



Monkstown
Village Initiatives

REPORT AND
STATEMENT OF ACCOUNT

YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2024

COMPANY NUMBER: N.I. 063696

Year ended 31st March 2024

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COMPANY INFORMATION

Directors:

Mr Stephen Acheson (Chairman)

Mrs Jill Harkness (Company Secretary)

Mr Nigel Beattie (Treasurer)

Mrs Susan Hamilton

Mr Clifford Lyons

Mr Peter Morrow (co-opted on 22nd February 2024)

Mr Alan Taylor

Registered Office: 18 Monkstown Village Centre
Newtownabbey
BT37 0HS

Bankers: Ulster Bank Limited
202-206 York Street
Belfast
BT15 1HY

Independent Examiners: Tony Clarke
53 Andersonstown Road
Belfast
BT11 9AG

Status: **Monkstown Village Initiatives is:**
A Company Limited by Guarantee **(NI063696)**
Registered with the NI Charity Commission June 2015
(Charity number NIC102393)

Recognised as charitable by the Inland Revenue
(Reference number XR29636)

**TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT (INCORPORATING THE DIRECTORS' REPORT)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2024**

Structure, governance, management and ethos

The organisation is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 4th December 2009 as The Care Centre (Monkstown). A name change, to Monkstown Village Initiatives, was registered with Companies House on 1st September 2011 and registered as a charity with HMRC on 17th October 2012. Monkstown Village Initiatives was registered with the Northern Ireland Charities' Commission on 1st June 2015. 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. Monkstown Village Initiatives is an organisation motivated by Christian principles and values, seeking to embody these through the programmes and services it provides/offers.

In the event of the charity being wound up, members will contribute an amount not exceeding £1.

Recruitment and appointment of Directors

- Article 31 (i) Unless otherwise determined by the charity in general meeting, the number of directors shall not be more than 12 or less than 5.
- Article 33 The directors shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) by the members present (in person, or through an authorised representative or by proxy) and also once a year before the AGM one minister from each of Abbey Presbyterian Church, Monkstown Baptist Church and the Church of the Good Shepherd (Monkstown) will be invited to serve as directors for the coming year.
- Article 34 subject to Article (33a & 36) Directors may hold office for a period of 3 years and shall retire in rotation with the longest serving one third to retire at each AGM, or if it is not possible to determine that, then the third to retire shall be determined by drawing lots. On retirement members will be eligible for re-nomination and election.

Subject to Article 35, The Directors shall

- (i) Have the power at any time and from time to time to appoint any person to be a Director to fill a casual vacancy. Any Directors so appointed shall hold office only until the next following Annual General Meeting and shall then be eligible for re-election.
- (ii) Have the power at any time to appoint as additional Directors up to but not exceeding a number equivalent to one third of the elected Directors for the time being. Directors so appointed shall hold office only until the next Annual General Meeting and then be eligible for re-appointment.

All Directors give their time voluntarily and received no benefits from the charity. Any expenses reclaimed from the charity are set out in the notes of the accounts.

Directors' induction and training

Directors should be familiar with the work of the charity and the community. New Directors are advised of the obligations of Trustees, the Memorandum and Articles of the charity, resourcing, and the current financial position as set out in the latest published accounts, and any future plans and objectives. They are made aware of our policies and procedures which include Child and Vulnerable Adults Protection, Data Protection, Health & Safety Policy and Financial Management.

Risk management

The major risks to which the charity is exposed, are identified and reviewed by the Directors regularly.

Organisational structure

The charity commenced this period with 6 directors. Peter Morrow was then co-opted as a director at the directors' meeting of 22nd February 2024. Peter's appointment has been registered at Companies House and with the NI Charities' Commission. With his consent, this appointment will be confirmed at the next Annual General Meeting (November 2024). The Board of Directors meet regularly and is responsible for the

**TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT (INCORPORATING THE DIRECTORS' REPORT)
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strategic direction and policy of the charity. All major decisions are undertaken by the Board, while line management of staff and day to day responsibility for the provision of services rests with the Development Manager of Monkstown Community Forum. The Board is responsible for ensuring that the charity delivers the services specified and that key performance indicators are met.

