

The Corrymeela Community

(a company limited by guarantee)

Report of the Council for the year ended 31 March 2023

The Council members, who are also the directors of the company for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their annual report and the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023.

The information with respect to the Council members and advisers set out on page 1 forms part of this report. The financial statements comply with current statutory requirements, the Memorandum and Articles of Association, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) (effective 1 January 2015) – (Charities SORP (FRS102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102).

Objectives and Activities

Corrymeela's objects are to be a Christian Community of peace and reconciliation by engaging with difference, addressing division and supporting peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland and beyond.

By 2025, our vision is to have contributed towards a more cohesive and hope-filled society by welcoming thousands of people into courageous conversations, which deepen our respect for each other so we can live well together.

We deliver our vision by welcoming thousands of people from different backgrounds to our beautiful Centre in Ballycastle, and into our community programmes, to nurture respectful relationships and explore difference together.

Corrymeela is also an open Christian community of nearly 200 members who commit themselves to each other and to the shared work of peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland and beyond. The Corrymeela members are drawn from a wide range of backgrounds and faith traditions and none.

Achievements and Performance

2022/23 was a tough year. Politically, the impact of Brexit and the continued suspension of the Stormont Assembly, led to a political vacuum and increased tensions in communities across N.Ireland. Economically, the cost-of-living crisis hit marginalised communities hard, whilst decreasing funding, meaning that charities like ours had to deliver more with less. The economy also created difficult conditions to recruit and retain staff, making operational delivery challenging.

Against this difficult backdrop our staff, volunteers and members worked extremely hard together to contribute towards a more cohesive and hope-filled society in the following ways:

1. We supported 5125 individuals to nurture respectful relationships at our Ballycastle Centre

During 2022/23 we welcomed 5,125 people from 207 groups to our beautiful Ballycastle Centre, which is more than triple the number of guests who visited the previous year. This huge increase in the number of guests reflects excellent work by our Centre teams who have worked extremely hard to both inspire groups to return post covid and to manage to deliver our services well despite having a significant number of unfilled posts throughout the year.

Our guests evaluated the quality of the welcome, hospitality, accommodation and programme we provided as being 92% positive on average. Individual guests reported that:

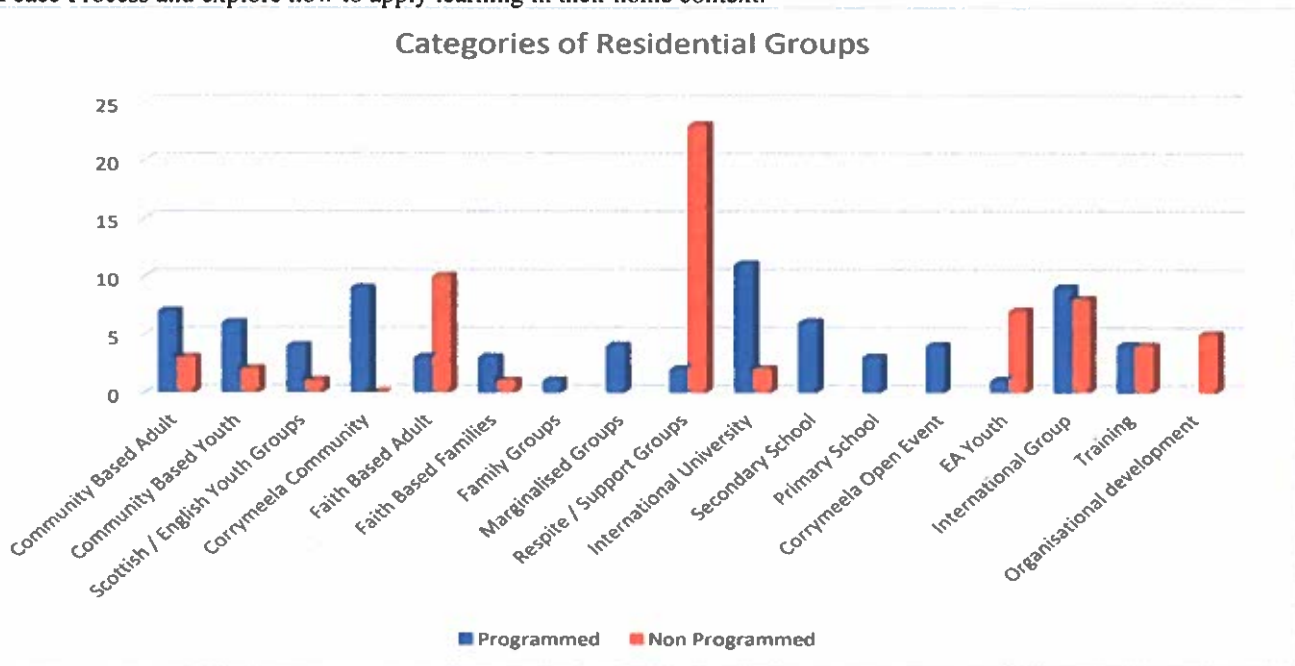
- 'From the moment we arrived, the volunteers and staff reached out to us and helped us to feel like welcome friends. Their hospitality did not diminish at any point over our stay, and we always felt welcome and wanted here'.
- 'Being in a room can allow people to connect through agreements and disagreements. Being able to explore other people's opinions, learning from others and broadening knowledge of important topics through talking about sensitive topics in a safe environment'.
- 'There is so much respect and love for the dignity of the human person here - it feels world-changing.
- 'The food was great. Enjoyed the shared meals and the rhythm of the centre'.

