

FERMANAGH COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

The trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2023. The trustees have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and aims

The principal objectives are to reduce social exclusion by providing an affordable, accessible and reliable transport service in rural areas of Fermanagh.

Activities and achievements

Rural Dial a Lift Door to Service

Comparing 2022/23 against 2019/20, performance of the Rural Dial-a-Lift Service by number of trips in 2023 (26,777) is at 99% of 2020 (27,037) performance. This represents a considerable achievement on the part of Fermanagh Community Transport, given our reduced operational capacity overall which was impacted heavily by energy and cost inflation across the board. The largest purpose by category is day opportunities which stands at 43.8% or 11,782 trips. This indicates that a very significant number of disabled and elderly rural individuals rely on our service to get them to their day opportunities. In second place is shopping/ personal business/ social visits which accounts for 29.7% or 8,033 of all the trips undertaken in 2022-2023. Third is education at 9.6% or 2,571 trips and training and employment at 6.3% or 1,687 trips. Health related trips account for a combined 9.7% (2,597) of all trips in 2022-2023.

Disability Action Transport Scheme

Comparing 2022/23 against 2019/20, the Disability Action Transport Scheme by number of trips in 2023 (1,705) was at 90% of 2020 (1,900) performance. There has been a remarkable recovery since COVID's peak. In 2022 to 2023, the DATS was without a sufficient driver resource for a number of months and this is reflected in the figures. In terms of trips by purpose through the Disability Action Transport Scheme in Enniskillen town, an even higher percentage at 63.6% of individuals compared to the DAL service 43.8% rely on the service to access day opportunities. This is perhaps less of a surprise given that the DATS service is specifically focused on those with a disability and those over 85 plus. Health related appointments account for 18.4% of all DATS trips in 2022 to 2023. Both the DAL and DATS figures are hugely positive and encouraging and demonstrate that FCT has the confidence and trust of its members to transport them safely as they access their basic and essential services. The build back in patronage is astounding when compared to traditional public transport patronage which is running well behind the figures achieved by FCT. Covid encouraged many more people to move to private vehicles as well as the increase in working from home.

Volunteer Social Car Scheme

Last year FCT had 5 volunteers under its volunteer social car scheme. This has risen to 8 in 2022-2023. The volunteers continue to play a vital role in helping us achieve and deliver so much more than we could were we relying entirely on our paid drivers alone. The volunteers continue to give us an enhanced agility and responsiveness which continues to allow us to facilitate and accommodate the increasing demand for trips related to GP appointments and out-patient hospital appointments. We extend our sincere thank you to the volunteers who are an exceptional group of people. We will be endeavouring to recruit more volunteers in 2023-2024, especially in the more remote and farthest reaches of Fermanagh.

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Group Hire With and Without FCT Driver

Group hire remains negligible. Fermanagh does not have the size or density of population of the other counties in Northern Ireland, nor does it have the economic value. Fermanagh records the lowest economic value of the other counties in Northern Ireland. As such, the vehicle hire with driver market is simply not there. Of the groups in the past who did avail of this service, many of gone out of operation due to an end of funding streams and the rising costs of operation.

A welcome departure from the decline in group vehicle hire with driver has been the significant take-up of the support available to voluntary and community groups through FCT with the support of the Cost of Living Support programme from Fermanagh and Omagh District Council up to the value of £10k in 2022-2023. Under the programme, local community and voluntary groups were being offered free membership for one year, free MiDAS training for volunteers and two days free group minibus hire. As well as this, the funding has also been used to facilitate transport to out of area hospital appointments for people who are struggling with the cost of living. It has been tremendously rewarding to see the interest and value placed in this programme of support by groups and individuals. This is something we will be looking to build on in 2023 to 2024.

Membership Numbers

Membership of FCT's Rural Dial a Lift Door to Door Service has witnessed an increase in membership from 877 members in June 2019 to 1,083 members in March 2023. This is a trend which can only be expected to continue to grow given the ageing demographic and the increasing inaccessibility, unaffordability, unavailability and infrequent public transport services and the exorbitant cost of taxis in the County.

FCT continues to liaise and collaborate with Fermanagh and Omagh District Council Community and Voluntary Sector Forum, Community Planning Transport Poverty and Anti-Poverty Working Groups, South West Ageing Partnership, Community Transport Association UK, RCTPs Managers' Forum and DfI, Queens University of Belfast, Disability Action, RNIB, as well as supporting numerous other initiatives locally, regionally and UK wide.

