

# **Trustees Report Families Beyond Conflict**

## **1. Name of Charity**

Families Beyond Conflict

## **2. Address**

WMC  
260 Cambrai Street  
Belfast  
Co. Antrim  
BT13 3JJ

## **3. NI Charity Commission Number**

Charity Number: NIC101840

## **4. The Purpose of the Charity**

Families Beyond Conflict was established to build the capacity of the community of the socially and economically disadvantaged greater Shankill area of Belfast. By promoting learning experiences to increase the skills, abilities and confidence of individuals and groups FBC empowers them to trust, combat exclusion and marginalisation and create a sense of belonging. Families Beyond Conflict puts in place support systems, strategies and mechanisms to encourage and facilitate a healing process with the object of bridge building leading to reconciliation within the entire community and beyond.

## **5. Charity Trustees**

Mrs Caroline Moffett: Chairperson  
Mr Anthony Clarke: Treasurer  
Mr Nicholas Magee: Secretary  
Mrs Marie McNiece: Member  
Mrs Winifred McConnell: Member  
Mrs Catherine Bickerstaff: Member

## **6. Financial year of relevance of this trustee report**

1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023

## **7. Summary of the Charity's main activities to further its purposes for the public benefit**

During the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 Families Beyond Conflict delivered the following services to the following numbers of clients.

<b>Work Area</b>	<b>Planned Outputs at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022</b>	<b>Actual at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023</b>
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>		
Complimentary Therapies	32 clients – 192 sessions	32 clients – 192 sessions
<b>Social Support</b>		
Monday Women's Group	12 Women over 65	13 Women over 65
Men's Group	12 Men	17 Men
Young Mum's Group	12 Young Mothers	13 Young Mothers
Thursday Women's Group	12 Women over 55	13 Women over 55
Family Bonding Scheme	20 young people/15 adults	20 young people/17 adults
Monday Women's Group 2	9 women	9 women
Lived Experience Project	23 women	23 Women
FBC Drop-in Centre	Open 8.30am – 5.00pm Mon-Fri	Open 8.30am – 5.00pm Mon-Fri

Families Beyond Conflict have provided the following programmes

### **Health and Well Being**

#### **Complimentary Therapies**

FBC completed a 4 runs of 6 x 1 hour sessions for 32 clients, each over a 6-week period during the course of the year

The total of therapies carried out in this financial year was 192 for 32 unique individuals. FBC hosted the therapy clinic 2 afternoons each week, in our new therapy room in the Woodvale Methodist Church grounds. The programme is run by a single Therapist through our partner group the Centre of Health and Wellbeing she is very experienced and popular with the clients. For each client she assesses their needs and administers the most appropriate course of therapies to best meet them. She also promotes the benefits of a healthier lifestyle by providing clients with information, advice, and handouts. The clients take an active role in deciding what therapy they receive; this enhances their feelings of being in control of their moods and emotions – something few have on a daily basis. Our aim continues to be to calm negative

emotions and improved positive emotions and to demonstrate how making life-changing choices can greatly benefit physical and mental health, particularly at a time when many clients are worried about the current economic climate when many are experiencing anxiety around the huge increases in cost of living. Those who took part greatly benefitted from the therapies; the majority found them to be effective in reducing stress and anxiety and reducing symptoms of depression as well as improving sleep.

We have been using the MYMOP recording method which proved a valuable asset in confirming the positive impact the therapies have. The demand for therapies continues to be high.

## **Social Support**

### **Monday Group**

The programme continues to meet all its aims and objectives. This group is made up of 13 women aged over 65 years who are struggling to deal with the stress and trauma as a result of the Conflict in Northern Ireland. A new member joined in April to replace one who left due to ill health.