As shown in the table below, we welcomed a wide range of groups, with a majority coming from more marginalised backgrounds. Post covid we were also pleased to welcome back 30 international groups and Universities, to learn about our

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Peace Process and explore how to apply learning in their home context.



One of the groups we welcomed was **Ashes To Gold** support a group of young men who are battling addiction, isolation or at risk of offending. These men have fully engaged with support programmes and we are working together to learn about positive choices and a brighter future while at Corrymeela. The project facilitator told us: “Our visit to Corrymeela was something I would love to do regularly with the young men, these guys normally don’t go a day without some form of alcohol or drugs, being at Corrymeela seemed to bring a sense of calm, a quiet and safe space to reflect and really think about what they want from life. The most important thing to come from this for me was having the opportunity to show the young men if they can go for 2 days without drugs, then maybe it’s possible to try 4 days and so on. We showed them we believe in them and hopefully they start to believe too. This was the first time any of the guys have been away or taken part in a residential and every one of them made the most of it” Project Facilitator

We provided space and programme for **Niacro** to bring families to Corrymeela who are marginalised in their own communities, due to having a family member in prison. There can be community retaliation, comments from members of their community or kids in schools that add to this shame and guilt which can leave family members isolating themselves. The Group Leader told us: “Some children commented that they enjoyed themselves so much they forgot about the issues back at home, we had a few of the teenagers crying in the group at having to leave Corrymeela. One girl who really misses her brother due to him being in custody said that the support and engagement of the programme at Corrymeela made her remember the good times with her brother, playing games and having fun. Another mother commented that she usually has pain but since arriving at Corrymeela it had left her”.

2. We supported 1423 people to explore difference together through our programmes which we delivered in communities around N.Ireland

Public Theology

Jonny Clark (Programme Manager for Public Theology) led on several initiatives in partnership with Alex Wimberly (Leader of the Corrymeela Community). Brave Spaces for Sacred Stories is our series of public facing events which include Borderlands and Corrymeela in the City.

Borderlands, a regular cross-community event of music, storytelling, and theological reflection, has been held in the Pavilion Bar on the Ormeau Road with an average attendance of 60 people per event in this financial year. Space has been created for dialogue around contemporary issues. Examples of such are: “The Cost of Loving” - a panel discussion and reflections on the cost-of-living crisis; “Remembering: The Journey to Hope” with Kathleen Gillespie and Anne Walker; “Solidarity” - personal stories about addiction, and alienation due to someone being LGBTQ+.

Corrymeela in the City, our regular gathering of ecumenical Christian worship, provides space for conversation about reconciliation between people within Northern Ireland, on the island of Ireland both north and south, and between these two

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islands. Along with a monthly worship service in South Belfast, we also went ‘on the road’ this past year, offering ‘Corrymeela’ in the cities of Coventry, Exeter, and Guildford in England; Coleraine in Co. Derry; and at a gathering LGBTQ-affirming Christians in Dublin. Our weekly online worship, from the Crof’, provides a short reflective service for hundreds of people from around the world.

This year we added another rhythm to our calendar by hosting an event to mark the UN International Day of Peace in partnership with the NI Inter-Faith Forum. On the 21 September we gathered 80 people at the Farsset Hotel in West Belfast for an event of inter-faith reflections with contributions from representatives from seven different religious backgrounds. This event was attended by Jacqueline Erwin (CEO of the Community Relations Council), Paul Narain (US Consul General Belfast) and Laurence Simms (Joint Secretary Irish Secretariat DFA). Something Jacqueline said after the event was that “it felt like it was the world in a room”. The CRC has now expressed a desire that this event in 2023 would be a flagship event for Good Relations Week.

