

Hope House (HH)

Trustees' Annual Report

Year Ended 31 May 2024

The Trustees present their report and the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 May 2024. The trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" (FRS 102) in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charity.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in notes to the accounts and comply with the charity's governing document, the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 and 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).

Structure, governance and management

The charity is a company limited by guarantee and was incorporated on 8 May 2014.

The trustees', who are also directors for the purpose of company law, and who have served during the year and since the year end were:

N Brabham
L Brabham
J McCarrol Waite

The company actively promotes a board of trustees which includes a range of skill, experience and knowledge in keeping with the pursuance of its Objects and to this end it is entitled to advertise and interview eligible candidates to be potential trustees of the board.

None of the trustees has any beneficial interest in the company. All of the trustees are members of the company and guarantee to contribute £1 in the event of a winding up.

New trustees are invited and encouraged to attend a series of short training sessions to familiarise themselves with the charity and the context within which it operates. These sessions cover the obligations of trustees, the main documents which set out the operational framework for the charity, resourcing and the current financial position and future plans and objectives. New trustees are also referred to the Charity Commission's guide "The Essential Trustee".

The Trustees have assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate exposure to the major risks.

Objectives and activities

Hope House (HH) is committed to the following:

- to providing refuge, mentoring, counselling, education in life skills, and whatever other means may be appropriate and available for the personal development and physical, emotional and spiritual benefit of women aged over 18 and over who are or have been the victims of domestic abuse and/or sexual exploitation; and
- to advance any other exclusively charitable purpose as the trustees may, from time to time, decide in accordance with the law of charity, and with the provision that any such purpose does neither distract from nor conflict with the primary objects of the charity.

The trustees have paid due regard to guidance issued by the Charity Commission in deciding what activities the charity should undertake.

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Achievements

The charity continues to strive to provide a safe, welcoming, and homely atmosphere for the benefit of our clientele which helps them to develop a more normal attitude to community life as it would seem more like a home and normality rather than as a "refuge".

Having traversed the previous years and extremely challenging times with both fallout from a connected organisation's Internal issues causing the loss of the majority of its volunteers as well as a Trustee and the accounts manager we have stabilised, and over the next year we intend to promote a drive to find new faces to join the team and expand our ability to reach and help those who come our way.

With the disappearance of the urgency of Covid in 2022-23 a decision was taken by the Trustees to return to full service and to actively seek ways to promote our services to a wider source base by reaching out. In 2021-22 as previously mentioned in report the potential of a partnering situation with another like-minded charity organisation, for whom Hope House could provide safe and secure accommodation for their clientele, was explored, and became a reality during the 21-22 financial period.

As previously recorded on the 9th of November 2021 Hope House entered into a formal working agreement with a like-minded charity working in the realm of "People/Sexual Trafficking" to not only refer possible clients for homing for various periods but also to utilise the premises of Hope House for team building meetings. This has proved both a beneficial and fruitful relationship and the fledgling relationship blossomed into a mutually beneficial arrangement.

This working agreement has led to onward progression and as a result Hope House has accommodated one client since August 2022 and another from the beginning of 2023. Both these clients had been accepted under the terms of the Articles of Association and the objectives and activities of Hope House and fully meet the criteria of those terms. Both clients settled in well and found the provision of accommodation, security and support a great benefit to their situation as they awaited proper classification of status and government housing allocation. Both clients have now moved on to their own allocated government body properties at the end of 2023 beginning of 2024 and we maintain connection with them.

In addition to this we reached out to another source and created another working relationship during the 2023-24 financial year, and this too has borne fruit, with the installation of a couple of new clients early in 2024. Unfortunately for one it was not the right move but the other has remained with us and we are actively seeking a new face to join her. As a result, whilst not massive we have had a steady stream of income into the Hope House organisation that whilst not making sufficient to employ staff enables us to cover the operational costs.

We have continued to fulfil our obligation for the repayment of the loan for the purchase of Hope House and the outstanding amount is reducing at the agreed rate within the time frame agreed at the time of its provision.

These situations have had an obvious beneficial impact upon Hope House accounts and therefore means that all operational outgoings are now covered despite the recent increase in utility prices. Hope House is now looking to source a funding income that will enable a manager's salary to be payable to the person in charge of the day-to-day oversight of operations, and to such end we have been provided with someone who is willingly volunteering to do that work for on behalf of the organisation by identifying and approaching a variety of funding sources.

Finally, we are in the process of applying for change of use for the property to a position that will enable us to utilise the third bedroom without recourse to HMO status which if successful will permit a further stream of income to come into the organisation. We await the outcome of that application.

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Financial review (including reserves policy)

The accounts have been prepared for the year ended 31 May 2024. The results are set out on page 8 of the financial statements. The charity had recorded a net surplus of £3,050 for the year. This was added to reserves brought forward to leave total reserves of £48,547 at 31 May 2024.

It is the policy of the charity that unrestricted funds which have not been designated for a specific use should be maintained at a level equivalent to between three and six months expenditure. The trustees consider that reserves at this level will ensure that, in the event of a significant drop in funding, they will be able to continue the charity's current activities while consideration is given to ways in which additional funds may be raised. This level of reserves has been maintained throughout the year.

Risk Identification and Management

The Board of Trustees has assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed, in particular they have highlighted those related to the short-term revenue funding leading to insecurity. This is a risk faced by most voluntary and community organisations. The board proactively work towards self-sustainability by developing the income generating services and facilities provided within the new premises. The Board are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate exposure to the major risks.

Compliance with Public Benefit

The company has given careful consideration to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit to ensure that the activities entered into during the year have helped to achieve the charity's objectives and activities, as well as providing public benefit.

Trustees' responsibilities

The trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the accounts in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the trustees to prepare accounts for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that year.

In preparing these accounts, the trustees are required to:

- * select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- * observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- * make judgements 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 accounts; and
- * prepare the accounts on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the accounts comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

On behalf of the board of trustees



N Brabham
Trustee

Dated: 12 November 2024