In the first quarter the group met on 13 Mondays, in the second quarter met a further 12 Mondays, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter there were 11 meetings and, in the final quarter, a further 11 totalling 47 meetings for the year to the end of March. They also took part in 3 respite trips with the Thursday morning group. In mid-June the joint group of 22 ladies spent the day together, initially calling into Dobbies Garden Centre in Lisburn for shopping and coffee, then headed to St Patricks Cathedral in Armagh for a guided tour of the Church of Ireland building. The group had previously visited the Roman Catholic Cathedral and interesting comparisons were made. The group then travelled onto Banbridge for lunch (and a natter). In October 20 ladies from the 2 groups greatly enjoyed a weekend residential in the Adair Arms, Ballymena. This, now traditional residential, is self-funded, they save weekly, and a nominated member is given responsibility for recording and banking the savings, this has the added benefit of encouraging the ladies to budget and save. The residential is the highlight of their year and they enjoy shopping and time together playing games and bingo and enjoy the entertainment in the hotel and spending an extended time together. The sharing of time with the ladies from the Thursday group greatly enhances their experiences and enables them to develop new friendships.

Arts and Crafts continues to be the most popular aspect of their programme. We were lucky to secure funding in the first quarter to enable the group to take part in a 4-week programme where they tried some new and different craft techniques including printing, felt making, weaving and jewellery making.

During the second quarter the group took part in a 4-week programme of reminiscences. As part of our Wednesday groups OCN accredited programme at the beginning of the year there was a session exploring social lives in the 40's 50's and 60's. The ladies in this group experienced those times and it was considered that revisiting happy times of their youth would be a worthwhile programme which would serve to lighten their

mood and improve their well-being. An outside facilitator was invited to oversee the programme as it is beneficial to the ladies to have someone new to lead sessions and introduce a different perspective. The group really enjoyed the project and were able to share stories about their childhoods, school, socialising, fashion, and special events in their lives like their weddings and special times with their families. The sessions were really heartening and there were many stories shared and there was a real focus on the positive even though many experienced a very poor childhood with little money. During the period the group also decoupage pots and planted cacti and did diamond painting.

During quarter 3 the ladies enjoyed more arts and crafts and focussed on Christmas crafts, they also had several bingo sessions which they really enjoy as well as other games. The group joined the Thursday ladies for Christmas lunch in the Lansdowne Hotel on 9<sup>th</sup> December – 19 ladies were present and once again enjoyed their time together.

In quarter 4 alongside the usual quizzes, bingo sessions and games the group enjoyed some relaxing adult colouring sessions and made keyrings using diamond painting, a craft media they enjoy as it is a fairly simple process, and they take away something tangible. The group have been busy this quarter with several trips out. They enjoyed a respite trip to Colmans Garden Centre in Templepatrick followed by lunch at the Rabbit restaurant. In February the group took part in a cookery session at a local church on the Shankill Road, the session was excellent and led by a former baker whose sense of humour made the session all the more enjoyable. They each made 2 loaves of bread and had homemade soup and freshly baked baps for lunch. Then to finish the year in March, the group headed to the outlet shopping Centre in Banbridge for some retail therapy and then into Banbridge for a late lunch. This activity was also run with the Thursday morning group where once again friendships were renewed and developed, and they thoroughly enjoyed their time together.

As previously reported the group are aging, and attendance is not always the 80-100% we have regularly achieved over the past few years. Many are struggling with health issues that affect their mobility and general well-being. It is difficult to organise appropriate respite trips that are comfortable and suitable for a group of ladies whose abilities are so varied and whose needs are diverse. The type of activity is carefully chosen to ensure as many can attend as possible, and we were delighted only 1 lady wasn't able to attend the last respite trip in March.

