

ABC Community Network

(A company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital)

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

for the financial year ended 31 March 2023

The trustees present their Trustees' Annual Report, combining the Directors' Report and Trustees' Report, and the audited financial statements for the financial year ended 31 March 2023.

The financial statements are prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2006, FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their financial statements in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

The Trustees' Report contains the information required to be provided in the Trustees' Annual Report under the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) guidelines. The trustees of the company are also charity trustees for the purpose of charity law and under the company's constitution are known as members of the board of trustees.

In this report the trustees of ABC Community Network present a summary of its purpose, governance, activities, achievements and finances for the financial year 31 March 2023.

The company is a registered charity and hence the report and results are presented in a form which complies with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 and, although not obliged to comply with the Statement of Recommended Practice (Charities SORP effective January 2015), the organisation has implemented its recommendations where relevant in these financial statements.

Mission, Objectives and Strategy

Objectives

Objects of the Company

The objects of the Company as defined by its governing document are:

To promote, further or support any purpose for the benefit of the community in the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council area (the "area of benefit") which are, or hereafter may be deemed under the law of Northern Ireland to be charitable, and in particular:

(a) To develop programmes and services to advance community development, citizenship and education, promote volunteering, relieve poverty and distress, youth and the aged, and for the promotion of good health, and the promotion of racial harmony and diversity.

(b) To promote and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of charities and voluntary and community groups by the provision and management for such organisations of office accommodation, conference, training, information, advice, payroll and other facilities, services or support.

Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance

Development Activity

It has been another busy and varied year for ABC Community Network and we continued to successfully provide a range of support services and practical assistance for member groups and emerging groups at the ABC Community Network in Portadown and at community venues across the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council area. This has included for example, the provision of meeting space, office space and hot desk facilities for a range of voluntary and community groups, reception and administration services and the delivery of a wide range of activities, training programmes and volunteering opportunities.

We have continued to work with the Southern Health & Social Care Trust, as per contract we have delivered the following services over the last financial year. ABC Community Network has provided support to community and voluntary organisations through a range of member services, for example, training and volunteering opportunities, funding support, signposting to support, advice, and networking events.

ABC Community Network website provides a health and wellbeing platform for local community groups to avail of information disseminated by the Southern Health & Social Care Trust, highlighting the promoting wellbeing division priorities for our local community.

We have facilitated 4 events throughout 2022-2023 linked to health and wellbeing, with a focus on vulnerable groups and older people.

ABC Community Network has ensured that the needs of local communities are articulated through active participation as a member or partner in a range of public and representative bodies within the southern area and at a regional level when appropriate. We welcomed the opportunity to be involved in 9 local / sub-regional / regional

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committees. As a representative on these Committees, it has provided a space for advocacy, discussing the challenges and issues the community is facing and how ABC Community Network can support our local community.

Community Development and Support

In our role as a sub-regional network and community development support organisation, we provided ongoing practical support and assistance to a wide range of community groups across the Armagh Banbridge and Craigavon Council area. This has included: the provision of office accommodation and meeting space for member groups and partner organisations; support to establish and develop groups; one-to-one support for existing groups; helping with funding applications, annual plans and project plans, governance, assistance with the preparation and independent checking of annual accounts and AGM preparations; Charity Commission NI registration and annual monitoring returns; administration and finance services including payroll; dissemination of information; promoting networking opportunities and promoting volunteering.

A diverse range of groups and agencies have benefited from the services delivered at both the ABC Community Network and in a range of community settings. This on the ground support has enabled member groups, particularly low capacity and underrepresented groups including those that support older people, those with disabilities and ethnic minorities, to address governance, development and sustainability issues and has facilitated the delivery of a varied range of services and activities.

ABC Community Network recognises the importance of strong governance arrangements and ensuring voluntary and community organisations have the operational capacity and skills to deliver efficiently and effectively.

ABC Community Network has continued to devise, develop, source and deliver free needs-based accredited and non-accredited training courses, arts and crafts workshops and structured health programmes for member organisations across the Armagh Banbridge and Craigavon Council area leading to the development of more cohesive and sustainable communities.

152 people, representing 25 groups, participated in Governance and Effective Management Training as part of ABC's Community Essentials Programme. The programme, which targeted low capacity groups, was funded by ABC Community Network.

101 people participated in 8 facilitated health and wellbeing programmes that included Singing for Mental Health, Dance Therapy, Painting and Drawing, a Walking Group, Garden Group, Yoga, Mindfulness, and a Writing Group.

37 groups were assisted with the completion of Charity Commission registration and annual reporting requirements and the completion of funding applications and evaluation reports.

The range of activities at ABC Community Network and community garden has presented a range of volunteering opportunities including setting up rooms for training and programme activity, gardening, general maintenance work and administration.

During 2022-2023, 9 Volunteers contributed 3000 volunteer hours on a variety of activities.