We were successful with our application to the Henry Luce Foundation providing 100,000 US Dollars over two years to support the Corrymeela Podcast Series Two and Three. The outcome of our application was received in December 2022. The funding will also provide the resource to develop an international seed group of emerging faith leaders in other countries impacted by conflict. The participants will come from Bosnia, South Africa and Lebanon.

Jonny, alongside Corrymeela Community member Jade Irwin, delivered our first Blessed Are The Brave residential since Covid 19 and the death of Glenn Jordan. Around 20 people were part of the weekend and there was a universal appreciation for the unique, safe, caring, and empowering space that was created for LGBTQ+ people of faith as well as those called to be allies in the challenging environment of many churches today. Many of these attendees of Blessed Are The Brave now attend Borderlands monthly, finding it a safe space for further dialogue and the building of a sense of community.

The development of a network of Interfaith Families has been another new initiative launched in 2022. Two residential were held in the Spring and Autumn with around 45 adults and children attending each time. In addition, a wider group of around 60 have gathered for two meals during the year which have coincided with Ramadan or another religious feast.

The Forum for Discussion on Israel and Palestine (FODIP) seeks to gather British and Irish Muslims, Jews and Christians to find pathways for dialogue around the contentious conversation on Israel and Palestine. When events in the region become global news, we know only too well how incidents of Islamophobia, as well as Antisemitism, rise dramatically. FODIP’s aim is to reduce these, by promoting understanding and more helpful and informed conversations. Jonny has been part of bringing together a cohort of representatives from Northern Ireland and has contributed to an in-person and online gathering of the wider cohort of about 25 participants. One residential was held in Corrymeela for all the participants from the UK and Ireland.

Jonny continues to represent Corrymeela in faith spaces and in a variety of forums that approach him to speak. These can be churches, Christian charities, as well as spaces like Spectrum, the LGBTQ+ Christian Fellowship. He also represented Corrymeela speaking on the Borders and Belonging material to the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) event in Liverpool. He also spoke on a webinar for CTBI which was hosted by the Anglican Bishop of Liverpool. Jonny also acts as a facilitator in an ongoing political elders’ group which reflects well on Corrymeela.

Several Webinars have been held during Advent and Lent with Jonny or Alex creating a platform for usually around 50 people each time to listen to a conversation with a peacebuilder, religious leader, academic or activist. This could be expanded in the coming year.

Sectarianism

Shona Bell (Programme Manager – Sectarianism) continued to delve deeper into the themes of Moving Beyond Violence (MBV) at an Academic, Policy Maker, Practitioner and Grassroots level.

Our International Moving Beyond Violence Consortium grew this year to include Ulster University, Bradford University, Mershon Centre for International Security Studies, The Northern Ireland Executive and The United States Institute for Peace. We hosted two online platforms with invited speakers who shared their practice regarding ritual peacebuilding. This included input from Fambul Tok in Sierra Leone and Damien McNally from Belfast. We co-hosted a webinar with UN Special Rapporteur Fionnuala D. Ní Aoláin with the conversation facilitated by Professor Duncan Morrow. We also hosted a residential in June 2022 at our centre with participants from NI, US, Sudan, South Korea and more.

This year we brought the Moving Beyond Violence questions into our grassroots communities exploring what they might see as inhibitors to peace. We have worked with over 50 people through a housing association, a women’s group, and churches in Belfast to explore the impact of Brexit, the Protocol, and the Windsor Framework. We also looked at issues of trauma, access to education and housing, and continuing paramilitary influence. These thoughtful, emotional, and feisty conversations have challenged all concerned and called into question the opportunities for real civic engagement in wider society.

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Our international work through Moving Beyond Violence have challenged us to establish ritual as part of peacebuilding. To this end we hosted our second Courage to Lament service in St Anne's Cathedral in the 21 June 2022 in partnership with the Wave Trauma Centre and Healing Through Remembering. The service was attended in person by over 150 people coming together to reflect on lives lost in the Northern Ireland conflict. Both the Presbyterian Moderator, David Bruce and Archbishop Eamon Martin participated in the service. Archbishop Eamon Martin reflected, "If we're ever going to have a lasting peace and reconciliation here, we need to understand each other's trauma, and each other's pain". He publicly acknowledged that commemoration was often along community lines. The Archbishop particularly referenced the Teebane and Bloody Sunday as examples of separate commemoration. Courage to Lament was also viewed 644 on YouTube and our three-minute highlight video produced after the event received 640 views.

