

EastSide Partnership

Company Limited by Guarantee

Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report)

Year ended 31 March 2024

The trustees, who are also the directors for the purposes of company law, present their report and the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Reference and administrative details

Registered charity name	EastSide Partnership
Charity registration number	102099
Company registration number	NI031146
Principal office and registered office	Avalon House 278-280 Newtownards Road Belfast BT4 1HE

The trustees

M Briggs	
S Douglas	(Resigned 1 September 2023)
D Gavaghan	(Resigned 1 September 2023)
M Gibson	
T Haire	(Resigned 9 June 2023)
B McConnell	
J McAlpin	(Resigned 1 September 2023)
A McMurray	(Resigned 1 September 2023)
W Clark	(Resigned 1 September 2023)
R Davison	(Resigned 1 September 2023)
G Dorrian	(Resigned 9 June 2023)
A Hassard	
A Irvine	(Resigned 1 September 2023)
K Purdy	
G Robinson	
S Jackson	
A Flynn	(Resigned 9 June 2023)
M Kelly	(Resigned 9 June 2023)
R McMullan	(Resigned 9 June 2023)
D Bell	(Appointed 1 December 2023)
L Feeney	(Appointed 1 December 2023)
S Burns	(Appointed 1 December 2023)
F Bell	
B Anderson	(Appointed 1 December 2023)
H Buick	(Appointed 1 December 2023)
T Ripley- McElvogue	(Appointed 1 December 2023)
M Stewart	(Appointed 1 December 2023)
R Brooks	(Appointed 1 December 2023)

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Reference and administrative details

Company secretary	Tony Wilson
Auditor	Finegan Gibson Ltd Chartered accountants & statutory auditor Causeway Tower 9 James Street South Belfast BT2 8DN
Bankers	AIB 11-15 Donegall Square North Belfast BT1 5GB
Solicitors	Hewitt and Gilpin 8 High Street Holywood Co. Down BT18 9AZ

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Structure, governance and management

Governing Document

EastSide Partnership is a Company Limited by Guarantee and is a Charity recognised by the Charity Commission for NI and HM Revenue and Customs. It is a not for profit organisation. The company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the company and is governed under its Articles of Association.

Appointment of trustees

Trusteeship follows from membership of the Charity, which is made up as follows:

- Community representatives - 4 nominations from the community sector in the East Belfast area, and the Director of East Belfast Community Development Agency;
- Political representatives - 3 elected representatives from Belfast City Council and one elected representative of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council;
- The sitting Member of Parliament for East Belfast;
- The Chairpersons of each subsidiary and working groups of the Charity;
- Other representatives - up to 4 nominations.

Trustee induction and training

A trustee induction process is in operation.

Arrangements for setting pay and remuneration of key management personnel

The directors consider the board of directors, who are the charity's trustees, and the senior management team comprise the key management personnel of the charity in charge of directing and controlling, running and operating the charity on a day to day basis. All directors give of their time freely and no director received remuneration in the year. Details of directors' expenses and related party transactions are disclosed in note 14 to the accounts.

The pay of the senior staff is set by reference to NICVA guidance and utilisation of NJC pay scales. In view of the nature of the charity, the directors benchmark against pay levels in other similar size charities when appointing new members of key management.

Organisation structure and how charity makes decisions

EastSide Partnership is governed by a Board of Directors. The charity is managed on a day to day basis by a Chief Executive, who is at the head of a management team as appointed by the Board of Directors. The Chief Executive, with the assistance of a management team manages the day to day activities of the Partnership, and reports directly to the Chairperson. The Chief Executive and management team also provide progress reports to all board meetings.

