Charity Reference No. NIC 102233

FELLOWSHIP OF GOOD COUNSEL TRUST

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

FELLOWSHIP OF GOOD COUNSEL TRUST

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FELLOWSHIP OF GOOD COUNSEL TRUST

CHARITY INFORMATION

Charity reference number	NIC 102233
Trustees	Ann McCay Tommy McCay Liam McCloskey
Address	11 Queen Street Derry ~ Londonderry BT48 7EG
Independent Examiners	Moore (NI) LLP 21/23 Clarendon Street Derry ~ Londonderry BT48 7EP
Bankers	First Trust Bank Meadowbank Strand Road Derry BT48 7TN
Solicitors	Casey & Co 8 Shipquay Street Derry BT48 6DN

FELLOWSHIP OF GOOD COUNSEL TRUST

TRUSTEES' REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

The Trustees present their report and accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES
Our vision and mission statement gives a clear account of what we do and who we are.

Our Vision
That all people may find freedom and dignity through Jesus Christ, for the greater glory of God. "I have come that you might have life and have it to the full." John 10:10

Our Mission
To joyfully come together as a group of individuals believing and celebrating the power of Jesus Christ for mutual support, and to minister to other people so that all peoples may find freedom and dignity through Christ.

The Trustees have paid due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit when deciding what activities the charity should undertake.

The strategies employed to achieve the charity's aims and objectives are to:

- promote Christian Celtic spirituality in Our Celtic Prayer Garden and Sanctuary to schools and various other groups on request,
- run directed retreats to any member of the public,
- provide Worship Services with teaching and prayer five days per week for any person who wishes to avail of it at St Anthony's Dundrean, Columba House, Derry, or The Celtic Garden,
- offer facilitation in Columba House, Iosas Centre and at St Anthony's different seasonal spiritual experiences for youth, families or individuals e.g. Lenten Prayer Experience / Confirmation Preparation (for schools)/ Follow the Star (Christmas Trail)/Summer Scheme for Children / Quiet Retreats,
- Follow A Star (Christmas Trail) This was a limited version curtailed because of electrical limitations and some covid restrictions / Quiet Retreats,
- we have produced a selection of CDs on New Life / Christs Healing Touch / Consolation/ 3 CDs with music reflecting Celtic Spirituality and other topics, Three in One, In God Alone and The Souls Shelter. These are always available,
- provide 7-week seminars (one night per week) on Life in the Spirit
- provide Meditation Every Sunday Morning for Residents at White Oaks. (This will continue when Pandemic conditions allow).
- take opportunities to promote publicly and creatively major events in the city e.g., Repentance Services (Good Friday) Columba Pageants (St Columba's Day) We do not feel that the time is right for public major events in the City. Our presence is constant in the City and our centres in Donegal are well advertised and equally well attended.
- provide a space for meditation, contemplation, or quiet prayer in the Oratory in Queen Street Derry City 5 days per week 10.30 am to 4.30 pm and morning prayer daily at the same venue. A similar space is provided at St Anthony's daily Monday to Friday with an hour of prayer and reflection at 12.00 noon. Saint Canice's Oratory in the Celtic Prayer Garden at IOSAS Centre is also open daily Monday to Friday for quiet reflection.

Since March 2020, delivery of our services has been seriously disrupted by Covid 19. Like many other organisations we have adapted to the circumstances we find ourselves in, mainly by using technology to maintain connectivity with service users. We continued outreach activities via Facebook in the form of videos, written information music and images. Other social media platforms were also used quite extensively including our website, and distribution of information through local and national publications. Our weekly meetings were usually conducted through Zoom but at times we met in the various outdoor spaces in the Celtic Garden or the lawn at St Anthony's and inside our larger facilities with reduced numbers when permissible. Since March 21 there has been an easing of some restrictions but all services will continue to be promoted and managed by the Community according to the Government guidelines of the day. The Community also plans and delivers services at St Anthony's on a Monday Night once a month, Columba House on a Thursday Night once a month and on anniversaries etc at the appropriate venue.

The principal function of The Fellowship of Good Counsel Londonderry is to support the advancement of the Christian Religion, by promoting through the creation and subsequent ministry of The Columba Community, and being open to, and engaging with, society as a whole and offering support to the marginalised and the socially needy is essential to the practical delivery of Gospel Values.

We have established four centres for the advice and counselling of the socially needy community and a Rehabilitation Centre for those suffering from Addiction.

