

Company Registration Number: NI037061
Charity Number: NIC102017

ABC Community Network
(A company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital)
Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements
for the financial year ended 31 March 2024

Daly Park & Company Ltd
4 Carnegie Street
Lurgan
Co. Armagh
BT66 6AS
Northern Ireland

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TRUSTEES' AND OTHER INFORMATION

Trustees	Frances Kerr Elaine Mateer Cassie Chambers Claire McCartan Rosaleen Ormiston Eamon McNeill - appointed 26/9/24
Charity Number in Northern Ireland	NIC102017
Company Registration Number	NI037061
Registered Office and Principal Address	82 Thomas Street Portadown Craigavon Co. Armagh BT62 3NU Northern Ireland
Auditors	Daly Park & Company Ltd 4 Carnegie Street Lurgan Co. Armagh BT66 6AS Northern Ireland

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TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

for the financial year ended 31 March 2024

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 2024.

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 2024.

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 2016), 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

It has been another dynamic and productive year for ABC Community Network. We successfully delivered a diverse range of support services and practical assistance to member and emerging groups across the Portadown base and community venues throughout the Armagh City, Banbridge, and Craigavon Borough Council area.

Key Achievements and Services

Facilities and Support

- Provided meeting spaces, office spaces, and hot desk facilities for numerous voluntary and community groups.
- Delivered reception and administration services tailored to community needs.
- Facilitated an array of activities, training programs, and volunteering opportunities.

Community Impact and Engagement

ABC Community Network has achieved the following service delivery in the past year:

- Training: 203 participants benefited from targeted training programs.
- Health Activities: 135 participants engaged in activities promoting health and wellbeing.
- Volunteering: 11 volunteers contributed an impressive 2,448 hours of service.
- Group Support: Assisted 36 community groups.
- Events: Hosted six events addressing social exclusion and fostering good relations, attracting 140 participants.

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In 2023–2024, ABC Community Network continued its focus on health, wellbeing, and social inclusion by organising six key events. These initiatives targeted vulnerable groups and older people, reinforcing our commitment to tackling exclusion and promoting good relations.

Digital Support

Our website served as a vital health and wellbeing platform, offering local community groups access to information and support across the Armagh, Banbridge, and Craigavon Council area.

Advocacy and Representation

ABC Community Network ensured the voices of local communities were heard by actively participating as members or partners in nine local, sub-regional, and regional committees. These roles enabled us to:

- Advocate for community groups and their needs.
- Address challenges faced by local communities,
- Collaborate on solutions that enhance the wellbeing of the broader community.

Through these efforts, ABC Community Network continues to be a cornerstone of support, fostering collaboration and empowerment across the borough.

Overview of Community Development and Support

Role and Contributions

As a sub-regional network and community development support organisation, the ABC Community Network has consistently provided hands-on support to community groups across the Armagh, Banbridge, and Craigavon Council area. This includes:

- **Infrastructure Support:** Provision of office accommodation and meeting spaces for member groups and partner organisations.
- **Capacity Building:** Assistance with group establishment, development, governance, and operational support, including help with funding applications, project planning, and independent checking of accounts.
- **Compliance and Administration:** Guidance on Charity Commission NI registration, annual monitoring returns, payroll, and administrative services.
- **Networking and Volunteering Promotion:** Facilitating collaboration between groups and encouraging community involvement.

Impact on Community Groups

The support provided has been pivotal for underrepresented and low-capacity groups, including those focused on older adults, individuals with disabilities, and ethnic minorities. This grassroots approach has enabled these groups to tackle governance, sustainability, and development challenges, resulting in a broad spectrum of impactful activities and services for the local community.

Key Achievements

1. Training and Development Programs

- Delivered free needs-based accredited and non-accredited training courses, arts and crafts workshops, and structured health programs.
- 38 local groups participated in the Community Essentials Programme, focusing on Good Governance, Funding Advice, and Effective Management Training.
- 135 participants engaged in 7 health and wellbeing programs, including:
 - Singing for Mental Health
 - Dance Therapy
 - Painting and Drawing
 - Walking Group
 - Garden Group
 - Yoga and Mindfulness
 - Writing Group

2. Charity Compliance and Reporting

- Supported 15 groups with Charity Commission registration, annual monitoring, funding applications, and evaluation report preparation.

