

FRIENDS OF DOWN COUNTY MUSEUM

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

The trustees present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2023.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and aims

Purpose of charity

As stated in its constitution, the purposes of the charity are:

- To support and promote the work of the Museum.
- The Society shall be independent of, but associated with Down County Museum.
- Members will work in close association with the Curator and staff of the Museum, to develop the Museum, support the collection, participate in associated activities and act as ambassadors within the community for the Museum.
- The Society is a charity (no NIC102387) and any funds raised are solely for the benefit of the Museum.

Significant activities

The main areas of charitable activity

- The Society may, in furtherance of its purpose, organise relevant activities, as well as support the Museum's own programme of events. These activities may include lectures, tours, literary or musical events, for educational, social or fundraising purposes. The Society will not undertake any substantial permanent trading activity and must comply with all statutory regulations.
- The Society may acquire or make grants, from its own funds or by acting as a conduit for other grant-aiding bodies, to the Museum for curatorial or educational purposes.
- The Society may appoint representatives or delegates to other relevant bodies, if such invitations are made.

Beneficiaries

The Museum is the main direct beneficiary; since its beneficiaries are people of all ages and backgrounds within the local community as well as visitors from elsewhere, these are the beneficiaries of the Friends' projects and activities.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Public benefit

The trustees are confident that the charitable aims of Friends of Down County Museum satisfy the principles of public benefit as defined in the Charities Act. They have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the aims and objectives and in planning its future activities.

The principal aim of the charity is that of providing support for, and promotion of, Down County Museum.

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ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Financial position

The financial position of the charity can be found on pages 7 and 8.

Charitable activities

Following Newry Mourne and Down Council's commitment to commissioning a strategic review of museum services, a chairman, Siobhan Stevenson, was appointed, who met or talked with a number of stakeholders from July to October 2022. Representatives of the Friends were invited to a meeting in October and subsequently provided a written statement, which was attached to Ms Stevenson's final report. This report was completed in November and its recommendations agreed by Council. The Friends were invited to a meeting in January 2023 to hear the recommendations. By this time, new members of staff, including Assistant Curator, Education Officer and Collections Assistant, as well as front of house staff, had already been appointed, although one had resigned after a few months in post and a replacement appointed. In addition, one of the recommendations of the report, to re-title curatorial posts, to better reflect their responsibilities, was also immediately acted upon by Council. The Friends hope that the current staffing level, while missing what was considered a key post of Technician/Photographer, will be fully supported by Council, staff given necessary training and funding provided for all aspects of museum activities, the collection and maintenance of the museum buildings. The Friends' committee has been endeavouring to build relationships with the new staff, keep members of the Friends informed and re-commence a programme of events, post-covid. The balance of educational and social events is key to this, so the first event organised, in November 2022 was a highly successful visit to Louth County Museum, followed by a pre-Christmas event to listen to some music and meet new staff members. This will continue in the next financial year as we continue to discuss issues which may arise and work with the museum to solve them.

Principal funding sources

The principal funding sources for the charity are currently from membership fees, donations and fundraising activities.

Investment policy and objectives

The Trustees have decided that any reserves should be invested in secure bank deposits. The Trustees consider the overall return on deposit accounts to be disappointing, but are not willing to place valuable resources in riskier investments.

Reserves policy

Due to the unpredictability of the income receivable by the charity it is the policy of Friends of Down County Museum to maintain a balance on unrestricted funds to cover emergency situations that arise from time to time and to also enable the charity to continue to deliver its service effectively.

The present level of reserves available to the charity is £24,890.

FUTURE PLANS

The charity plans continuing the activities outlined above in the forthcoming years subject to satisfying funding arrangements.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The charity is controlled by its governing document, a deed of trust, and constitutes an unincorporated charity.

Recruitment and appointment of new trustees

A broad mix of business, professional and other skills are well represented on the Management Committee and all Trustees are chosen on the basis of their willingness to serve, ability, governance experience and support of the ethos, mission and philosophy of the organisation.

Risk management

The trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Charity number

102387

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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023**

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Principal address

Down County Museum
The Mall
English Street
Downpatrick
Co. Down
BT30 6AH

Trustees	Anne Liggett Lesley Simpson Paddy Moore Gerald Lennon
Chairperson	Anne Curran
Treasurer	Paddy Moore
Assistant Treasurer	Brian Leathem
Secretary	M Lesley Simpson
Committee members	Jennifer Taggart Noreen Napier

Independent examiner

M.B.McGrady & Co
Chartered Accountants
Rathmore House
52 St Patricks Avenue
Downpatrick
Co. Down
BT30 6DS

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 24 May 2023 and signed on its behalf by:

Ms Lesley Simpson
Trustee

Dr Patrick R J Moore
Trustee