The Advancement of Religion
The direct benefits which flow from Purpose 1 include improved spiritual awareness and an increase in faith resulting in more rounded individuals with reduced levels of stress and anxiety contributing more positively to the community at large. These benefits can be evidenced / demonstrated through oral feedback from clients in conversation, personal testimony attendances at services, greater social integration, and a more joyful and confident demeanour and the continuing supporting of Columba Community by the freely giving of time skills and finance over many years by many individuals. We see no possibility of harm emanating from our proclamation of the Christian message but the wider benefit to the public will outweigh any detriment arising in the course of Christian outreach. The charity's beneficiaries are any member of the public who presents for help or spiritual direction at any of our premises or services. Any private benefit arising out of the fulfilment of our Christian ministry or to lay staff is essential to the fulfilment of the purpose of the advancement of religion.

The Advancement of Education
The direct benefits which flow from Purpose 2 include improved knowledge in specific areas, a greater experience in many subject areas and an increase in life skills leading to a more confident and productive community. These benefits can be evidenced / demonstrated through feedback from clients on evaluation forms, a greater interest in the particular subject area, the observance of use made of the particular skills and the fact that beneficiaries return to further programmes. We see no possibility of harm emanating from any teaching from experienced teachers but the wider benefit to the public will outweigh any detriment arising in the course of Christian teaching. The charity's beneficiaries are any member of the public who presents for courses or life skills training at any of our premises or services. Any private benefit arising out of the fulfilment of our educational ministry by tutors / teachers / facilitators is essential to the fulfilment of the purpose of the advancement of education.

The Relief of Distress
The direct benefits which flow from purpose 3 include the creating of freer more positive and joyful individuals contributing energetically to their families and communities. We see no possibility of harm emanating from any healing ministry or pastoral counselling from very experienced individuals engaged in this ministry. These benefits can be evidenced / demonstrated through greater social integration, and a more joyful and confident demeanour among those who have experienced the removal of stress from their lives. The charity's beneficiaries are any member of the public who presents for relief of distress at any of our centres. Any private benefit arising out of the fulfilment of our healing ministry by community members or Christian ministers is essential to the fulfilment of this purpose.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

The trustees gratefully continue to acknowledge the efforts of the Community, our staff and the increasing number of volunteers who have enabled us to progress our vision and mission statement and to continue our work throughout 2022/23.

It would be remiss of us not to acknowledge the sterling work of many of the community members who worked tirelessly to keep St. Anthony's functioning throughout this difficult time. The Facebook pages of both IOSAS Centre and Columba House were used extensively to take the place of garden tours with articles on individual Celtic Saints, teaching videos from Fr Neal and other members of the community including a series of teachings on Columba and a seven-week course New Life in the Spirit all of which were favourably received.

Key objectives, outcomes and evaluations from programmes facilitated during the financial year are as follows:

The YARD Project
The circumstances of the pandemic and restrictions on activities meant it was not possible to continue YARD Project programme delivery during the year. This will be remedied when conditions allow. We have plans to revamp the Yard Project once the pandemic ceases but until this point there will be little project activity with the exception of keeping up our association with other youth groups on social media, email and other platforms.

The Connections Programme
Building upon the success of the pilot programme delivered previously, the Connections programme has developed into a regular service provided to the local community. With a target age range of 65 yrs+ the programme aims to enhance the lives of older people through lifelong learning opportunities accompanied by health and wellbeing elements such as meditation and exercise.

We acknowledge the support of Derry City and Strabane District Council in providing financial resources to develop and sustain this programme. The Connections programme is delivered weekly to a group of people aged 65-82yrs with an average weekly attendance of 12 people. The impact of the pandemic has meant it has been difficult for this programme to flourish and increase in breadth of activities. However, it is clear that the project provides a vital service with a demand in the community, therefore we will continue service delivery in whatever way we can during this difficult time.

Volunteer Recruitment and Development
As a volunteer-led organisation we have relied on the support of a broad base of volunteers to enable us to fulfil our mission and provide our services to the local community in 2022/23. A number of volunteer recruitment initiatives were successful in attracting new volunteers to assist with various roles. Our volunteers assist with everyday roles such as reception / administration, housekeeping, workshop facilitation and other duties. Additionally, youth volunteers assist with the design and delivery of youth programmes.

