

Artillery Youth Centre

Notes to the Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024.

1. About Artillery and its Programming

Artillery Youth Centre (AYC) is a youth led project for young adults based in North Belfast. It is an independent community led organisation that receives funding from a range of bodies including Belfast City Council, the Rank Foundation, Department of Communities, Education Authority, the Irish Youth Foundation, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Department of Justice and the UK Youth Fund. AYC is widely recognised as a strategic and innovative organisation that has contributed to youth work for older teenagers across Belfast and is at the forefront of the development of unique models of youth participation.

Artillery aims to provide services primarily to young people aged between 15 and 25 and works with marginalised groups including young parents, young offenders, and youth at risk, school refusers and families.

In this past year Artillery has worked on a number of key initiatives including the Bosco Café – a social enterprise that provides work experience and training for young people in the catering and hospitality sector; the Second Chance programme which helps young people into employment; and a youth at risk programme working with young people involved in risk taking behaviours and a programme of youth work that builds upon the long term relationships our staff have with young people and their families in the communities we serve. As well as these, Artillery provides Education and training programmes including support for at risk young people, OCN accreditation, First Aid, Food Hygiene, Driving Theory and Community Youth Work.

We have undertaken a strategic review and completed a strategic plan for the coming years; we delivered a number of community initiatives to support the image of young people in this community including community clean-ups, summer street parties delivered by residents; and programming to improve the skills and capacity of young adults.

Artillery also operates beyond North Belfast through a network of partnerships with voluntary sector organisations and over the past year have provided training and support to groups in North Antrim and North and West Belfast. We have also helped draft funding applications for other groups as well as supporting them with strategic planning.

Artillery is a constituted youth/community organisation overseen by a Steering Group made up of local people, all of whom are past or current users of the Centre. There are a range of skills and experience amongst the Steering Group which meets regularly to provide strategic input and management of services.

2. Statement of Compliance.

This set of accounts is completed in accordance with guidance contained in the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 1964. Section 27 of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 1964 requires the trustees (i.e. the committee) of Artillery:

- To keep proper books of account with respect to the affairs of the charity.
- To prepare consecutive statements of accounts each consisting of:

- (i) A receipts and payments or an income and expenditure account relating to a period of not more than fifteen months.
- (ii) A balance sheet relating to the end of that period.

In accordance with the constitution of Artillery, we are required to carry out an audit or independent examination of our annual accounts. This statement of accounts was prepared by Bernard Tierney & Co and ratified by the Trustees of Artillery Youth Centre.

In accordance with the Charities Act we undertake to preserve the books of account and statements of account relating to Artillery for a period of at least seven years.

3. Basis of Preparation of Accounts

The accounts were prepared to comply with the Statement of Recommended Practice on Accounting and Reporting (SORP) by Charities which prepare accounts on the accruals basis. SORP sets the standard for accountants dealing with charity accounts and sets out a clear format for accounting practice in relation to charities.

4. Key issues from the Accounts

In the year 2023/2024 Artillery had an income of £166,578 and an expenditure of £167,929. Current assets include premises valued at £100,000 (Northside Educational Resource Centre, 183 Antrim Road, Belfast), Equipment with a book value of £1,595 to include computer hardware, a van and a minibus and £227,051 cash at bank and in hand.

What is evident from the accounts for the year is that Artillery remains in good financial health and has net assets that would suggest an ability to manage its finances with prudence well into the coming year. Of particular note are the following:

- The most significant expenditure incurred during the year were salaries of £112,178 for 9 staff (4 full time and 5 part time) Pension costs contributed to a significant payroll expense in this past year.
- Overheads of £14,195 represent just under 8.5% of the operating costs of the organisation which reflect a prudent approach to financial management and a clear commitment to cost effectiveness in the operation of the charity.
- Income from the Bosco Social Enterprise, training, transport and youth services totaled £57,035. Together this represented 34.2% of the overall income of Artillery in this year.
- Grant Aid remains the main source of income for the organisation.
- We had an increase in income in this financial year of 33% which included a rise in earned income in real terms through social enterprise activities. We remain committed to fundraising solely for our own strategic youth work priorities and have not chased funding for its own sake. Our focus is on youth work as we see it and we have stubbornly resisted the sectoral drift towards expensive activities and programming that undermines young people's agency.

Going forward there remain challenges for Artillery.

- The recommendation that the reserves should be at least 3 months of operating costs has once again been achieved in this financial year.
- Whilst significant progress has been made to diversify income. Artillery remains dependent on grant aid for the delivery of the majority of its services.

- We remain committed to providing quality services at value for money. Pressures of wage inflation continue despite a wage structure within the organisation that is significantly less than comparable youth providers.
- Energy costs, wage inflation and overhead costs continue to pose significant challenges to us.
- Governance (Policies and Procedures)

We are satisfied that the level of financial oversight remains robust within the organisation. We continue to be governed by procedures and policies that ensure adequate checks and balances are in place. We maintain procedures for payments, procurement, purchasing and account management that are accepted best practice standards.

In particular we maintain the following policies and procedures (reviewed annually) in pursuance of our charitable objectives:

- Financial Procedures Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Child protection
- Working with vulnerable adults
- Procurement
- Publicity
- Equal Opportunities
- Social Media Policy
- Data Protection and retention policy

5. Contacts

Management Committee

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