

FRIENDS OF DOWN COUNTY MUSEUM

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

The trustees present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2024.

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.

FRIENDS 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

The year from April 2023-March 2024 saw a resumption of the Friends' more normal programme of activities. There are currently over 100 Friends and the Committee, back to its full complement of 10 people, normally meets 6 or 7 times a year in addition to the Annual General Meeting. The Committee organised a trip to Lisburn Museum and Linen Centre in April 2023 and established a President's lecture to take place each year after the AGM. The introductory lecture was given in May 2023 by the President himself, Ken Dawson, on the subject of Henry Joy McCracken. It was well attended, attracting more people than usual to an AGM. A Friends' event in October was equally successful – Fergus Whelan from Dublin gave an excellent lecture about Archibald Hamilton Rowan. The Museum and Friends jointly hosted a visit from the Friends of the Ulster Museum in March 2024 and it is hoped to join with them, and the Friends of Armagh, in future events. One of our members, Ralph Forbes, took part in the 'Sloane Lab' project which culminated in an exhibition in the Museum. Down County Museum took a lead role in this partnership between the British Museum, British Library and Natural History Museum. The Friends have returned to one of their primary functions in funding collections-based projects. An offer was made of a special gift to the Museum to commemorate its 40th anniversary. The Museum suggested several projects and the committee opted for the scanning of the Museum's postcard collection which could then be uploaded to the Museum's website. In addition, to make up for the lack of subsidised projects from 2020-2022, the committee also agreed to fund conservation of a recently acquired portrait of Constance Malleson of Castlewella (stepsister of Mabel Annesley by William Conor. We hope to see these projects completed later in 2024.

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 £27,251.

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 2024**

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	
Secretary	M Lesley Simpson
Committee members	Jennifer Taggart Noreen Napier Margaret McCord Leanna Russell Ralph Forbes

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 15 May 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



Ms Lesley Simpson
Trustee



Dr Patrick R J Moore
Trustee