Shona is an active member and regular chair of #stopattacks, a pressure group of church, youth and community workers focussing on the residual violence that we have failed to move beyond. This year we have actively influenced online and in person with the Police Service for Northern Ireland (PSNI), Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NIACRO) and Tackling Paramilitary Programme (TPP). We have also made submission to the NI Affairs committee both by reporting initially, and then by giving evidence in London. In addition, Shona is a member of the Reference Group which is a non-government organisation which engages with some of whom who are non-subscribers of peace.

In 2022, we recognised the need for respite for our front-line partners and provide Sustainable Hope experiences for TIDES Training, St Peters Immaculata, Fostering Network and the Rural Community Network.

Ambassador Ruth Parkin, friend of Corrymeela, invited Shona to speak at the St Brigid's Day celebrations in Helsinki. This was a huge honour for Shona and an opportunity to work with the Irish Consulate in Helsinki and a local non-government organisation, the Martti Ahtisaari Peace Foundation.

Gareth Gould our Shared Education Project Coordinator produced the resource 'Shared Education in Youth Work.' This was an outstanding piece of work which provides both advice, signposting and activities for youth workers who want to develop their cross-community work.

Legacies of Conflict

Hedley Abernethy resigned as Programme Manager Legacies of Conflict in August 2022 moving to a new position with the Alliance Party in October of the financial year 2022/2023. The post was advertised internally as a 6-month contract. Gareth Gould successfully applied for the position as his fixed term contract with the Shared Education Project was concluding. In March 2023 we received notification from the Community Relations Council (CRC) that our core funding application had been successful. This has allowed us to proceed to externally recruit the position of Programme Manager Legacies of Conflict as a permanent post.

In this financial year we completed *Belfast and The World*, a four-year project funded by the Special European Union Programme Body (SEUPB) through Belfast City Council. As part of this we worked with many communities from across Belfast achieving the outputs to allow for full draw down of payment. Over 200 people took part in the programme and of those, 168 people completed over 24 hours of input from Corrymeela and a range of experts. The final event was held in April 2022 in the Clayton Hotel and we were delighted to showcase the first performance of the newly commissioned play, "Soldiers Are We". While *Belfast and The World* concluded, we began facilitating the Decade of Centenaries course with approximately twenty parishioners from St John's and St Matthew's parishes in north and west Belfast.

Our Places Our Pasts Our Perspectives (OPOPOP) continued to progress during 2022/2023. As Amy Reid (Project Coordinator OPOPOP) went off on maternity leave, we welcomed Rhianne Morgan into post. Rhianne has taken forward three community-based heritage projects in this financial year in Ligoniel (outskirts of North Belfast), Ardarn (East Belfast) and the Atlas Women's Group (Lisburn). A further two Heritage Leadership OCN Level III courses were held involving 16 people. Our funders (National Lottery Heritage Fund and Department of Foreign Affairs) and partners remain invested OPOPOP.

Facing our History Shaping the Future (FoHSF) was particularly impacted by Covid 19. In the first 6 months of 2022/2023 we commissioned an evaluation of the programme. This was undertaken by Confluence Facilitation and provided a framework to re-energise the programme. We reconnected with 4 schools and in the spring of 2023, we held two residentials on a cross-community basis. The schools involved were Slemish Integrated College and Ballymena Academy, Newbridge Integrated College and Banbridge High School. Over 100 Year 10 students with their teachers participated. In March 23, Gareth delivered a workshop with our partners Facing History UK at the Queen's University Belfast *Feminism in Schools NI Conference*.

At the beginning of the Financial Year 2022/2023 we were awarded a significant Strategic Partnership grant from the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) of €450,000 for a three-year project across all Corrymeela's programmatic themes. In November 2022 another DFA award of €40,719 came our way to support us and wider society mark the 25th Anniversary of

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the Belfast Good Friday Agreement in April 2023. A working group was established, meeting weekly to plan for the 25th Anniversary of the Belfast Good Friday Agreement. During this period of reporting, Gareth also represented Corrymeela in the Social Change Initiative – a project tackling inequality and promoting respect for human rights.

Marginalisation

Denise Bradley (Programme Manager Marginalisation) and Hiba Hussain (Programme Coordinator) continued to deliver out on the Asylum Seeker and Refugee Trauma Support Programme. The programme is funded by the Department of Health through the Community Foundation Northern Ireland. To date with our partners the Starling Collective, Anaka Women's Collective, CANS, Place to Wonder, LORAG and the Hummingbird Project we have delivered trauma informed services to 1551 people including those seeking refuge and asylum, practitioners in the voluntary, community and statutory sectors and academia.

