneously providing daily high quality, contemporary services to reflect the community landscape and to make sure the people of our Belfast city are ready for the opportunities of the next decade.

Decreased statutory service provision during and post lockdown has resulted in a waiting list of issues, particularly around roads, SEN support, weeds and infrastructure. GCC has tried where possible to find solutions to the backlog of work required to sustain a safe and secure community until this situation balances out, if it does.

*"The community management model has continued to show benefit in the period, demonstrated by an ability to respond to local need fast and when it matters most, including during crisis".*

### Children's Health Programme 23



### Phillipinnes Independence Day



### Supporting Sport Development



The period has witnessed, continuance of new communities engagement at the pitch, growth in existing teams competitive progression, enhanced engagement of women and girls and increased use by persons over the age of 65 years. The quality of facilities is currently at a high standard, with the renovated surface, new fencing and accessible,

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high quality spectator stand. However, with one eye on the future the organisation is looking at potential new guidelines from the IFA regarding playing field grounds, this may require expansion of the spectator stands to accommodate for 100 persons.

We were delighted this year that our home teams achieved so much in competitive sports, with the Immaculata becoming Intermediate Champions for the first time and Fire Blades achieving 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the European volleyball competitions.

*Our 'Mac' achieve Intermediate Success*



*Grosvenor Playgroup Smiley Days*



The organisation wishes to thank support agencies for having a continued vision in 'Grosvenor', particularly Belfast City Council for their renewed faith in the community management model. Department for Communities for working in partnership with the organisation towards a rejuvenated Grosvenor Road and the Early Years Pathway Fund for enhancing the capacity of the early years sector.

The engagement of people living in the Falls ward at the centre is the pivotal feature of our success, from volunteering to participating, inputting development drives and supporting vulnerable community members. The organisation, facility and future of the area will be actively driven by the people of the community. As such in 2023 we continued with an outcome-based focus, measuring meaningful impact and long-term change from the individual to the area, to the city.

***Our plans for 2024 to 2025 will include fruition of commitments for capital regeneration at Distillery Street and Grosvenor Road, expansion of bespoke SEN services, increasing the Warm and Well Programme and new health investment to assure team progression. We want this community to be able to benefit from Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment and play a role in achievement of Belfast Agenda aims and as such wish to develop our research capacity.***

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## Programming 2023

### Training & Research

The organisation worked to ensure a range of innovative learning pathways in the year, as such an extensive training programme linked to clear employment opportunities was implemented. Grosvenor Community Centre worked in partnership with CIT Health to provide a Driving programme, enabling participants to undertake driving lessons, accreditation and test, the programme generated an 92% success rate, with participants indicating increased confidence, movability and widening of employment options. The organisation also provided CSR training programmes to assist those seeking to enter industrial, manufacturing or building roles as well as Sports accreditation and coaching. Training provision is aligned to real job opportunities and gaps in the market and included accreditation in childcare to meet a growing demand in the childcare sector. The accredited training calendar also included Fitness Instruction, SIA (Door Persons Security Badge), Forklift Training, Manual Handling, Data Protection and Child Protection.

Inclusive Growth  
'Ready to Take City Opportunities'

*Food Safety Training*



*Horticultural Training*



*Bella Boogie Bounce Training*



### Partnership Growth:

The organisation has continued to work with Bryson Charitable Services in the period in a relationship which benefits both the locality and wider Belfast. The organisation continued to work in operational terms with South City, based in the Village and has retained membership on the Greater Falls Neighbourhood Partnership, Southwest Action Team, Greater Falls Family Support Hub, Housing Consumer Network and Greater Falls Out of School Hours Network. As well

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as being represented on two local boards of governors for primary schools and with Communities in Transition Health Programme West Belfast. The organisation is also working with partners around Weavers Cross/Belfast Transport Hub., due for completion in Autumn 2024.