### **Thursday Group**

The programme has met all its aims and objectives. The Thursday group is made up of 12 ladies over 60, who have had 48 meetings in this financial year as well as taking part in the respite trip to Armagh with the Monday group, the residential in Ballymena above. They also enjoyed the same craft programme as the Monday group and the reminiscence programme which they too really enjoyed and Christmas Lunch in the Lansdowne hotel (See Above) the group greatly appreciated the bread making session as the Monday ladies had and then the final respite trip of the year was with the Monday group to Banbridge as described above. They took part in Christmas crafts in

November and December. This group also took part in crochet lessons which were run by one of the Monday ladies, they had requested this activity for some time and were pleased we had time to fit it in the schedule. They too also enjoyed decoupage pots and planting cacti, diamond painting and the usual bingo, quizzes, and games. Attendance has been good with this group as, like the Monday group they are aging and less able but have not been hit by the illnesses the Monday group experienced this year.

### **Mothers Group**

This group of 13 Mum's who have children or grandchildren at school has developed to become an intergenerational group, including 4 sets of Mums and daughters and an even balance of members in their 30/40's and 60's. In the past the group only met during term time as many were involved in the family summer programme, this year they continued to meet all summer as the demand to meet was very high and a further 12 meetings took place in the second quarter totalling 48 meetings in this financial year.

The group went on their first respite trip of the year in August as they had been so busy with their education programme. Childcare commitments limit the group in terms of the type and timing of any trips they may be able to go on, but they went to lunch and enjoyed a lovely time together. In the first quarter the group took part in a 4-week craft programme, where they decorated jewellery boxes, made bracelets, did needle felting, etching and made decorations to celebrate the Queens platinum jubilee. The group completed an OCN Accredited training programme in September which lasted for 8 weeks, entitled discovering woman's identity in Northern Ireland. They then completed another programme exploring Celtic myths and legends which lasted until mid-November, this was not accredited but they enjoy this self-development aspect of the programme and found this programme enjoyable and discovered much they were not aware of which is part of their shared heritage. We have been very fortunate to secure these accredited and non-accredited programmes for free. The group also had a workshop exploring sexuality run by the Rainbow Project. Some of our members are dealing with family situations around non-binary issues and it had come up in discussion several times, the workshop was extremely well presented and provided some clarity about definition of terms such as non-binary and gender fluid. It helped the Project Manager better understand the definitions should any other members in any group come to her with concerns.

In quarter 3 the group also spent time decorating Christmas Eve children's gift boxes and some other Christmas Arts and Crafts as well as enjoying the usual quizzes and bingo. The group went out together independent of FBC for their Christmas dinner but enjoyed a game of Christmas "Stop the bus" and a Christmas Chip for their last meeting of the year.

Starting in January, the group took part in a new accredited programme (level 2) looking at the influence of women in Northern Ireland politics and the rights of Women in different countries. They also explored Bills of Rights of several different countries and discussed their differences. Over the past 2 years this group have qualifications.

Not one member had previously gained a single academic qualification. The programme has greatly developed them on a personal level and undertaken 4 accredited training programmes 1 at level 1 and 3 at level 2, they have totally embraced the opportunity to “study” and gain increased self-esteem and confidence. Two members have taken on part-time employment, and another is considering going back into education. This year’s programme has been a triumph as the members realised how much they could achieve, and that learning can be fun.

The group took part in 2 respite trips in quarter 4 – they faced and beat escape rooms in a fun activity which had 2 teams trying to solve problems and puzzles to discover how to escape the rooms (and save Belfast from atomic annihilation). There was a deal of competition but taken in good spirit. The group also enjoyed a meal together. In March the group also enjoyed another meal together and their final get together was a residential in the Adair Arms, Ballymena. This was self-funded; the ladies saved each week and chose the venue. Attendance is rarely below 100% which is a tribute to the programme as well as a real indication of the need for the programme and the huge benefit the participants gain from it. It is particularly pleasing that most have become very good friends and share time together outside of FBC. It has contributed greatly to alleviating their social isolation and providing them with the confidence to outside their comfort zones and explore many things they would never have considered in the past.