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Structure, governance and management *(continued)*

Audit and Risk Committee

The ARC was set up in 2017 by the ESP Board in order to support them in their responsibilities regarding issues of risk, control, governance and associated assurance. The ARC has delegated responsibility on behalf of the board for ensuring that there is a framework for accountability; for examining and reviewing all systems and methods of control both financial and otherwise including risk analysis and risk management; and for ensuring the charity is complying with all aspects of the law, relevant regulations and good practice. The ARC membership consists of no fewer than 3 directors appointed by the ESP board, at least 2 of whom will be from the parent board, and including the board chair, along with one external member to the committee who will be independent of the charity and who will bring relevant skills and expertise to it.

Project committees/boards

For each of the key delivery projects, specific objectives are set by the board / committee for each project, and reported against on a quarterly basis to the partnership board. A strategic business plan for each project / subsidiary company is also presented to the board.

Neighbourhood Partnerships

The Partnership previously established two neighbourhood partnerships: Inner East Neighbourhood Partnership and Tullycarnet Neighbourhood Partnership. The Neighbourhood Partnerships are in the form of 'coalitions of interest', with a memorandum of understanding between the Partnership and the two Neighbourhood Partnerships. This memorandum forms the basis of the relationship, support and facilitation provided by the Partnership.

Subsidiary Companies

The Partnership have 5 wholly-owned subsidiary companies as follows:

- Avec Solutions Limited - a trading company providing web design and hosting services to the voluntary, community and private sectors.
- EastSide Property - a charitable property development company which acquires and brings back into use unused and derelict properties and seeks to make that accommodation available for organisations, individuals and companies making a positive contribution to the community.
- EastSide Greenways - a charitable company which was established to promote and support the use, enjoyment and sustainability of the Connswater Community Greenway.
- EastSide Arts - a company which seeks to promote the development of Arts activities in East Belfast.
- EastSide Tourism - a company which seeks to advance the education of the public regarding east Belfast's artistic, industrial, political and social heritage.

Relationships with related parties

None of our trustees receive remuneration or other benefit from their work with the charity.

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Year ended 31 March 2024

Structure, governance and management *(continued)*

Risk management

The company aims to mitigate the major risks it faces by implementation of the following procedures:-

- Significant external risks to funding have led to the development of a strategic plan which clearly identifies funding requirements going forward.

- Internal control risks are minimised by the implementation of procedures for authorisation of all transactions with a financial implication.

- Maintenance of a company risk register, which is reviewed at meetings of the Audit and Risk Committee.

Objectives and activities

Purposes

The purpose of EastSide Partnership, as expressed in its objects is to:

(1) Promote urban regeneration, community development and the redevelopment and revitalisation of East Belfast and its environs (the "area of benefit") by all or any of the following means:

- Design, promote, implement and evaluate strategies concerned with improving the economic, social, cultural and environmental life of the inhabitants of the area of benefit;
- Promote study and research, and develop and influence policy and practice, in the fields of urban regeneration and community development;
- Engage with, promote co-operation among, and establish strategic partnerships between groups, organisations and agencies in the voluntary and community, statutory and private enterprise sectors;
- Provide a forum for the discussion and debate of urban regeneration, community development and related issues and raise public awareness of these matters;
- Provide strategic and practical support to community and voluntary groups in the area of benefit;
- Such other charitable means as may from time to time be determined.

(2) Advance the arts, including promoting and organising performances and events which improve public access to and/or participation in the arts.

(3) Advance education for the public benefit by assisting and supporting schools and parents and facilitating the formation of partnerships to improve educational attainment in areas of social and economic deprivation.

(4) Promote for the public benefit good community relations, religious and racial harmony, social cohesion and equality and diversity.

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Public Benefit

The public benefits that flow from purpose (1) are:

- A reduction in social inequalities
- An increase in the range of facilities and services available to the public;
- Improvement in the quality of services delivered to the public and in the efficiency and effectiveness of agencies delivering services to the public as a consequence of enhanced knowledge and understanding of the problems, obstacles and potential solutions; heightened motivation; improved inter-agency co-operation, co-ordination and partnership working; and stronger inter-action between these agencies and the community;
- Improved physical appearance of the built environment, resulting in a raising of people's sense of quality of life, well-being and aesthetic appreciation of their surroundings;
- Enhanced opportunities for employment and training for residents living in economically and socially deprived areas and consequently a reduction in poverty, unemployment and hardship.