ABC Community Network's office accommodation was fully utilised throughout the year and the conference room, multipurpose room and garden were regularly used to host a range of activities delivered by ABC, partner organisations and local community groups. 18 Groups used office accommodation at the community hub regularly during the year. 60 discrete activities were delivered by 15 community and voluntary sector groups during the year.

Communications

Community development information and other information relevant to the sector, from ABC Community Network and a variety of statutory, voluntary and community organisations, was disseminated regularly to member organisations and the general public through the ABC Community Network's Contact Management System and Communications Hub.

A range of communication platforms, including social media, weekly e-news bulletin, and Network News quarterly magazine, enabled us to circulate key information in a targeted and timely fashion and to promote members' activities and celebrate their achievements. We also promoted networking opportunities to enable representatives from member groups to share information and provide support for each other.

This has ensured that our members are fully informed about the work of the organization, its members, and opportunities promoted through the community and voluntary sector, statutory agencies, Trusts and Foundations.

Partnership working

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Partnership working is at the heart of community development, and we acknowledge the support received from many of the agencies that we have come into contact with during the year.

We have ensured that the needs of local communities are articulated through active participation as a member or partner in a range of public and representative bodies within the southern area and at a regional level when appropriate.

We actively promoted, participated in and contributed to a range of public consultation events and workshops and actively engaged with representatives from key statutory agencies regularly.

Financial Review

The results for the financial year are set out on page and additional notes are provided showing income and expenditure in greater detail.

ABC Community Network has secured both core funding and project funding from several sources during the period covered by this report including:

- Department for Communities
- Armagh City, Banbridge, Craigavon Borough Council
- Southern Health & Social Care Trust
- Public Health Agency
- National Lottery Fund

It also earned income from the provision of office accommodation, venue hire and from its resource centre and back office support. This self-generated income contributed to funded projects delivered by ABC Community Network during the year.

Financial Results

At the end of the financial year the company has assets of £41,846 (2022 - £22,324) and liabilities of £9,005 (2022 - £5,848). The net assets of the company have increased by £16,365.

Reserves Position and Policy

ABC Community Network has a detailed Reserve Policy in place which is subject to annual review. The policy aims to have from £40,000 to £55,000 of cash reserves which approximates to three months of outgoings including potential redundancy costs. The significant increase in self-generated income and reduction in costs in the current year meant that we can now report that we have met our Reserves Policy target.

Trustees

The trustees who served throughout the financial year, except as noted, were as follows:

Kyle Hillis
Fionnuala Henry (Resigned 1 April 2023)
Anne McCusker
Cassie Chambers
Roseanna McCabe (Resigned 1 April 2023)

In accordance with the Articles of Association, the directors retire by rotation and, being eligible, offer themselves for re-election.

The secretaries who served during the financial year were:

Jonathan Boyd (Appointed 8 April 2022, Resigned 1 April 2023)
Elaine Mateer

Compliance with Sector-Wide Legislation and Standards

The company engages pro-actively with legislation, standards and codes which are developed for the sector. ABC Community Network subscribes to and is compliant with the following:

- The Companies Act 2006
- The Charities SORP (FRS 102)

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Public Benefit Statement

In planning and directing the work of the company the Board of Directors has considered and understands both elements of the public benefit requirement i.e. that there are direct benefits which are identifiable and are available to the public or a section of the public.

ABC has identified the benefits for people and community groups as:

- An increase in the effectiveness of local charities, community groups and associations and their effective use of charitable resources, an increase in community infrastructure and facilities, an increase in partnership work and increased engagement with statutory bodies.
 - Improvement of knowledge and skills of communities.
 - Better understanding of the factors that contribute to poverty and deprivation in communities, awareness raising of existing and emerging needs within communities, the enabling of people to overcome barriers to services and the identification of new services and the development of activities to meet gaps in provision.
 - Raised awareness of the importance of health and wellbeing in the community, to empower communities to take action on the multi determinants of health, signposting to other relevant organisations and networking.
- The beneficiaries of the company's services are members of community groups, individuals who may be considering establishing or joining community groups and members of the general public living in the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council area (the "area of benefit")

Plans for Future Periods

ABC Community Network plans to expand their services within the Armagh Banbridge and Craigavon Council area by:

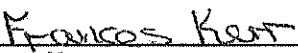
- Supporting the Sustainable Development of Community & Voluntary Groups
- Increase access and engagement with ABC Community Network Services, and
- Strengthening Community Connections

This will be achieved by securing further funding to develop our services and increase our presence as a Network Organisation.

Auditors

The auditors, Daly Park & Company Ltd have indicated their willingness to continue in office in accordance with the provisions of Section 485 of the Companies Act 2006.

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 26 October 2023 and signed on its behalf by:



Frances Kerr
Chairperson



Kyle Hillis
Trustee