We see the volunteer relationship as reciprocal and mutually beneficial. As an organisation we benefit from the time, talent and skills of volunteers and rely on their commitment to continue our work. In the past year we have developed our volunteer management policy to incorporate regular volunteer / supervisor evaluations. This has enabled us to better recognise and meet the needs of our volunteers. Feedback from these volunteer evaluations has noted benefits for volunteers including improvements to mental health through volunteering, increased self-esteem, better social connections and desire for further training and learning.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Total income for the year was £18,711 of which £17,095 was generated from donations and legacies. The balance of income was generated from rent received for room hire and sales of merchandise. Total expenditure by the charity was £20,339, all of which was expended on direct charitable activities. The balance on funds at the year-end was £83,872 of which £38,826 is restricted funding carried forward to 2023/24 and the balance of £45,046 which is unrestricted in nature.

Reserves policy
It is the policy of the charity that unrestricted funds which have not been designated for a specific use should be maintained at a level equivalent to between three and six month's expenditure. The Trustees consider that reserves at this level will ensure that, in the event of a significant drop in funding, they will be able to continue the charity's current activities while consideration is given to ways in which additional funds may be raised.

The Trustees have assessed the cost of providing a reduced level of services in order to continue operating in the event of a reduction in income and consider this amount to be approximately £20,000 per annum. Therefore, the target level of reserves is £5,000 to £10,000. Free reserves as at 31st March 2023 are £45,046. The Trustees continue to monitor the general level of reserves in accordance with the upper level of the target so that they will be able to continue the current activities of the charity.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

In the 2023/24 year we aim to continue to strengthen the spiritual and pastoral work, which is carried out at all our centres, one in Northern Ireland and four in the Republic of Ireland. This has still been severely limited by the presence of the Covid restrictions, but we are planning for the future whilst trying to help people cope with the present circumstances.

We have returned to Columba House for our weekly meetings, and we intend at some time to run Baptism in the Spirit / Life in the Spirit seminars at one or more of our centres or at the invitation of any parish to us to minister there.

The YARD project has not been able to operate as normal during this time although before that our aims were being followed as usual. Workshops and classes were not able to be provided for all of the dates they were booked in for.

The Connections Programme continues to be delivered to accommodate all participants. We will completely revamp the Connections programme for older people and explore opportunities to enhance the range of activities offered to participants.

We ceased providing pastoral support and prayer ministry to residents of White Oaks Rehabilitation Centre at meetings on Wednesday nights monthly and Sunday mornings and Saturday evening Worship were eventually stopped by law, but this will continue when possible.

The residential programme reopened at Whiteoaks and with limited numbers because of Covid but hopefully will now continue to operate and we will deal with issues if they arise. Despite the restrictions placed on our work the staff at each centre have worked hard, opening when possible by law, and attending zoom meetings when possible and continuing to adapt to all difficulties and overcome them where possible.

We intend to continue our limited collaboration with the Loving Sister Earth Movement to support the National Holy Wells Day in June but being led by obedience to any imposed restrictions.

In 2021 work was at an advanced stage on establishing a Centre in Letterkenny for people who have completed the residential programme at White oaks but are not yet ready to go back into society. This Centre was indeed opened and has been appropriately named Carlin House in honour of our founder and director Fr Neal Carlin. it is managed and run by the Board of Whiteoaks. We wish them every success and hope that during 2024 the Community will be able to go there for an informal visit.

Looking forward to next year at Columba House we will continue to deliver our youth work programme through The Lenten Experience if possible. Work to upgrade the electrics in the Celtic Garden is needed. This will require funding. In the meantime in December 2022 staff from the IOSAS Centre and Celtic Garden delivered The Follow a Star Christmas event for families, with the assistance of volunteers. This event was on a smaller scale until funding becomes available to upgrade the electrics.

We will seek to further build our volunteer base and develop the skills of existing volunteers through in-house and accredited training programmes when possible.

Throughout the Pandemic we have kept in touch with people and people have kept in touch with us by every means at our disposal. It is clear that people still want and need our services and want to be part of what we do. This gives us hope for the future and so we enter this new year on an optimistic note.

Last year was the 1500th year of Saint Columba's birth and we have already used Facebook and WhatsApp to spread the word to commemorate this event and will continue to explore new avenues to keep the name and message of Colmcille alive in the city. We have available for sale all four of Fr Neal's Books as hard copies and on Kindle and will no doubt continue to go down all avenues to broadcast that news.

