

FERMANAGH COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

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 2024. 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.

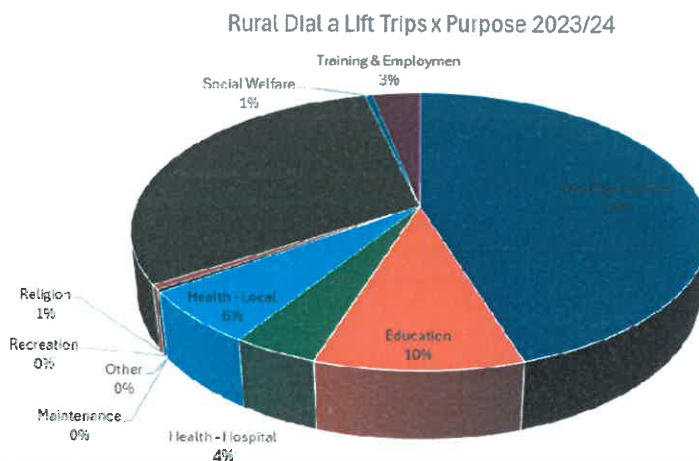
Activities and achievements

Charitable Activities

Rural Dial a Lift Door to Service

Comparing 2023/24 against 2019/20, performance of the Rural Dial-a-Lift Service by number of trips in 2024 (27,529) is at 102% of the 2020 (27,037 trips) performance. In 2022/23, Fermanagh Community Transport (FCT) achieved 26,777 Rural Dial a Lift trips. This represented an increase of 752 or 2.8%. This is undoubtedly a positive achievement within the continuing context of increasing costs and ongoing funding uncertainty. However, in counterbalance to this, FCT has witnessed a significant increase in the number of 'Refusals' in 2023/24. This phenomenon demonstrates that FCT has reached saturation point in terms of operational capacity afforded through the level of funding received through the Department of Infrastructure's Rural Transport Fund. Need and demand within and across our rural community within County Fermanagh are exceeding our capacity to meet it. This is incredibly frustrating given the life-line nature of our service and its criticality to ensuring access to basic and essential services for those most removed from public transport and or without access to a car and who are predominantly older people, people with disabilities and women. Most of our members/ passengers are multiple identity in that they are often older, with a disability and female.

The largest purpose by category is day opportunities which stands at 12,408 or 45% of total Rural Dial a Lift Trips. This represents a 1.2% rise on the total for day opportunity trip number in 2022/23. This indicates that an increasing number of disabled and elderly rural individuals rely on our service to get them to their day opportunities.



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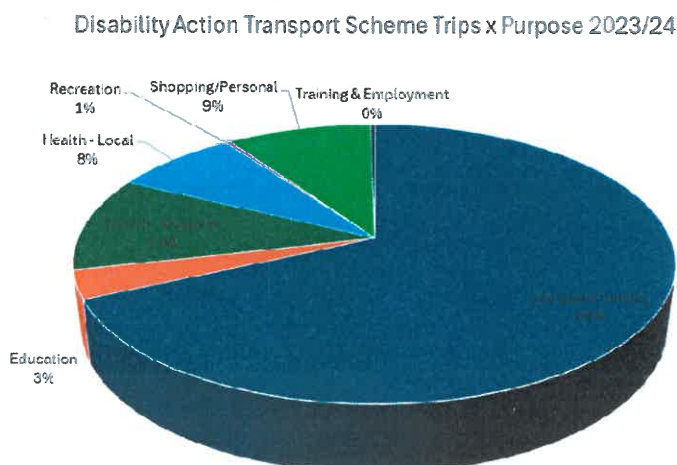
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In second place is shopping/ personal business/ social visits which account for 30.3%, a rise of 0.6% on 2022/23 (8,033 trips to 8,341 trips). Education came in at 10% compared to 9.6% in 2022/23 (2,571 trips to 2,722 trips). The training and employment category has fallen in absolute terms from 1,687 trips to 886 trips, representing a reduction in relative terms from 6.3% to 3%. This is likely attributable to our increasing inability to offer the trip needs of those who would wish to use the service for training and employment. FCT cannot provide the daily time span to accommodate this category to the extent which is sought. Health related trips accounted for a combined 10% of total DAL trip numbers in 2023/24, a rise of 0.3% on 2022/23 (2,597 trips to 2,797 trips).

Disability Action Transport Scheme

Comparing 2023/24 against 2019/20, the Disability Action Transport Scheme achieved 1,678 trips compared to 1,900 in the financial year 2019/20. 11% (222) fewer trips were achieved in 2023/24 compared to 2019/20. In relation to 2022/23, 1,705 trips were achieved. 2023/24 has therefore achieved 27 fewer trips. This is a highly positive result given the uncertainty and relative reduction in the funding made available for the Disability Action Transport Scheme.

The relative breakdown of the Disability Action Transport Scheme trips by purpose for the financial year 2023/24 is shown below.



68% (1,141) of DATS trips in 2023/24 were for day opportunities. This compares to a relative figure of 63.6% in 2022/23. The total trips for day opportunities in 2022/23 was 1,084. Health related appointments both to Hospital and GP have risen by 0.6%, up from 314 to 317. Shopping accounted for 9% (155 trips) in 2023/24, compared to (9.7%) (166 trips) in 2022/23.