### **Cross-Community Group (Thursday)**

This group is made up of 10 women from the Shankill area. These women originally came together as part of a VSS cross-community programme, in conjunction with 10 women from the Centre of Health and Wellbeing in Whiterock. It was due to run until March 2020 but was cut short before it was concluded by the lockdown and the funding had to be repaid to VSS. The demand for the programme was high and the FBC group met in a single identity situation from April at the conclusion of a cross-community programme which ended in March 2022 following a successful funding bid to the Lottery Awards for All. They met 8 times between April and May. There was a break from this programme as FBC were awarded funding for a Lived Experiences programme and membership is made up, in the majority by members of this group. This group started to meet again on Thursday 6 October on a programme looking at the legacy of the conflict. The initial stage of the programme lasted 5 weeks and the members explored how the Conflict had affected them and their families and the impact it had on their lives. They also took part in Christmas craft sessions and had a party on their last day together before Christmas.

This programme continued in January/February when the group met up with a cross community group with the aim of expressing the legacy in the form of a stage performance, unfortunately this was not concluded as the other group dropped out of the programme. While this was disappointing the members gained invaluable experience in writing pieces and comparing the legacy of the troubles from a loyalist and republican perspective, which essentially is very similar. This programme has

been provided for FBC for free – and it was a great opportunity for the members of this group to experience another new activity which serves to greatly increase their confidence and self-esteem. The group continued to meet until the end of the year and took part in a respite trip to the Escape rooms which they thoroughly enjoyed. This group will continue to meet into the next financial year where it is hoped to secure some funding for a cross-community programme.

### **Monday Group 2**

Following a successful request for a budget virement a new group was initiated on 7<sup>th</sup> November to meet on the first Monday afternoon of each month. This group is currently made up of 9 women who are victims and survivors and were on the FBC waiting list. It is anticipated a further 3 (to bring the group up to 12 members) will join over the next few months. It has been a long time aim to reduce the waiting list; initially however, it is likely the group will meet monthly as the Project Manager is a lone worker with limited time, but it is planned to encourage participants to lead up sessions enhancing their skills, personal development and confidence and the aim is to increase the frequency of meetings. Therefore, at this stage the group have met up on 5 occasions, the first was a getting to know you session and the second was a craft session where the members made Christmas lanterns. After Christmas the group played a game of stop the bus in January, which was a lot of fun, in February they enjoyed an afternoon tea which was delivered to FBC. The ladies enjoyed the food and feasted on sausage rolls, chicken goujons, and sandwiches, scones with jam and cream and tray bakes. In March a member of the group demonstrated, and the members practiced, screen printing. This will be continued into April when the group will decorate Tote Bags. FBC is delighted to have the opportunity to reduce the waiting list and increase its work with some of the most vulnerable women in the Shankill area, separate funding will be sourced to develop this group more and hopefully enable them to meet more often.

### **Tuesday Group**

The agreed funding virement with VSS also enabled FBC to run a 6 weeklong programme focussing on a mixed media art project. Through reminiscence, working with clay, mosaic and storytelling, each participant created a display piece which told a story through a fusion of image and text. The mixed media approach ensured that there was something for everyone with activities adapted where necessary for our differently abled older people. We aimed to create a combination of individual and group artwork with a fun, positive energy – the project encompassed the 5 steps to wellbeing. This project involved at least 8 unique new participants as well 3 who are currently involved in other programmes and who have been identified as needing extra support at this time. The project commenced on 8 November and ran for 6 weeks to 13 December. It was extremely successful, and the resulting pieces were very professional and satisfying for the participants. They gained great benefit from their participation, and it is hoped this group may come back together for another project in the future – much will depend on identifying a suitable programme at a suitable cost.