We once again reiterate that, as in previous years, the work of Columba Community will continue, and we will endeavour to implement the leadings of the Holy Spirit to bring new life to society in general.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document
The Fellowship of Good Counsel Trust is an unincorporated charitable organisation and is governed by its Constitution.

Recruitment and appointment of the Trustees
All people in the area of benefit, without discrimination, are eligible for appointment as a Trustee. Proposals for application to membership are submitted to the Board of Trustees and individuals may be elected if they are so willing and accepted by the Board, in accordance with the charity's Constitution.

Organisation Structure
The Trustees who served during the year were:

Ann McCay
Tommy McCay
Liam McCloskey (Liam passed away on the 7th April 2022 and The Trustees and the Community members all acknowledged his contribution over the years.)
Marguerite Hamilton
Fr. Shaun Doherty
Martin McKeever
Kathleen Devlin

The Trustees are responsible for the strategic direction and policy of the organisation. The Trustees are from a variety of professional backgrounds relevant to the work of the charity.

All members of the Board of Trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no benefits from the charity. Any expenses reclaimed from the charity are set out in the notes to the financial statements.

The trustees work with the management committee known as The Columba Community of which 6 trustees are also members being Marguerite Hamilton, Fr Shaun Doherty, Ann McCay, Tommy McCay, Kathleen Devlin, and Martin McKeever. This management committee oversees the activities of the centres providing staff line management, financial monitoring, programme design and evaluation. The charity's administrator manages the day to day running of the organisation including programme co-ordination and oversees a team of volunteers who provide office cover, answering the telephone and door, assistance to visitors and general duties as required at Columba House and St Anthony's.

As reported last year Fr Neal Carlin Founder of Columba Community passed away on the 6th August 2021. Fr Neal's ministry still continues at all the Centres. Responsibility for the implementation is under the jurisdiction of The Fellowship of Good Counsel with responsibility for its implementation in the hands of the trustees and specifically directed and led by Marguerite Hamilton assisted by Fr. Shaun Doherty. On the ground the work of operating the centres is carried out by The Columba Community previously established over the years by Fr Neal and now continuing to work in Columba House, Derry City, St Anthonys Retreat Centre, Donegal, IOSAS Centre and associated White Oaks Organics, Celtic Garden, Sanctuary Chalets, Visitors Centre and Café/ Restraunt in Donegal and in a limited manner in Whiteoaks Rehabilitation Centre.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

The reference and administrative details of the charity can be found on page 1.

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Charity law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the Trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice). Under charity 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 charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that year. 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 Charities SORP;
- Make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the accounts; and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to assume that the charity will continue in operation.

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 applicable law and regulations. 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.

By order of the Trustees

Tommy McCay

Tommy McCay
Trustee
Date: 9/4/2024

FELLOWSHIP OF GOOD COUNSEL TRUST

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF FELLOWSHIP OF GOOD COUNSEL TRUST

We report on the accounts of Fellowship of Good Counsel Trust for the year ended 31 March 2023, which are set out on pages 9 to 13.

Respective responsibilities of charity trustees and examiner
As the charity trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008. It is our responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts under section 65 of the Charities Act
- Follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland under section 65(9)(b) of the Charities Act
- State whether particular matters have come to our attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report
We have examined your charity accounts as required under section 65 of the Charities Act and our examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland under section 65(9)(b) of the Charities Act. The examination included a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also included consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as charity trustees concerning any such matters.

Our role is to state whether any material matters have come to our attention giving us cause to believe:

1. That accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 63 of the Charities Act
2. That the accounts do not accord with those accounting records
3. That the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act
4. That there is further information needed for a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Independent examiner's statement
We have completed our examination and have no concerns in respect of the matters (1) to (4) listed above and, in connection with following the Directions of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, we have found no matters that require drawing to your attention.