## Health Outcomes and Sports Advancement

### Health Outcomes:

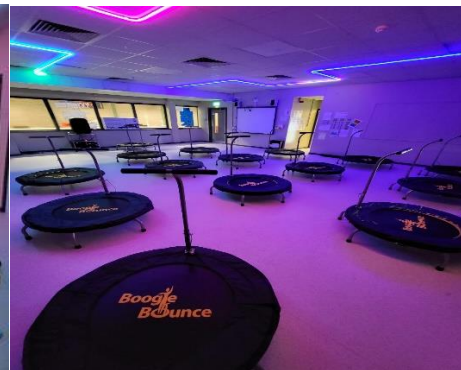
We worked in the period to diversify health programming, with a specific focus on excluded males and mid age women. As such a rebranding took place and name change, Bella Wellness, in honor of our former Chairperson.

Bella Wellness aimed to ensure accessible programmes for people who previously felt nervous or lacked confidence to attend. A new initiative was commenced for early mornings to support those with larger families or in employment, starting at 6am. The Spin Cycle initiative has been super successful in attracting adult males, who previously had not engaged. The circuits are individually tailored, they aid group relationship building but with individual equipment, this helped to sustain the confidence of individual participants. The sessions have opened up the facility to a whole new target audience and we are delighted to see engagement of older adult males in a sustained programme. The Bella Spin required some capital investment but has enabled the organisation to provide an innovative, early morning service targeting people who are most vulnerable to poor health determinants.

*Bella Spin*



*Bella Boogie Bounce*



*Bella Kids Bounce*



Bella Boogie Bounce commenced in the period following outlay investment. Bella Boogie Bounce has managed to engage a whole new group of women and young women. The service entails individual equipment, enabling those who feared 'group' work to engage at their own capacity but with the motivation of a group setting. Bella Boogie

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Bounce operates at a time to suit those with care requirements, those with underlying health issues and other barriers to engagement.

The Court Ward area of Belfast, in which the community centre is located, continues to face incredibly alarming health outcomes. Women in the Court Ward are statistically likely to die a full five years before women in more affluent post codes according to NISRA. This statistic in modern times continues to illustrate the difference between communities in poverty and those in other areas. The Grosvenor area is located beside the Westlink, directly adjacent to the worst air quality indications in the city. The community was poorly designed in the 1970's with limited play space, outdoor zones and poor insulation in homes. Further to this the community was cut in half with Westlink and continues to be separated by the city core by a complex and poorly designed road and pavement network.

Grosvenor Community Centre has endeavoured in year to provide a plethora of Health programmes to tackle the multi-faceted issues impacting poor health across the locality.

**The Health Environmental Programme** at Grosvenor community garden is operated in conjunction with the Plough Men's Shed. The programme is framed around growing home goods, cooking, walking and light aerobics on site. The programme supports around 43 older persons, year round and 7 days per week. Grosvenor Community Centre continued in year to support older persons with hearing impairments, the sessions flourished in year with new seat work outs, yoga, arts and crafts and mindfulness.

*Environmental Health Programme*



*Golden Girls Support Group*



### **Trauma Informed Practice and Counselling**

In year with partners we engaged in Trauma Informed Practice including workshop weekends. The series are based on small, sustained group work to explore what trauma is, its reverberations and how to develop boundary setting. The

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programme has made notable progress and outcome change in participants lives. This programme is set to span across a decade and we hope to use this as a trial for how to alter the trauma landscape of this community.

Grosvenor Community Centre and the Playing Field are viewed as hubs for community sports, competitive advancement, all age engagement and cultural inclusivity. The Playing field in year 2024 has continued to incubate success and has managed to ensure a need reflective blend of programmes for children, young people, adults and older persons. Sustaining the space as a site for both competitive sports and community engagement is a balancing act but one which is achieved by local management and through listening to local schools, sports teams, health activity providers and cultural sports providers.

**Dander Ball**



**Filipino Independence Day**



**International Sports Day**



2023 did not disappoint, the sporting and health programme at the centre has been varied, inclusive of non-traditional sports, with an additional focus on women's participation and in celebrating sports across different cultural identities, including supporting city centre based asylum seekers. Additionally, the organisation continued to expand activities for age demographics, specifically, children aged 5 to 7 years and persons aged 60+ years.

The playing field remains the 'Field of Dreams' acting as home space for a number of different teams, programmes and initiatives. Grosvenor Road playing field is able to perform the multiple functions of facilitating competitive leagues, community sports, multi sports and health and wellbeing programming. The organisation open the playing field 7 days per week, including late nights, which enables this ability to act as a leverage point for so many different sports, health programmes and initiatives. The organisation operate the playing field responsively to community needs, this requires a degree of flexibility, achievable via the **community management model**.