Denise has delivered four Trauma Informed Approach to Practice training residentials with 70+ people and hosted a *Starting the Conversation – Imagining a Trauma Informed Community* in February 2023 with over 100 people attending from different backgrounds and organisations. Alongside this and throughout the year, Hiba delivered the Take 5 Wellbeing Programme as part of the project and supported 22 women and 7 children in Magherafelt in promoting connections, reducing rural isolation and improving mental health and wellbeing.

With funding from our Together We Shelter Legacy and in partnership with the VSB Foundation and the Blue Pilgrims the Marginalisation team led on the Voices of Migrant Women project which sought to increase the visibility, voice and space for leadership by refugee, asylum seeking and migrant women. During the summer of 2022, Hiba led on a leadership residential for women at Corrymeela. In the early spring of 2023, Hiba delivered a six-week trauma informed programme with eleven young women and girls, promoting a strength building model and offering space to explore self-esteem, relationships and promote trust and confidence. Alongside this Hiba continued to hold a very busy casework involving 30+ individuals and families

Denise also actively promoting a holistic and collective approach to trauma and continues to build and community of practice. During this financial year 2022 - 2023 she has delivered a series of inputs on marginalisation and trauma methodologies with LCC University Lithuania, Queen's University Belfast and Dublin City University. Denise was also quest speaker at the Southern Trust Professional Conference Adult Safeguarding, bringing visibility to the re-traumatisation of those seeking asylum and refuge in Northern Ireland by structural discrimination.

As the Financial Year 2022 – 2023 concluded, Denise and Sylvia (Sylvia Gordon Head of Programme) began working with Causeway Coast and Glen's Borough Council as asylum seekers arrived in the Borough. This work will continue in 2023 – 2024.

3. Our Community of members continued to thrive

Corrymeela began with the idea of 'community' – with individuals, inspired by their Christian faith, agreeing to be in respectful relationship with each other as an expression of how people can live well together. Corrymeela continues to have an active membership at its heart.

At the end of March 2023, Corrymeela had 167 voting members, 22 provisional members and 92 associate members. Members commit annually to the values of Corrymeela, promising to live out the purpose of Corrymeela wherever they live, work and worship. Provisional members take on a year of active involvement before deciding whether to commit more fully to the community. Associate members elect to remain in close contact with the life of Corrymeela, but recognise they are unable to commit to the level of involvement expected of members.

Members currently contribute more than **5,000 volunteer hours** per year to Corrymeela's work at the centre, alongside programme staff, and through Council and its committees. The membership also provides Corrymeela with connections across various strands of society – with over 200 direct links with church, civic, educational, and professional organisations. In committing to being in relationships of difference, the community serves as a contrast to the harmful divisions of our society. Among the highlights of the members' involvement in the work of Corrymeela this past year were the week-long **Nurturing Hope conference** in July. Led by members in concert with staff, Nurturing Hope hosted an international gathering of over 60 scholars, practitioners and everyday peacemakers who look to create spaces through which people who are divided can "experience the intimacy of our honest differences". The organisers also created a 5-volume booklet as an educational resource for schools and other learning communities.

Other member-led initiatives included the Corrymeela podcast, the monthly Corrymeela in the City ecumenical services, and the 'Women, Trans and Non-Binary Lives as Sacred' public theology series.

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A major development in the life of the community in 2022/23 was the work of reviewing the members' Statement of Commitment and the expectations of membership. Part of the aim was to restate who we are as a community in order to diversify our membership. While remaining a Christian Community that pursues peace and reconciliation by seeking guidance from the teachings of Jesus, the membership clarified that individuals do not need to identify as Christian to belong as a member. In replacing an earlier version of our Statement of Commitment with '**The Journey We Continue**' members invited each other to commit to relationships with each other – and to the shared work of engaging with difference, healing division and supporting peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland and beyond.

The end of the 2022-2023 year saw the return of **community presence**. This is a form of short-term volunteering we consider particularly important because as members volunteer 'shoulder to shoulder' with other volunteers and alongside staff, we provide a positive experience for guests and 'nurture respectful relationships' with one another.

A community of faith at the heart of Corrymeela remains one of our greatest assets.