The public benefits that flow from purpose (2) are:

- A broadening of understanding and awareness of arts and culture;
- Increased opportunities for the public to access the arts as a result of an extending range of arts activities and events taking place;
- Enhanced quality of life and sense of well-being through engagement with and participation in creative artistic events and activities;
- Renewed enthusiasm for and belief in the arts as a means of expression and fulfillment.

The public benefit that will flow from purpose (3) is:

- An improvement in educational attainment, capabilities and capacities and potential to secure employment by pupils living in areas of social and economic deprivation

The public benefit that flows from purpose (4) is:

- A gradual transition to a safer, more stable and cohesive community and positive citizenship as a result of raised awareness and understanding, a shared sense of purpose and the creation of safe, neutral environments.

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Achievements and performance

Report on activity 2023-24

EastSide Partnership, for reasons of effectiveness and good governance, deliver much of their activity through wholly owned subsidiary companies, each of which will report separately. However, reference will also be made in this report as core partnership staff are also involved in supporting and coordinating the activities of all companies within the group.

The main benefits of our activities during the year were:

a) Provision of a range of facilities and services available to the public;

These are provided through our subsidiary company, EastSide Property, and separately reported there. Examples of services provided directly by the partnership through these facilities would include the provision of education through the Carew Centre and of heritage educational services through EastSide Visitor Centre and managing the heritage hub at Templemore Baths, which commenced in July 2023.

b) Improvement in the quality of services delivered to the public and in the efficiency and effectiveness of agencies delivering services to the public as a consequence of enhanced knowledge and understanding of the problems, obstacles and potential solutions; heightened motivation; improved inter-agency co-operation, co-ordination and partnership working; and stronger inter-action between these agencies and the community;

We have continued to work with key statutory, community and private sector interests to improve service quality, including for example in partnering with schools to deliver community based education initiatives through an agreed Education Framework, a more coordinated approach to the development of the Newtownards Rd, supporting the Inner East Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership and Tullycarnet Neighbourhood Partnership and through working with The Executive Office's Urban Village initiative.

c) Improved physical appearance of the built environment, resulting in a raising of people's sense of quality of life, well-being and aesthetic appreciation of their surroundings;

We continue to work with Belfast City Council to ensure C.S. Lewis Square and the Connswater Community Greenway is maintained as a high quality facility for local residents, which has enhanced the physical appearance of this part of inner East Belfast, with heavy use by local residents and visitors alike and an increase in physical activity. We continue to lobby for further greenway development in east Belfast through the EastSide Greenways strategy to contribute to the ongoing physical regeneration of the area.

d) A broadening of understanding and awareness of arts and culture;

Through widespread engagement with local residents, businesses and elected representatives, alongside our social media promotional activity, many more people have come to appreciate, and engage in, arts activity in the east of the city.

We deliver all round arts and cultural activity at indoor and outdoor venues across east Belfast with a particular focus on C.S. Lewis Square as an important public space for cultural regeneration activity. The space hosts a variety of events for the local community and visitors alike which ranges from monthly markets, fitness sessions, family fun days and live music such as part of EastSide Arts

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Festival in July and the Eastside July Weekender, both showcasing in thriving and talented artistic community.

e) Increased opportunities for the public to access the arts as a result of an extended range of arts activities and events taking place;

We continue to deliver an all year round community arts programme with a focus on local venues and opportunities which meets the needs of local people and in areas of social disadvantage and increasing public access to the arts for social impact and well-being.