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### **Challenges faced:**

***Demand for the playing field linked to advancement, as the sports teams have achieved wider success they are seeking longer slots on the full playing field. This has meant the organisation having to give priority to teams who are supporting those who face exclusion.***

***The issue of limited car parking has continued to be a problem but discussions are continuing with DFI around Genoa Street and taking on additional land.***

***There has been a sustained issue with intravenous drug use along the Westlink walking path, the organisation continue to manage the space behind the playing field (external to centre grounds but near to the playing field) and work with partners around Belfast wide solutions.***

***Demand for internal facilities has also increased and ideally the organisation would like to have a full size basketball court based on needs for the Filipino community.***



Expanded provision for women and young women – growth in volleyball and basketball

### **How are we trying to future proof?**

The organisation is working as part of **Distillery Street Focus Group** to expand the sport and health offering in the wider Falls area. Belfast City Council have lifted the plans for Distillery Street back fields and submitted a Peace Local Action Plan bid. The decision is pending for regeneration of the site, but with a timeline for announcement looking set for August 2024. The plan will be to open up the back fields and reconnect them to Section 5 of the greenway, this will significantly enhance local persons connectivity to health activities, walking, running and nature routes. Simultaneously the organisation would like to open up the rear of the premises and be directly accessible via section 5, creating a one stop health and wellbeing pathway framing the Falls. The back fields will provide an additional venue and outdoor space for health and wellbeing activities. Longer term we would like to explore opportunities for full size basketball courts.

The planned changes to **guidelines by the IFA** include larger size spectator stands, the organisation are presently reviewing grounds to see how this would be achieved. The physical advancements at the centre in the past four years have significantly enhanced the Immaculata Seniors growth and competitive ability, the team won the Intermediate Cup in year. As a community development organisation we want to support their continued advancement and will work to ensure the grounds match new criteria along with Belfast City Council.

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**Conversations with DFI** have been ongoing around the lands at Genoa Street to open up additional parking spaces during events, matches and activities. More recently the organisation approached a local tour operator to arrange use of their premises during overspill events.

**Increased demand across sports**, basketball use has continued to expand in year but the hall is limited by scale, as such, we are hoping to at a later stage be able to install a basketball court in and around Distillery Street at a suitable location. Preliminary plans are being developed, the consensus so far is that the space would be covered, aiding all weather use. **Volleyball success** was achieved by the Firebaldes in year, including a trip to Poland for Euro competitions. We want to invest more in the team this year to enable that to flourish, this will include supporting new members, uniforms and a website.

Community Centre as an independent centre is also being considered as part of Space and Place feasibility studies linked to the leisure transformation programme and the changed demands in sports have been communicated as part of this process.

**Branding**, we were delighted in year to see removal of advertising boards at the back of the building, which had been causing issues with debris, design, and appearance of the centre. We now hope to be able to have a BCC sign and Grosvenor displayed on the space, which has massive use being the slip road of the Westlink into City Centre.

Capacity at the playing field has been managed to genuinely reflect community need and the wider changes in Belfast society, including support services for asylum seeking individuals. The facility is located at the cusp of the City Centre and recognise that the city centre residential population, be that hotel or apartment based, are very much a part of the West and City centre communities. The working relationship between Grosvenor Community Centre and Belfast City Council has and is pivotal to the success of the playing field. The organisation are enormously grateful for the continued faith by Belfast City Council in the community management model. ***We want to very much be a part of the Belfast Agenda and help all citizens to be healthier, happier and engaged.***



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Supporting partner primary  
and post primary schools  
with sports days