4. We delivered programmes to support 281 leaders to work cohesively

A key part of our strategy is to work with existing and emerging leaders across society to overcome obstacles and discover creative ways to strengthen relationships, increase our mutual respect and deliver better outcomes for everyone particularly those who are most marginalised. This year, we supported 281 leaders to do this, examples of which included supporting

- frontline leaders from local organisations who delivered throughout Covid in difficult circumstances and in need of respite
- the delivery of a development programme to equip local leaders to explore their local heritage
- leadership groups at our Centre, including The Washington Ireland Programme, Ambit, Hecua, Incore and The Kroc School of Peace Studies

5. We engaged 23,000 individuals through events and digital communications

During this year, we delivered a series of events to inspire, equip and engage individuals in their everyday lives to discover ways to explore difference together. For example, victims, survivors, church and civic leaders attended our ecumenical Service of Lament in St Anne's Cathedral. Using the biblical practice of lament, this service offered a space to reflect on the impact of the conflict in Northern Ireland and explore ways to build a better for future for everyone.

We also grew our social media reach to just over 23,000 followers on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and our new LinkedIn page. In doing this, we provided content to inspire followers to live well together in their lives.

We also sourced funded and completed recordings to launch a second series of our successful Corrymeela Podcast, which is due to launch in April 2023.

6. Our Horizons team delivered 9,261 volunteer hours to support groups at our Centre

During the year, we benefited from the recruitment of 2 teams of excellent residential volunteers in our new Horizons programme. Our skilled team were able to provide additional support in a group setting and more informally during hospitality times to support our groups well. One participant said 'the volunteers were so welcoming and interested in us and modelled excellent behaviour towards others'. Another valued 'the deep discussions I had afterwards with the volunteers about reconciliation'.

During quarter one we completed an internal review of our new Horizons programme, to enable us to embed it well. This review identified a series of training and management recommendations, which we have been able to implement with the new team who started in September 2022, which have improved their team cohesion and enabled them to quickly learn the skills needed to support groups in programmes and through hospitality.

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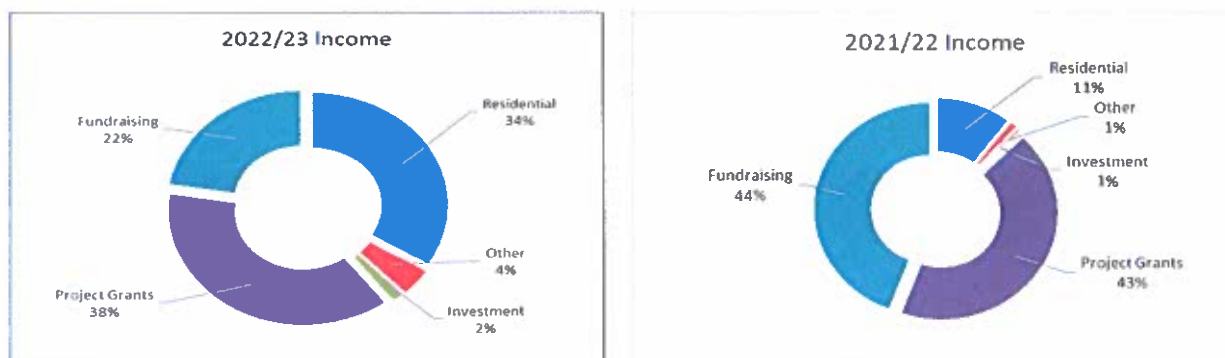
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Financial Review

Incoming resources for the year were £1,707,788 (2022: £1,420,310), an increase of £287,478. This has been a result of the residential income which has increased by £397,071 as the centre returned to normal operations following the covid restrictions. Grant income remains strong at £609,307 (2022: £616,469) as we continue to deliver project and programmes both at our residential centre and in the community. Fundraising income has reduced by £268,403 of which was attributable to a drop in legacies of £203,282, due to a very significant legacy in the 2022. The fundraising environment remains challenging especially with the cost-of-living crisis which is affecting donors' disposable income and ability to make donations. We have also benefited from the interest rate increases on our deposits which has given us a £25,675 increase on income from our investments.

Expenditure has increased by £427,400 as operations, programmes and activities grew back to pre-pandemic levels both in project work and in our residential centre.

The principal sources of funding for the organisation remain in the three key areas, income from grant support for programmes and projects £609,307 (2022: £616,469), fundraising voluntary income £359,975 (2022: £628,378) and the residential centre of £546,083 (2022: £149,012).



Investment Powers and Policy

Under the Memorandum and Articles of Association the charity has the power to invest in any way the Council wishes. Corrymeela's Investment Policy is as follows:

Council, having regard to the liquidity requirements of operating Corrymeela, to the needs of a major capital development project and to the reserves policy, will operate a policy of keeping available funds primarily in interest bearing deposits with a limited amount in government stock. The Community should seek to optimise the rate of deposit interest it earns.

