

COOKSTOWN AND WESTERN SHORES AREA NETWORK TRUSTEE'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JANUARY 2023

Background

Cookstown and Western Area Shores Network (CWSAN) is a community umbrella organisation which was formed in 1996 to represent and support the interests of community groups within the rural areas of Cookstown and Magherafelt District Council areas and along the Western Shores of Lough Neagh. The network operates from a central location in Stewartstown serving the needs of groups in this rural area stretching from Swatragh to the north, the Washingbay and the River Blackwater to the south and westwards to Broughderg and into the Sperrins foothills. CWSAN is one of 7 Rural Support Networks (RSN's) forming a Local RSN infrastructure. Its core project, the Rural Community Development Support Service is funded by the Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Programme through the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA). Since 1997 the Network has expanded from a few groups based along the Lough Shore to the present membership of 78 (serving over 300 groups in terms of advice, policy and networking). These include community and development associations, youth, farmer's groups, women's groups, welfare rights, ethnic minorities, playgroups, historical and cultural groups and a number of issue based partnerships. "Sustaining rural communities" continues to be CWSAN's strapline in this our 27th year.

Structure, governance and management

The organisation is a charitable company limited by guarantee. The company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its Articles of Association. Cookstown and Western Shores Area Network has a cross-community focus and is managed by a voluntary committee which is elected annually. The appointment of trustees is in accordance with the charity's Articles of Association, whereby each member is entitled to nominate one person only in writing not less than seven days before the date of the Annual General Meeting. If the number of nominations for the office of trustee is less than any agreed number of vacancies at the Annual General Meeting further oral nominations, with the approval of all voting members, may be invited from members attending and voting at the said meeting. Retiring directors are eligible for re-election.

Objectives and activities

The objects of the charity are: To carry on activities which benefit the community of Cookstown, the Western Shores of Lough Neagh, Magherafelt and Dungannon (aka Mid Ulster) and its environs and in particular (without limitation) to: a) support the development of community and charitable organisations; b) facilitate community capacity building through support, mentoring and advice; c) provide education, training, personal and group development and related consultancy services; d) manage, promote, implement and be involved in furthering rural development, community development, rural/ urban development, Anti-Poverty, health and welfare, projects and activities; e) lease and manage property, for the benefit of clubs, charities, community and voluntary sector organisations; f) co-ordinate, facilitate and deliver accredited and non-accredited qualifications, skills training and lifelong learning projects and/or programmes; g) develop, manage and implement projects and programmes in advancement of human rights, conflict resolution, reconciliation, the promotion of religious or racial harmony, equality and diversity; h) develop, manage and implement projects and programmes for any other purposes recognised as charitable; i) advance community development, in particular but not exclusively through the creation of training and employment opportunities for the

unemployed by the provision of workspace, buildings and/or land for use on favourable terms; j) promote such other charitable purposes as may from time to time be determined.

Achievements and performance

Cookstown and Western Shores Area Network's charitable activities remain to support the development of community development and charitable organisations through facilitating capacity building, support and advice, providing education and training to improve the efficiency of the administration of local rural charities in direct pursuit of their objectives. CWSAN is in its 27th year of supporting groups principally in the Mid Ulster area. CWSAN continues to manage, promote, implement and be involved in furthering Rural development, community development, rural/urban development, anti- poverty, health, welfare, projects and activities through its bases in Mid- Ulster. Maintaining this developmental support as a core function and the delivery of a series of local interventions, projects and programmes were central to this year's function. CWSAN continued to partner with DAERA to provide this service on the ground to over 200 local groups. Over 2022 to January 2023, a number of key milestones included the delivery of the NICHI and SPD projects for the PHA and a review evaluation of same, successful delivery of Rural Capital Micro grants to 194 groups , successful delivery of a Health Nutrition and Pain Management programme for 7 local groups, the ongoing support to DAERA in the final programme evaluation and monitoring of the Mid Ulster Rural Action last rural development Programme, the successful delivery of funding to over 30 local groups in improving community Mental health and delivery of 11 small grants from a legacy programme . The network continued to be representative on the Mid Ulster Community Planning and other local development forums representing the sector and providing ongoing support to larger organisations such as Agewell, MUSN, the Lough Neagh Partnership etc. The development of the membership base across Mid Ulster continued to be a focus point for the network in partnership with neighbouring network COSTA on the the delivery of the Marginalised Minority communities programme along the border counties. CWSAN continued to engage community organisations through training provision, networking opportunities, representation, policy consultation, partnership project and small grants delivery and in assisting develop appropriate solutions to local needs particularly in the area of charitable governance and annual accounting. In this year, following on with support as a result of the cost of living crisis, CWSAN were instrumental in continuing to assist and co-ordinate local community responses to warm and welcoming spaces from our GDPR database of 300 groups, CWSAN held its membership level to 78 groups and has worked with 242 local groups with staff and board attending in excess of 450 meetings.

Financial review

The trustees conduct annual reviews of the appropriate level of unrestricted reserves. The purpose of this reserve is to provide stability for the charity to ensure that it is able to honour existing contractual obligations, to cover unforeseen events beyond the organisation's control and to be able to continue its operations in the unlikely event of a significant fluctuation in expenditure and income. It is the policy of the charity to have general reserves amounting to two to three months of support and governance costs. Based on next year's budget this amounts to between £25,000 and £35,000. CWSAN have designated 3 months core operating funding of £33,850 to meet this good governance requirement as well as strategy, best practice and consultancy support. The organisation have also ensured that all future contracted obligations including redundancy reserves for core staff are considered within its reserve policy and to this effect £46,000 has been set aside for this purpose. Included as part of the restricted reserves, are all future contracted obligations including redundancy reserves for project staff. The present level of reserves available to the charity is considered more than satisfactory.

Trustees

The trustees who held office during the year and up to the date of signature of the financial statements were as follows: Rosaleen Hanna Eileen McGovern Perry McCrory Sean Donnelly May Devlin Geraldine McAdam Ann McVey Robert Cochrane

Auditor

The auditor, David Lyttle + Co Ltd, is deemed to be reappointed under section 487(2) of the Companies Act 2006.

Statement of disclosure to auditor

So far as each person who was a director at the date of approving this report is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the company's auditor is unaware. Additionally, the directors individually have taken all the necessary steps that they ought to have taken as directors in order to make themselves aware of all relevant audit information and to establish that the company's auditor is aware of that information. This report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies entitled to the small companies exemption.

On behalf of the board

Rosaleen Hanna

Director

24 May 2023