DfI Blue Green Capital Infrastructure Fund – Electric Minibus

Last year we were successful in our bid to the DfI Blue Green Capital Infrastructure Fund for funding to purchase a 13-seater fully accessible minibus. The minibus was to be operated as part of a pilot scheme being overseen by DfI. It was clear in the last annual report that significant delays plagued the promised delivery of the vehicle. Regrettably, the company Nu-Track Ltd responsible for the supply and delivery of the vehicle was put into administration in 2022-2023. Fermanagh Community Transport along with five other rural community transport partnerships each lost more than £70k each. Each was an unsecured creditor. Not only was this a loss in financial terms for FCT, but it represented a huge loss for those individuals who rely on our service and support, as well as an important and exciting opportunity to test the technology. A condition of applying for the Blue Green Fund was that each successful organisation had to remove a conventional internal combustion engine (ICE) from its fleet. In real terms, FCT Ltd experienced the loss of two vehicles.

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Public benefit

The Trustees of Fermanagh Community Transport confirm that they have complied with their duty under section 4(6) of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 to have regard to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit and that the public benefit requirement has informed the activities of the charitable company in the year ended 31 March 2023.

Achievement and performance

Charitable activities

The organisation has maintained its membership and its level of services to the target population throughout the year.

Financial review

Financial position

Sources of funding for the Charity have remained stable with the charity generating a deficit during the year of £(100,724) (2022: Surplus £127,729).

The Charity has used its reserves to cover the deficit in line with the Charity's Reserves Policy.

Reserves policy

Fermanagh Community Transport's current policy is to trade and deliver services, employ staff, rent premises, purchase/hire/lease vehicles and equipment, purchase goods and services. The Fermanagh Community Transport Trustees must ensure that it has sufficient resources.

It is considered good practice to seek to build financial reserves which will enable the organisation to meet future commitments or unforeseen expenses without a negative impact on the ability to deliver services or develop our business in the manner planned.

By holding reserves, the organisation will be able to;

1. absorb setbacks and take advantage to change and opportunity;
2. demonstrate a plan for viability beyond the immediate future and provide reliable services over the longer term;
3. demonstrate to funders that the organisation has given consideration to long-term plans and viability.

Principal risks and uncertainties

The Trustees have conducted a review of the key risks facing the charity and have established procedures to manage those risks. Significant external risks in relation to funding have led to the development of a strategic plan which allows for the diversification of funding and activities. Internal risks are minimised by the implementation of procedures for authorisation of all transactions and to ensure consistent quality of delivery for all operational aspects of the charity. These procedures are periodically reviewed to ensure that they still meet the needs of the charity.

Going Concern

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis, which assumes the charity will be in operational existence for a period of at least 12 months from the date the accounts have been signed, notwithstanding the fact the organisation generated a total deficit in the year of £100,724 (2022 – surplus of £127,729). Included within the results for the year was a loss on disposal of fixed asset of £53,822.

Since the year end, the charity has received notification of potential cessation of funding from its main grant funder of the Rural Transport Fund Scheme by the Department of Infrastructure. At the date of signing these financial statements, the charity remains confident an appropriate resolution can be sought and funding provided, and whilst they await a final decision, the charity has sufficient reserves to discharge all its liabilities as they fall due until. However, the ability of the charity to continue as a going concern is dependent on such funding being made available and the directors have prepared the financial statements on the going concern basis, on the assumption such funding will be received.

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STRATEGIC REPORT

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The charity is controlled by its governing document, a deed of trust, and constitutes a limited company, limited by guarantee, as defined by the Companies Act 2006.

Organisational structure

Fermanagh Community Transport is a company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital. It is registered as a charity with the Charity Commission NI.

The charitable 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.

Anyone within the area of benefit who subscribes to the objects of the Company can become a member of the Company. Suitable new Trustees are recruited from among the members by the current trustees and presented to the AGM to be appointed as per the Governing Document.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Company number

NI610269 (Northern Ireland)

Registered Charity number

101626

Registered office

42 Enniskillen Business Centre
Enniskillen
BT74 4RL

Trustees

Barry Boyle
Eileen Drumm
Allison Forbes
Catherine Magowan
David Monaghan

Company Secretary

David Monaghan

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Auditors

CavanaghKelly
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditors
36-38 Northland Row
Dungannon
Co. Tyrone
BT71 6AP

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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023**

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The trustees (who are also the directors of Fermanagh Community Transport for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of 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 those financial statements, the trustees are required to

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

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to 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.

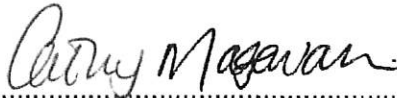
In so far as the trustees are aware:

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

AUDITORS

The auditors, CavanaghKelly, will be proposed for re-appointment at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting.

Report of the trustees, incorporating a strategic report, approved by order of the board of trustees, as the company directors, on 27 June 2023 and signed on the board's behalf by:



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Catherine Magowan
Trustee