The following policy operates for the Witness for Peace Fund and other restricted funds which may have to be invested:

In general, the Corrymeela Community expects its investments to be ethically invested. Specifically, this means no investments in armaments, tobacco, alcohol, countries that have a poor human rights record and companies that have shown little respect for environmental considerations.

Reserves Policy

Council has established the level of reserves (that is those funds that are freely available) that the charity ought to have. Reserves are essential to

- provide working capital or seed money for new projects to get off the ground before funding has arrived.
- provide for new developments or programmes for which funding cannot be found.
- help fund redundancies if grant aid or project income ends or reduces, or if the work changes direction.
- provide working capital for major site developments while fundraising is being carried out and/or awaiting grants coming in.
- provide working capital for day-to-day work and to cover seasonal variation in income and expenditure.

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Elected Trustees shall be elected at the annual general meeting for a period of up to three terms of office. A term of office runs from one annual general meeting on to the next annual general meeting rather than being determined by calendar years. The Trustee's term of office can be extended by a further period of up to three terms of office by mutual agreement between the Council and the Trustee. Trustees may not serve more than six terms of office consecutively. A Trustee who has served six years consecutively will only be eligible for re-election after two terms of office have elapsed since the Trustee's retirement. In exceptional circumstances the Trustees may resolve that it is in the best interests of the Charity for a retiring Trustee to remain for one further term.

The Trustees shall appoint a chair, a vice-chair, treasurer and such other honorary officers from among their number.

The Trustees may at any time co-opt up to four individuals who are eligible to be Trustees to address any lack of skill or expertise. A Co-opted Trustee may be appointed for a term of up to three calendar years from the date of appointment and shall be entitled to attend meetings of the Trustees and shall have a right to vote at meetings of the Trustees. Co-opted Trustees shall not be required to be members of the Charity. A Co-opted Trustee shall be eligible to be co-opted again, subject to a recommendation from the Trustees on each occasion but shall not serve for a period of more than six years consecutively.

All members are circulated, prior to the AGM advising them of the Trustees retiring, informing them of the responsibilities of a Council member and inviting them to make nominations on the appropriate form. The election of Trustees shall be made by the members of the Charity at the annual general meeting or at a general meeting summoned for that purpose provided always that an overall majority of the Trustees (whether elected or appointed as a casual vacancy or a Co-opted Trustee) must be members of the Charity.

Structure

The objective of Council members individually and collectively, is to ensure, that Corrymeela operates in a manner which enables it to fulfil the objectives listed in the Memorandum and Articles of Association as effectively as possible.

Overall the role of Council is to govern, while the responsibilities for management rest with the Executive Director and where appropriate and agreed, the Leader. In carrying out its responsibilities, Council will uphold the values of accountability to its stakeholders, probity and transparency.

Council is responsible for the overall governance of the charity and is supported by the following five Committees:

- Office Bearers' Committee
- Community Life Committee
- Audit and Risk Committee
- Governance and Nominations Committee
- Finance Committee.

Council will appoint the Chair of the Committee and approve membership. Trustees participate in the Committees and Council is informed by regular reporting so all decisions are ratified by Council.

Remuneration of Key Management and Personnel

The trustees (Council) give of their time freely and receive no remuneration for their duties. Corrymeela aims, to the best of its ability, to provide fair and equitable salary remuneration whilst trying to secure a sustainable future. Corrymeela benchmarks salaries by mapping individual posts, with reference to the responsibilities and qualifications required for the post, against NJC scales and within the NI voluntary sector but remains independent from any external comparisons. The final decision on any pay review lies with Council.

Review of Governance

Council meetings

During the course of the year, Council met on 12 occasions to govern the organisation, which included agreeing and monitoring progress against our Operational plan and budget, managing risk and developing a new strategy.

In addition, the following Committees met on a regular basis:

- Governance and Nominations Committee,
- Community Life Committee,
- Audit and Risk Committee,
- Officer Bearer's Committee,
- Finance Committee.

Trustee Induction and training

Each new Council member receives a copy of:

- Corrymeela's Articles of Association,

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Council therefore considers that the ideal level of reserves at 31 March 2023 would be approximately 6 months annual unrestricted expenditure that is £539,768. The actual reserves at 31 March 2023 are £574,303. In calculating reserves, the Council has excluded the restricted funds £495,771 and £5,246,203 for designated purposes. The current reserves are just above target.

Public Benefit

The Charity's Objects are to be a Christian Community of peace and reconciliation by engaging with difference, addressing division and supporting peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland and beyond.