This included the weekly EastSide Arts Choir and the Big Kids Society which provides public creative workshops in a variety of different art forms. A new project called 'Creative Citizens' began with three main elements; the first will involve extensive research into what is currently available creatively in east Belfast and to identify the barriers to participation in arts and creative activities in the area. The second will use the research to inform the 'Everyday Creativity' project, a project which will encourage people across east Belfast to enjoy moments of creativity as they go about their daily lives. The third element of the programme will be the development and implementation of a training programme which will provide professional development opportunities and support creative career paths for people in east Belfast.

We delivered the EastSide Arts Festival and C.S. Lewis Festival with programming to celebrate 'people and place' in the area, engaging local people to participate in the arts. The Greenway project continues to deliver an all year round animation programme which includes cultural activity as a driver of visits and use of the space to promote health and well being and civic pride.

f) Renewed enthusiasm for and belief in the arts as a means of expression and fulfillment;

With the audience growing, and numbers of volunteers increasing, for the wide range of arts activities delivered this year, this has been a clear indication of the increased commitment and enthusiasm which we have experienced.

g) An improvement in educational attainment, capabilities and capacities and potential to secure employment by pupils living in areas of social and economic deprivation;

We continue to utilise funding from the Dept of Justice via the Dept of Education to continue the EastSide Learning project with a variety of programmes to raise aspirations, improve educational attainment and develop community and statutory relationships for the benefit of children and families. Examples of this include the EastSide Early Years Network, Forest Schools Programme and ABC after school project.

h) A gradual transition to a safer, more stable and cohesive community and positive citizenship as a result of raised awareness and understanding, a shared sense of purpose and the creation of safe, neutral environments;

The partnership has continued to engage in city wide initiatives, particularly with the arts, tourism and regeneration initiatives between east and west Belfast, which has helped increase understanding and a sense of shared purpose as we cooperate on programme delivery.

C.S. Lewis Square / EastSide Visitor Centre has also opened up an entirely new 'shared space' with diverse programming to meet the needs of many people from many different backgrounds and traditions, right in the heart of the community and plans have now been developed to extend the centre.

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Financial review

The results for the year are set out in detail on pages 17 to 34. The company returned net income/(expenditure) for the year of £4,909 (2023:£30,324). At 31 March 2024, the total funds of the charity amounted to £393,979 (2023: £389,070), comprising restricted funds of £236,878 (2023: £251,207) and unrestricted funds of £157,101 (2023: £137,863).

The unrestricted funds are considered to be essential to provide sufficient funds to cover any unforeseen costs which may arise and fulfill the legal obligations of the charity in the event that current levels of income are not maintained.

Investment powers and policy

Aside from retaining a prudent amount in reserves each year most of the charity's funds are to be spent in the short term so there are few funds for long term investment. The directors, having regard to the liquidity requirements of the organisation and to the reserves policy have operated a policy of keeping available funds in an interest bearing deposit account.

Reserves policy and going concern

A policy has been implemented by the company in order to recognise the charity's requirements for reserves in light of the main risks to the organisation. It has established a policy whereby the unrestricted funds not committed should equate to between 25% and 50% of annual administration overheads. The aim is to provide sufficient funds to cover any unforeseen costs which may arise, as well as allowing for the payment of any liabilities which would arise should the company cease to operate.

Plans for future periods

The charity plans continuing the activities outlined above in forthcoming years' subject to satisfactory funding arrangements. The key themes outlined in the EastSide Partnership strategic plan will be the areas where resources are focused in the forthcoming year.

Trustees' responsibilities statement

The trustees, who are also directors for the purposes of company law, are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

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

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

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the applicable Charities SORP;
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity 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 charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Auditor

Each of the persons who is a trustee at the date of approval of this report confirms that:

- so far as they are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the charity's auditor is unaware; and
- they have taken all steps that they ought to have taken as a trustee to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's auditor is aware of that information.

Small company provisions

This report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies entitled to the small companies exemption.

The trustees' annual report was approved on 6 December 2024 and signed on behalf of the board of trustees by:



Tony Wilson
Charity Secretary