Moore (NI) LLP

Moore (NI) LLP
Chartered Accountants
Date: 9/4/24

21/23 Clarendon Street
Derry ~ Londonderry
BT48 7EP

FELLOWSHIP OF GOOD COUNSEL TRUST

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Receipts					
Donations and legacies	3	**14,951**	**2,144**	**17,095**	33,979
Other income	4	**1,616**	**-**	**1,616**	965
Total		**16,567**	**2,144**	**18,711**	34,944
Payments					
Charitable activities	5	**18,371**	**1,968**	**20,339**	41,482
Total		**18,371**	**1,968**	**20,339**	41,482
Net receipts/(payments)		**(1,804)**	**176**	**(1,628)**	(6,538)
Reconciliation of funds:					
Cash funds last year end		**46,850**	**38,650**	**85,500**	92,038
Cash funds this year end		**45,046**	**38,826**	**83,872**	85,500

FELLOWSHIP OF GOOD COUNSEL TRUST

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES
AS AT 31 MARCH 2023

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Cash funds				
Current accounts	**45,046**	**38,826**	**83,872**	85,500

	2023 £	2022 £
Assets retained for the charity's own use (unrestricted funds)		
Buildings (NBV)	**420,227**	438,041
Long leasehold (NBV)	**10,177**	10,177
Fixtures and fittings (NBV)	**86**	172
Office equipment (estimated value)	**1,000**	1,000
	431,490	448,390
Other monetary assets (unrestricted funds)		
Loan to St Anthony's Retreat Centre	**55,000**	55,000
Loan to White Oak's Visitor Centre	**10,000**	10,000
	65,000	65,000

The accounts were approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by:

Tommy McCay

Tommy McCay
Trustee

Date: 9/04/2024

Charity Reference No. NIC 102233

1 **Basis of Preparation**
The financial statements have been prepared using the receipts and payments basis.

2 **Nature and purpose of funds**
Unrestricted funds are available for general purposes in accordance with the charity's objectives.

Restricted funds are donations which the donor has specified are to be solely used for particular areas of the charity's work or for specific projects being undertaken by the charity.

3. **Donations and legacies**

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Donations	**14,099**	**-**	**14,099**	22,047
Gift Aid	**852**	**-**	**852**	2,787
Derry & Strabane District Council	**-**	**444**	**444**	4,895
UK Government – Energy Bills Support Scheme	**-**	**1,200**	**1,200**	-
WHSCT – Positive Aging Small Grants	**-**	**500**	**500**	-
National Lottery Community Fund	-	**-**	**-**	4,250
	14,951	**2,144**	**17,095**	33,979

Analysis of material restricted funds

a) **Derry City & Strabane District Council**
Funding for the provision of programmes under the Connections project.

b) **WHSCT – Positive Aging Small Grants**
Funding towards the cost of the Inspiring Our Elders Programme.

c) **UK Government – Energy Bills Support Scheme**
Contribution towards costs of energy bills.

4. Other income

	Unrestricted Funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Use of room	-	-	120
Sale of Books/CDs/Bibles/Xmas Cards	1,616	1,616	845
	1,616	1,616	965

5. Expenditure

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Salaries and wages	7,203	-	7,203	5,444
Rates	582	-	582	547
Cleaning and housekeeping	160	-	160	220
Insurance	1,148	-	1,148	1,045
Heat and light	3,148	1,644	4,792	2,272
Repairs and maintenance	1,972	-	1,972	2,302
Telephone	967	-	967	2,128
Volunteer and Travel expenses	-	-	-	184
Church requisites	972	-	972	625
Donations	1,750	-	1,750	8,300
Programme facilitation	-	-	-	1,130
Programme materials	-	-	-	642
Programme catering	-	324	324	856
Loan to White Oaks Visitor Centre	-	-	-	10,000
Printing books	-	-	-	1,777
Accountancy fees	-	-	-	3,360
Sundry expenses	186	-	186	379
Bank charges	283	-	283	271
	18,371	1,968	20,339	41,482

6. Transactions with Trustees

None of the Trustees (or any persons connected with them) received any remuneration during the year, nor were any Trustees reimbursed expenses.

7. Related party transactions

The charity enjoys a close working relationship with St Anthony's Retreat Centre, which is a charity operating in the Republic of Ireland. During 2017, the charity provided a loan of £55,000 to St Anthony's Retreat Centre. This amount was outstanding in full as at 31st March 2023.

8. Breakdown of Restricted Funds

	Opening balance	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Closing balance
	£	£	£	£	£
White Oaks – YARD project	30,000	-	-	-	30,000
HM Government Energy Support Scheme	-	1,200	(1,200)	-	-
WHSCT – Positive Aging Small Grants	-	500	(324)	-	176
Derry & Strabane District Council	-	444	(444)		-
National Lottery Community Fund	4,250	-	-	-	4,250
Restricted donations	4,400	-	-	-	4,400
	38,650	**2,144**	**(1,968)**	**-**	**38,826**