The benefits include building a shared society in Northern Ireland and elsewhere, where different political, religious and ethnic groups are reconciled to each other and value their diversity. This advances peace and good community relations, lessens conflict and helps alleviate discrimination. It also promotes restorative justice and relieves suffering, poverty and distress arising from conflict. It also promotes opportunities for engagement in constructive dialogue, discussion and debate.

Corrymeela is Northern Ireland's oldest peace and reconciliation community. Our programmes work with children, youth, schools, family, volunteering and faith-based initiatives that support a Shared Future here. We promote knowledge and understanding of difference and support equality and diversity to reduce discrimination. Over 5,000 people a year come through our residential centre in Ballycastle as well as thousands more engaged by our schools and community outreach. Our Residential Centre is a unique space where we can model a different way - a way to have respect and dialogue with those who are different. It gives people a direct experience of an 'other space' - a place to imagine, experience and learn, and most importantly take that experience away with them. It is also a safe space where we can facilitate private meetings with politicians allowing them to have conversations that are impossible publicly. Our Centre is also acting as a catalyst for global change. We are building global partnerships and our learning and experience is being used across the world. We currently work with 15 US universities as well as most of the major universities in Ireland.

Plans for Future Periods

The ongoing Assembly suspension, along with huge cuts in government funding and the cost of living crisis are combining to create a harsh economic and challenging political climate for charities to operate within in 2023/24. In the midst of this difficult context, we aim to deliver the following objectives by the end of March 2024 to deliver our strategy:

- Support 6,800 individuals to repair relationships, by delivering programmes for 1,392 people in the community and hosting 5,408 at our Centre
- Deliver programmes to support 300 emerging and existing leaders to nurture cohesion in their communities
- Support 45,000 people to play a part in our movement of change
- Deliver an income of £1.6 million and a deficit of no more than £313,000.
- Successfully deliver 16,000 hours of residential volunteering
- Upgrade the sewage system at our Ballycastle Centre

Structure, Governance and Management

Governing Document

The Corrymeela Community is a company limited by guarantee governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association last revised and adopted on 27th April 2019. It is also a registered charity with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland.

The Corrymeela Community is a Christian community of reconciliation and there are currently 167 members (178 in 2021), drawn from many traditions whose members individually and together are committed to reconciliation through the healing of social, religious and political divisions that exist in Northern Ireland and throughout the world. Council is responsible for the overall governance of the charity.

Appointment of Council

As set out in the Articles of Association the Council shall consist of:

- Up to 8 (and not less than 6) elected Trustees
- Up to 4 co-opted Trustees.

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- Corrymeela's Governance Framework which includes Council's roles and responsibilities, Code of Conduct and Governance and Organisational structures
- Council's Commitment to Working Together
- Corrymeela's Strategy, which includes the organisation's Vision, Values and Purpose, and the current Operational Plan

Council delivered an induction programme for new Trustees that included an overview of Corrymeela's Strategy, Governance Framework, Finances and organisational structure and an opportunity to meet with key management staff.

Improving governance

Over the course of this year, Council have taken steps to continue to improve the charity's governance so we deliver our mission well now and in the future. Highlights included:

- During this year, Council appointed former Head of Barnardo's in N.Ireland, Lynda Wilson, and Sharon Crooks, an HR consultant and mediator, both of whom bring considerable skill in governance, HR and well-being..
- In the autumn, Council completed a Listening Exercise to review staff structure and working experience. The exercise identified that staff are skilled and committed to working well for the organisation. However, a number of recommendations were made to improve clarity, cohesion, structure and capacity which are currently being implemented.
- During the year, we completed updating the final batch of policies, which will be shared with staff in the new financial year.

Risk Management

Our Audit and Risk Committee has continued to manage risk well, by ensuring that proper controls are in place and to give assurance to members that Corrymeela has high standards in corporate governance This has included the regular review of our risk register and managing the updating of all our policies.

Reference and administrative details

Details of the Council members, company secretary and other advisers are listed on pages 1.

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Statement of Council Members' Responsibilities

The Council members (who are also directors of The Corrymeela Community for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the council members Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the council members to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the council members have prepared the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice, including Financial Reporting Standard FRS102, the Financial Reporting Standard Applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) and with the Statement of Recommended Practice "Accounting and Reporting by Charities". Under company law the council members 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 charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the council members are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgments 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; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

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

In so far as the council members are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditor is unaware; and
- the council members have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.

The Council members are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Small companies' exemption

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions relating to small companies within Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

By order of the Council



Brid Cullen
Chair
The Corrymeela Community
Date 27th June 2023