Both the DAL and DATS figures remain strong within the continuing context of relative funding uncertainty and relative funding reductions, but the increasing level of 'Refusals' across both DAL and DATS clearly demonstrates that we have reached our maximum capacity and are beginning to show signs of reduction. We cannot do more with less and less year on year.

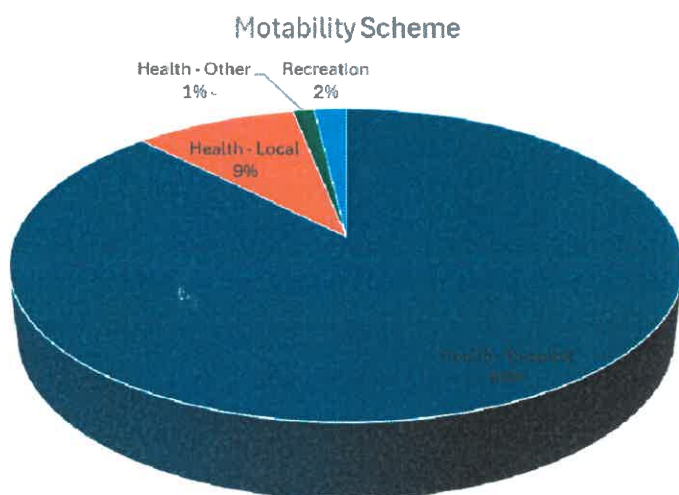
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Motability Out of Area Home to Hospital, Health and Wellbeing Service

The Motability Out of Area Home to Hospital, Health and Wellbeing Service which has been funded by the Motability Foundation for a 3-year period as part of the overall £3.4 million collaborative Programme which is being led by Easilink in Strabane, Omagh and Foyle, along with North Coast Community Transport and CDM Community Transport commenced properly although tentatively in September 2023.

The pie chart below shows that FCT has delivered 162 trips since September 2023 to the 31st March 2024. By far and away the largest category of trip has been for attendance at hospital appointments outside of the Fermanagh area. Over this early period in the service roll-out, members have been taken to Altnagelvin Hospital, Mid-Ulster Hospital, Omagh Hospital and Health Complex and the City Hospital in Belfast.



Volunteer Social Car Scheme

Last year FCT had 8 volunteers under its volunteer social car scheme. This has risen to 15 in 2023-24.

Our Volunteer Social Car Scheme drivers have been absolutely outstanding in 2023/24. In a year where we have been operating for much of the time below par in terms of paid drivers due to funding uncertainty and reductions, the volunteers have stepped up and met the need and demand, especially for the increasing hospital and health related trips across both the DAL and DATS, and within the new Motability Scheme Out of Area Service which started to come online tentatively last September (2023).

Group Hire With and Without FCT Driver

Group hire on a self-drive basis has begun to show some uplift in 2023/24. This appears to have been driven by the increasing cost pressures and constraints faced by many of our local community, voluntary and sport groups for whom private transport is becoming an increasingly unviable option. Our service has enabled several groups to continue to offer their group members the opportunity to travel to various sporting and community events within Fermanagh, across Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom. We had 2 accessible minibuses which spent 2 weeks in England in the Summer of 2023.

Whilst we anticipate that this trend in group self-hire will continue, it will not add any significant degree of earned income to the organisation's resources, especially in any way toward making up for the reduction in funding from the Department for Infrastructure. The fact remains and has been impressed on the Department for Infrastructure on numerous occasions and as reported within the Trustee Report 2023, 'Fermanagh does

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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 have gone out of operation due to an end of funding streams and the rising costs of operation.'

Membership Numbers

Membership of FCT's Rural Dial a Lift Door to Door Service stands presently at 941. A recent list cleansing exercise brought the number of registered members down below 850 from over 1,000 members. It is important to note that we are not actively promoting the Dial a Lift Service due to the budget circumstances, yet we are seeing our membership uplift from the reduced membership following the list cleansing exercise in early 2024. This trend will undoubtedly continue considering the ageing demographic within the County, the lack of available, suitable and accessible public transport, the prohibitive cost of taxis and the continuing cost of living pressures which continue to rise albeit at a slower rate from 2022/23.

FCT continues to liaise and collaborate with Fermanagh and Omagh District Council Community and Voluntary Sector Forum, Community Planning Anti-Poverty Group, South West Ageing Partnership, Community Transport Association UK, RCTPs Managers' Forum and DfI, Queens University of Belfast, Disability Action, RNIB, the Ealing CT Social Value Calculator Revision and Update Group, the Large Community Transport Operators Group (UK), our Motability Programme Partners, as well as supporting numerous other initiatives locally, regionally and UK wide.

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 2024.

Financial review

Financial position

Sources of funding for the Charity have remained stable with the charity generating a surplus during the year of £50,737 (2023: deficit £100,724).

The Charity uses its reserves to cover any deficits 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;

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

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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.

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.

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REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Company number

NI610269 (Northern Ireland)

Registered Charity number

101626

Registered office

42 Enniskillen Business Centre
Lackaghboy Industrial Estate
Enniskillen
BT74 4RL

Trustees and directors

Barry Boyle
Eileen Drumm
Allison Forbes
Catherine Magowan
Barry McManus – appointed 27 June 2023
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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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 25 June 2024 and signed on the board's behalf by:



Catherine Magowan
Trustee