### Snapshots of the Year 2023

- ✚ Home team Immaculata Win the Intermediate Championship for the first time
- ✚ Implemented new Boogie Bounce and Spin Classes
- ✚ Fire Blades were supported to attend tournaments in Poland as part of European championships in volleyball
- ✚ Continued support for Asylum seeking community including developing a team and central contact points (weekday mornings and afternoons)
- ✚ Grosvenor continued in the period to facilitate community sport and health programming at 2 other sites via payroll and administration support
- ✚ Extended provision for the over 55-year age group (including over 75 year olds) via Danderball league and walking groups.
- ✚ Growth of connections with the Plough Men at the community garden including a shared menu planning and activity programme – the Plough Men now engage in walking group at playing field 3 sessions per week.
- ✚ Continued support for Primary Schools in the Area to host annual calendar of sporting provision, including hosting schools sports days and competitive events year round.
- ✚ Schools supported in period: St Mary's, St Joseph's Primary School, St Claire's Primary School, St Peter's Nursery School, St Mary's (PP), St Malachy's, Gaescoil an Lonnain.
- ✚ Teams/Leagues supported in period: Intermediate League Matches Immaculata Junior Football Club, Immaculata Senior Football Club, Willowbank, St James's Swifts, Belfast Celtic, Street Soccer, EMSONI, Kobi Ethnic Minority League, South Belfast Youth League, Pinoy Sports Association, Rising Stars, Fire Blades, Eastern European Volleyball Programme.
- ✚ Summer and Seasonal Programming (Community Based) – The site helps to provide activities for 48 children per day for 2 sessions, 89 young people for 4 sessions per week including a Sunday for 6 weeks across the vulnerable Summer period.
- ✚ Sporting variety on the Playing field sustained: Tag Rugby, Women's Football, Danderball World Cup, Multi Sport, Walking and Running Initiatives.
- ✚ Health Programming on the 'Field of Dreams – Wellbeing and Change Health Programme, Yoga, Mindfulness, Forthmeadow 5K, Healthy Eating at the Garden, Grow your Own.
- ✚ Major Cultural celebrations including Barrio Fiesta and EID

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### **Warm and Well Programme:**

In Year the centre operated a service to support those facing the health challenges of higher home costs and the cost of living. This service is flexible, yet supported, informal yet measured. The Warm and Well Programme engages all age ranges, but typically over 45 years, who feel isolated at home and are faced with rising home costs. Warm and Well provides a place and space to come together, hang out, develop, be warm, have a nutritious meal and explore health plans to meet the individual.

### **Youth Health and Wellbeing Programme:**

In Year Grosvenor Youth Service implemented a new programme focused on boundary setting, confidence to say no and understanding mental health. This programme was hugely successful and we hope to run a further schedule in 2025. The programme entailed one to one mentoring, light touch counselling and understanding what a boundary is and reinforcing confidence to maintain individual boundaries. The programme in year engaged 53 young people, generating feedback such as, "I have never understood why I feel pressured all the time, now I know I was afraid to say no". "This support has changed my life, I am not afraid anymore, I am confident to be me." We were very proud of both the team, the participants and the outcomes.

### **Bella Wellness in the Health Zone**

We were delighted in year to support a range of new groups at Grosvenor Wellness Zone, including the Antrim Ladies GAA, Community Sports Network Vulnerable Support Programme and the local teams.

## Family Support Programming

### Grosvenor Playgroup

The Playgroup continued in 2023/24 with maximum capacity of 24 children, this 5-day service is enhanced with a family engagement programme. The service is registered with BHSCT and as such all staff are fully trained and annually updated. The dedicated staffing team are focused on providing high quality care for children aged 2 years and above up to P1. The service supports placements for students and young people interested in a career in childcare or early years. In year additional services were implemented alongside Bryson including a Parent and Baby session 2 days per week.

Easter Fun at the Playgroup.....

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### Grosvenor Out of School Hours Programme

5 Days per week sees the facility alive with children in the afterschools programme, the service supports 48 children daily. The Out of School Hours programme sees children engaged in health and wellbeing, nutritional support, physical activity, multi sports and learning support. The service ensures that children are able to access a local support programme which is underpinned by a quality, caring and empathetic staff team, along with a healthy snack, a warm welcome and the chance to form positive relationships with peers.



### Grosvenor Youth Service

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Grosvenor Youth Service currently supports 58 young people in a varied year-round programme. The service encourages young people from junior and senior age to enjoy communication, learn, develop resilience and enhance capacity. In the year 2024 the members and leaders kept a strong focus on awareness raising, social media safety, mindfulness and wellbeing. The programme included accredited training from first aid to sports coaching, a political understanding initiative, relationship and sex education and body positivity initiative. The members also engaged in a cross-community programme focused on redeveloping the estates on either side of the interface wall. Including a Summer School with QUB Planning Department.