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3. Volunteering Opportunities

- 11 volunteers contributed 2,448 hours to activities such as room setup, gardening, maintenance, and administration.

4. Facility Utilisation and Activity Delivery

- The community hub hosted 19 organisations/groups, fully utilising the office, conference room, multipurpose room, and garden.
- 60 discrete activities were facilitated by community and voluntary sector groups, promoting diverse engagements throughout the year.

Strengthening Governance and Sustainability

ABC Community Network emphasises the importance of robust governance to enhance the capacity and efficiency of voluntary and community organisations. By addressing operational challenges and providing access to resources and training, the Network fosters more cohesive, sustainable communities.

ABC Community Network continues to play a crucial role in empowering local groups, delivering impactful services, and creating opportunities for personal and organisational growth across the Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon Council area. This collective effort ensures the ongoing development of inclusive, well-supported, and resilient communities.

Communications and Information Sharing

ABC Community Network has consistently disseminated vital information relevant to the community and voluntary sector through collaboration with statutory agencies, voluntary organisations, and member groups. Using our comprehensive Contact Management System and various Communication Platforms, we ensured the timely delivery of updates to both member organisations and the general public.

Our diverse range of communication tools—including social media channels, a weekly e-news bulletin, and the Network News quarterly magazine—allowed us to share targeted, relevant information effectively. These platforms also highlighted member activities, celebrated achievements, and promoted opportunities within the sector.

Additionally, we facilitated networking events, enabling member representatives to exchange knowledge, share experiences, and support one another.

By leveraging these resources, we ensured that members remained informed about ABC Community Network's initiatives, activities across the sector, and opportunities offered by statutory agencies, trusts, and foundations. This approach strengthened connections, enhanced collaboration, and supported the development of our vibrant community network.

Partnership Working

Partnership working is central to our approach to community development. We deeply value the support and collaboration of numerous agencies with whom we've engaged throughout the year.

To ensure that the needs of local communities are effectively represented, we have actively participated as members and partners in various public and representative bodies within the southern area, extending our involvement to the regional level where appropriate.

Our commitment to collaboration is reflected in our active promotion, participation, and contribution to a range of public consultation events and workshops. Additionally, we have maintained regular engagement with representatives from key statutory agencies, fostering meaningful dialogue and collaboration.

Financial Review Principal Funding Sources

ABC Community Network successfully secured both core and project funding from a variety of sources during the reporting period, including:

- Department for Communities
- Armagh City, Banbridge, and Craigavon Borough Council
- Southern Health & Social Care Trust
- PHA

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In addition to external funding, the Network generated income through office accommodation rental, venue hire, and services provided by its resource center and back-office support. This self-generated income significantly contributed to the delivery of funded projects throughout the year.

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

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.

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 present as a Network Organisation.

Financial Results

At the end of the financial year the company has assets of £33,732 (2023 - £41,846) and liabilities of £8,414 (2023 - £9,005). The net assets of the company have decreased by £(7,523).

Trustees

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

Frances Kerr
Elaine Mateer
Cassie Chambers
Claire McCartan
Rosaleen Ommiston
Eamon McNeill - appointed 26/9/24

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

Reserves Policy

ABC Community Network has a detailed Reserve Policy in place which is subject to annual review. The policy aims to have from £25,000 to £40,000 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.

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")

The 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 9/12/24 and signed on its behalf by:

Frances Kerr
Frances Kerr
Trustee

E. Mater
Elaine Mater
Trustee

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STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

for the financial year ended 31 March 2024

The trustees, who are also directors of ABC Community Network for the purposes of company law, are responsible for preparing the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the trustees as the directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law) including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" Section 1A (Small Entities). Under company law the trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company and of the surplus or deficit of the company for that period.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP
- make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether the financial statements have been prepared in accordance with applicable accounting standards, identify those standards, and note the effect and the reasons for any material departure from those standards; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the 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 (information needed by the company's auditor in connection with preparing the auditor's report) of which the company's auditor is unaware, and
- the trustees have taken all the steps that they ought to have taken as trustees in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the company's auditor is aware of that information.

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 9/12/24 and signed on its behalf by:

Frances Kerr
Frances Kerr
Trustee

E. Mafeer
Elaine Mafeer
Trustee