

**Gracehill Old School Trust**  
**Company limited by guarantee**

**Trustees' Annual Report**  
**Year ended 31 March 2023**

The trustees present their report and the unaudited financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2023. The trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statements of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" (FRS 102) in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charity.

**Objectives and activities**

Gracehill Old School Trust's objects are "to preserve and protect for the public benefit, building or structures of interest in and near Gracehill in the County of Antrim and to restore renovate and conserve parkland planned landscapes and other open spaces and land related to such buildings or structures."

Having overseen its restoration, the Trust now manages Gracehill Old School, the Grade B listed former primary school in the Moravian settlement and Conservation Area of Gracehill. As well as providing sustainable income from rental of portions of the premises and community facilities, the building also houses a mock schoolroom which is open to organised tours and an exhibition which is open to the public during the building's opening hours and by arrangement outside normal business hours. This centre outlines the history of the Moravian community and their settlement at Gracehill and contains interpretative panels and exhibits. The Trust facilitates organisations who wish to visit the village with tours by local volunteer guides.

The Trust has also overseen the renovation of the Village Square, including the reinstatement of the village pond and historic pathways. They have researched and installed a "live" Victorian Post Box outside the former historic Village Post Office and Shop, which they have now acquired. Having secured funding, a programme of renovating and restoring of the building is now underway in a similar project to the Old School. The first phase of this has now been completed restoring the historic living accommodation within the building. This will be available for short term rental. The fabric of the building has also been restored and protected with the installation of a new roof structure, replumbing and rewiring.

These initiatives directly benefit the users of the community facilities within the Old School and visitors to the interpretative centre and school room. They indirectly benefit those organisations that make use of the organised tours of the village and the tenants who are provided with suitable premises for their businesses. It also has a wider benefit to the community at large through the retention and restoration of buildings of historic significance in a conservation area. These benefits are all recognisable, identifiable, definable, and capable of description and are all beneficial.

The intended beneficiaries are sections of the public who live in the village or visit the village and use its premises. The wider public also benefit through enhanced public understanding of the history of Moravians and the settlement in Gracehill and through access being granted to historic buildings and architectural features which are also being preserved for the enjoyment of future generations.

**Public benefit statement**

The trustees have had regard to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit and they believe that this has been met through the achievements outlined in this report.

**Achievements and performance**

**Gracehill Old School**

During the year, activity has continued to recover following the pandemic. There has been a gradual increase in tours and community use of the facility although not yet returning to their pre-covid levels.

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**The Old Shop, 6 Montgomery Street, Gracehill**

During the year, the Trust completed further renovation work on the building and an associated courtyard further enhancing access to the historic Old Shop interior and holiday accommodation. All grant aid applicable to this work has now been paid. The funders included private donors, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Village Catalyst Pilot and the Historic Buildings Division, Department of Communities.

The building is now operational and has had a number of visitors but has also been extensively used by visitors in connection with the World Heritage Nomination. The Old Shop has also been used to facilitate Tour and Volunteer Guide training and as a venue for community activities, such as Craft fairs and history groups. In addition, it has been the catalyst to bring back a mobile library service to the village which is now regularly used by many local people.

**World Heritage Status**

The Trust has continued the efforts, now in their twenty-first year, to take forward the World Heritage bid that involves Gracehill as a constituent part of the proposed "Moravian Church Settlements" transnational nomination to UNESCO in partnership with Bethlehem (USA), Herrnhut (Germany) and Christiansfeld (Denmark). During the year further progress was achieved. Gracehill was added to the UK "Tentative List" of Potential World Heritage sites and was subsequently part of the nomination by the US Government to UNESCO in Paris. The assessment process is ongoing with the outcome possibly known in Summer 2024.

The Trust was fortunate to work in close partnership with Gracehill Moravian Church and was successful in achieving significant funding toward the costs of preparing the nomination documentation from Mid and East Antrim Borough Council and Historic Buildings Division, Department of Communities.

**Tours**

The number of tours has continued to increase again during the year with a noticeable increase in international visitors perhaps prompted by ongoing media interest.

**Financial review**

The financial results are as set out on 9-10 of the accounts. The challenges faced by the trustees in 2022.23 are likely to continue and will require ongoing monitoring.

**Structure, governance and management**

Gracehill Old School Trust is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. The company was incorporated on 6 August 2002. The company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objectives and powers of the company and is governed by its Articles of Association. The liability of the members is limited in that every member of the company undertakes to contribute to the assets of the company in the event of its being wound up while he/she is a member or within one year after he/she ceases to be a member, for payment of the debts and liabilities of the company contracted before he/she ceases to be a member and of the costs, charges and expenses of winding-up and for the adjustment of the rights of the contributories amongst themselves, such amount as may be required not exceeding £1.

The directors of the charitable company are its trustees for the purpose of charity law. The trustees who have served during the year and since the year end were as follows:

Peter Thomas Carter Brown  
Christie Colhoun  
David John Johnston  
Roberta Kathleen Thompson  
William Richard Wray

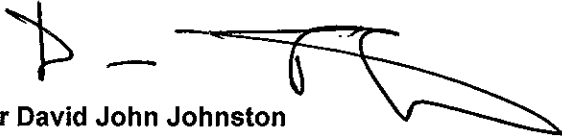
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**Small company provisions**

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

This report was approved by the board on 20 November 2023 and signed on behalf of the board by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Johnston', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**Dr David John Johnston  
Trustee**