## **Lived Experience**

Lived Experiences was a creative writing project designed to produce an anthology of new writing from women survivors and a digitised performance designed to be used as both a learning tool and a work of art. Families Beyond Conflict (Shankill) worked with long-term partners the Centre of Health and Wellbeing (Upper Springfield) in developing this project. The 23 women, who were involved had been adversely and negatively impacted by the legacy of the Northern Irish Conflict and it gave a platform and opportunity for expression for those who felt their stories had gone unheard or ignored. The programme focused on delivering a series of creative writing classes. It had a strong good relations focus and was specifically targeting those who have perceived barriers because of their culture and identity. We engaged Prime Cut Productions to provide an experienced creative writing facilitator to work with participants, encouraging them to share their experiences and draw out their stories to create a series of monologues. These monologues formed the basis of a printed anthology and the screenplay for a digitised performance. The anthology included images chosen by the participants they felt represent their feelings, opinions, and aspirations. The digitised performance lasts approximately 10 minutes and features a chosen selection of the monologues delivered by the participants themselves, with provision made for those who feel uncomfortable doing so not to be photographed. Anonymity is fully provided for those who feel more comfortable with it. Once filmed a copy will be provided to all stakeholders and with participants permission has the capacity to be a free learning resource.

Each single identity group met 8 times with the creative writing facilitator and 2 times with the same facilitator in a cross-community situation. Each group took part in several exercises to encourage individual writing skills at the same time as developing the confidence of the participants. The resulting pieces of work have far surpassed any expectations any participant had. The quality of work was incredible each piece told a story that had previously not been shared. It was an extremely emotional process for all who took part and alongside the laughs there were many, many tears. Each Single Identity group was very supportive of each other and recognised the similarities in their struggles. But when the stories were shared in the joint meetings there was a real recognition and understanding of the same suffering experienced by both communities. These shared meetings served very well as part of the healing the participants so obviously experienced. Not all chose to be filmed but the majority who did really relished a completely new experience and those who didn't wish to be filmed were still present in the sessions and enjoyed the process. The group met one more time to celebrate their achievements in October where they enjoyed a game of Stop the Bus and enjoyed a meal together in Farset.

The book has since been published and available in libraries across Belfast and from FBC and The Centre for Health and Wellbeing

## **INTERGENERATIONAL**

### **Men's Group**

Seventeen men are involved in the programme, this is such a well-established group with the membership remaining stable for at least 3 years. The group met on 45 occasions since the beginning of April. Every other week the men meet at a local Leisure Centre for football training and a match. These sessions last about one hour and 15 minutes and the group then meet for coffee and a chat in the café. Aside from the obvious health benefits of the football some of the men are still attending the gym at other times in the week, inspired by the exercise and their football. While there are benefits to the physical exercise there are also benefits to the chats following the football and the meetings on the non-footballing weeks. It provides a rare opportunity for these men to share their problems and talk about the issues that affect their daily lives. In the past these men have found it difficult to make social connections but feel much more at ease in each other's company and able to broach sensitive issues. There is no doubt their common love for football creates a good environment where they feel comfortable to have these conversations. It has been extremely difficult to organise any respite trips for this group as most members work full time and often at weekend – two respite trips took place in the last quarter – a much enjoyed and highly competitive visit to the escape rooms in Dundonald and a day enjoying outdoor pursuits at Todd's Leap in Ballygawley. The intensity of the day long programme really tested the men's strength and stamina and as always, they were very competitive but in a "friendly" way! This group has become very close – and it is heartening to witness the very positive relationships between the 2 generations who have this project in common whereas prior to their participation there was no opportunity to share any time together.

### **Family Bonding Scheme**

The Programme began in April with planning and child recruitment. Twenty young people were registered, which meets targets. The Parents/Guardians met for the first time in June when they were informed of their roles and responsibilities during the programme. The programme provides an opportunity for the young people and older members of their families to share new experiences and spend positive time together in an environment outside the usual one they share. A very full and exciting programme was arranged in the week beginning 4 July. Attendance was excellent with an average of 96% overall. For most events we had at least 18 adult family members attending. The intergenerational rapport and the respect that has been developed is the outstanding feature of this project alongside the development of friendships and regular and ongoing contact between individuals outside the programme. The behaviour of the young people was excellent, and they were a credit to their families. The activities they shared developed and enhanced their relationships in a very positive way. There was a good balance of activities geared to meeting the various likes and needs of the young people. During the period of lockdown there was a window during Halloween half-term when we were able to meet and run a

programme. This was extremely well received by the Families as it was pointed out there are many more activities and events happening in the summer but none in the autumn or New Year. It is planned to take account of this in the planning of next year's programme.