Grosvenor Summer Programme:

The centre provides a 6-week summer programme for children aged 4 years to 12 years and 12 years to 18 years. The summer programme includes 2-day sessions for children and nightly sessions

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for young people, as well as a Saturday and Sunday programme. The summer programme includes on-site activities as well as an off-site programme of excursions and residential activities. The programme helps children and young people to feel engaged, happy and active all Summer long. The summer also enables the organisation to re-survey residents around emerging themes and area issues. The pandemic undoubtedly changed the community landscape and new challenges have emerged which the organisation is proactively addressing.

#### Grosvenor Family Support Programme:

Family support provision is on site at the facility in partnership with the GF Family Support Hub. The programme engages whole family unit and reflects individual family needs, by way of example, mum may engage in the wellness programme, younger members may avail themselves of play therapy and children in the Play or summer scheme. The programme is on a case-by-case basis ensuring tailored support which is monitored using outcome measurement.

#### Grosvenor Emergency Supports:

The organisation has continued to provide emergency support in times of acute crisis, this included help with home utility costs, emergency food supplies for highly vulnerable isolated persons and assistance with maintenance including garden clearance.

#### Grosvenor Environmental Programme:

The organisational staff and volunteers recognised that the area is still facing issues linked to environmental problems, particularly linked to roads infrastructure, weeds in alleyways and shared spaces, litter and graffiti. As such the organisation has continued where possible to undertake area clean ups, weed removal and road safety measures. This was supplemented by the environmental programme at Grosvenor Community Garden, whereby community members were able to learn about planting and developing floral displays for the area which were then disseminated across the estates.

The centre continued in year to provide facilities and support programmes both indoors and outdoors focused on developmental programming, capacity services, sports, health and wellbeing.

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Groups supported at Grosvenor CC  
Golden Girls, Immaculata Juniors and Seniors, Fire Blades, Rising Stars, McNeil Dancing, Cooke Dancing Group, Pinoy Association, Bryson Parental Support Group, Willowbank, St James Swifts, South Belfast League & More

Festivals and Events in 2023/24.... Barrio Fiesta, Filipino Independence Day, Belles International Day, Youth Empowerment Conference, Next Generation Celebration, Halloween Fest, Grosvenor Lights Up for Christmas, 8<sup>th</sup> August – Families Together at Distillery Street, February Weekend Health Festival

Operational Days: Monday to Sunday  
Operational Hours: Monday to Thursday 6.30am to 10.00pm,  
Friday 6.30am to 12 midnight  
Saturday 8.30am to 6.00pm, Sunday 10.00am to 7.00pm  
Operational Weeks: 49 weeks per annum  
Average Daily Footfall: 2,270

#### Updates:

Expenditure in 2023 continued to increase due to area demands and extended programming. The period also saw some delays in funding support due to uncertainty around executive departments, this led to some funding support being released in quarterly blocks rather than yearly. This has subsequently balanced in the year 2024. The board of directors and project management team have grown over the years to include younger representation as well as representatives from Grosvenor Residents Group on the management subcommittee.

#### A Reflection on the Year 2023

We spent this year responding to daily needs and in some instances crisis, we also used the year to meet the changing demands of the city and reflecting our changing demographic. Demands have undoubtedly stayed high and this has been exasperated by a back log of work to be undertaken by some external support agencies. The community has faced some challenges linked to negative choices which were heightened during the pandemic, and which have left some mental health

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impacts. The family fun events and planning for Distillery Street regeneration has helped in some ways to lessen the impacts of the riot. We also implemented a programme of mentoring and counselling in the year. The centre responded by upping health and wellbeing programming and continuing emergency supports such as utility supports for individual homes. The facility has sustained extensive 7 day opening hours, supporting a diverse range of groups, ensuring maximum inclusion and bringing a wide range of cultural backgrounds together. Grosvenor Community Centre wishes to thank all those people who have participated at the site and who continue to make our space a vibrant centre in Belfast. The organisation recognises the faith shown by agencies, particularly Belfast City Council, in the community management model. Our vision for 2023 to 2026 is to ensure that the area physically is enhanced, that people are ready and confident to take advantage of the new opportunities in our city and crucially that we level up this area of deprivation to finally occupy its rightful place in Belfast.

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