### **Drop In**

We have provided a safe and secure environment where members of the local community can seek free advice and/or support on issues such as pensions or benefits. As in previous years the vast majority of callers require redirection to the most appropriate local service. It is estimated that about 10% require more support such as making benefit applications or CV's or job searches on line. There is no regular pattern in terms of numbers of callers who require support. Approximately 3-4 would call into the Centre each week. Over this year of the programme we have been able to provide counselling for 5 people through our programme run in conjunction with Centre for Health and Wellbeing. We have also provided complimentary therapies for five people who dropped in. It is anticipated this pattern will continue into the future.

### **Main Achievements during the year**

Families Beyond Conflict has greatly developed and superseded targets in respect of every programme. The organisation embraced the opportunity to provide an exceptional programme that resulted in the publishing of the book – Lived Experiences. Twenty three ladies in a cross-community situation reflected on their experiences during the Troubles in poetry and prose. The published book provided a tangible outcome that greatly impacted on the group and on their road to healing. Budget transfer also enabled us to set up a new group to help alleviate the waiting list, although only meeting monthly at present it is hoped to increase numbers and develop the group in the future. FBC were also fortunate to secure free accredited training for our Wednesday group who were able to undertake level 1 and 2 levels on 3 separate courses. Finally, extra funding enabled us to run a one-off craft programme enabling us to work, albeit for a limited time with a further 10 participants.

### **Public Benefit Requirement**

The Trustees have had due regard to the Commissions Public Benefit Requirement and ensured that all activities, courses, programmes and projects have been delivered to meet the requirement. No trustees have received private benefit.

## A Review of the Charity's financial position on 31st March 2023

On 31st March 2023 the financial position of the charity was as follows;

Income	2022	2023
Charitable Activities	£60,279	£70,978
Expenditure		
Wages/Salaries	£27,539	£32,791
Programme Costs	£23,161	£34,176
Running Costs	£8,851	£9,154
Total	£59,551	£76,121
Surplus/(Deficit)	£728	(£5,143)

### Deficit

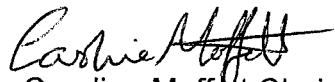
The charity had a deficit of £5,143 for the year ended 31st March 2023. This operating deficit is a result of the charity continuing its charitable operations at the same time as being committed to meeting the increasing needs of the people it works with.

Funding was obtained for an extension from the Victims and Survivors Service to run from 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024 and it is likely that will be further extended to March 2025. Families Beyond Conflict is also confident in renewing funding from April 2025 and is committed to meeting the remaining deficit from sources other than VSS over the two years.

### Trustees Signature

I hereby declare that this report is a true and accurate account of the charities operations during 2022-2023

Signature



Mrs Caroline Moffett Chairperson

14<sup>th</sup> October 2023

COME VISIT

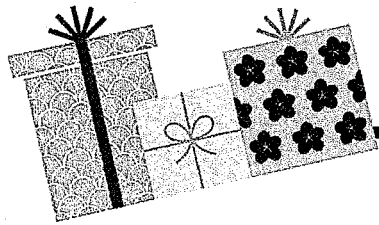
OUR

# Christmas Craft Fayre

Friday 15th November  
6 - 9 pm

The Spectrum Centre  
331 Shankill Road Belfast

BT13 3AB



Crochet

Christmas  
Decorations

Gifts

Food stalls

Hampers

Kids crafts

Homemade crafts

Tombola