Purposes and activity

This charity's purposes, as set out in the objects contained in its Memorandum, are for the advancement of education and the protection of health, in the Monkstown area and its environs of Newtownabbey. The aims of this charity are to provide opportunities to address disadvantage. In particular, lowered attainment and poor aspiration. Activities will provide enhanced educational, social and skills outcomes, contributing toward improving the emotional health and well-being of people in Monkstown and the surrounding area. To enable connections, the charity provide excellent facilities for a range of local groups of different ages and interests. These aims fully reflect the purposes that this charity was set up to further.

We review these aims, objectives and activities each year. This review looks at what has been achieved and the outcomes of the work undertaken in the previous 12 months in order to ensure our aims, objectives and activities remain focused on our stated purposes.

Our main objectives for the year continued to be:

- To deliver mentoring and follow-up drop-ins along with the Educational & Personal Development for young people co-operating with the local schools and in-centre;
- To provide mental health therapy, support and education to the local community;
- To deliver our StressBEAT programmes in the local schools and organisations;
- To grow our Flourish group, a mental health and wellbeing group for over 60s; and
- To continue to transform the Community Garden, at the rear of Monkstown Village Centre, to be used by the community, local schools, community groups and individuals.

Monkstown Village Initiatives (MVI) held its Annual General Meeting for the period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023, at 7.00pm on Monday 20th November 2023 in Monkstown Village Centre.

MVI 5-year strategic plan update

This strategy maps out how MVI will seek to develop community infrastructure across Monkstown and surrounding areas. Feedback is encouraged by directors and staff and an action plan based on High Level Outcomes agreed. A Strategy Review was carried out on the 18th January 2020 with discussion based on excellent presentations from staff.

Directors' meetings

There were 7 directors' meetings held during the year. The last meeting of this period was on 19th March.

Monkstown Village Initiatives continues as a member of Monkstown Community Forum and has an historic and fruitful strategic partnership with that organisation.

Reviews

- Reviews of MVI policies and financial procedures and changes are carried out on a routine basis.
- The MVI policy/procedures for General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) was adopted in May 2018.
- Risk assessments are carried out for all activities when necessary and reviewed yearly.
- MVI Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy is up to date. Colin Barr is the MVI designated person and Susan Hamilton the Board's designated person. Access NI checks have been obtained for staff and volunteers.
- Public liability insurance is £10m.

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Finance

This year Monkstown Village Initiatives had a deficit of £3,677. Monkstown Community Forum makes contributions toward MVI's YouthWorks, Gardening, re:think/re:act projects and to general funds.

The Directors have examined the charity's requirements for reserves in light of the main risks to the organisation. A reserve of £20,000 has been set aside to protect the charity's work in event of a shortfall in income and to plan for a minimum of two months' continuity should major funding streams cease.

Membership

The company currently has 31 members.

Staff

- Alan Johnston manages MVI facilities, projects and staff as part of his duties as Development Manager in Monkstown Village Centre.
- Deborah Smyth is employed, part-time, in a caretaking/cleaning role, as part of the Facilities Team.
- RoseAnne (Rosie) Donnelly is employed, full-time, as a Cognitive Behavioural Therapist within the re:think/re:act service.
- Colin Barr is employed, full-time, as a senior youth worker. A monthly contribution for this post is received from Monkstown Community Forum. Colin has been transitioning to fulfil the Development Manager's role, in Monkstown Village Centre, in the future.
- Robyn Harris is employed, part-time, as a project worker in the YouthWorks Team. (Robyn returned from maternity leave at the end of March 2024.) A monthly contribution for this post is received from Monkstown Community Forum. Connie Bamford was employed to cover Robyn's maternity period. It is planned that Connie remain employed until the end of August 2024.
- Bryan Scroggie, Jodie McCord and Ben Thompson are currently sessional youth workers with MVI YouthWorks.
- Áine Gilchrist continues as Garden Manager of Monkstown Village Garden. A monthly contribution for this post is received from Monkstown Community Forum.
- Roy Millar, of Monkstown Community Forum, is paid to provide gardening support, in Monkstown Village Centre and other sites, where necessary.

Pensions are set up with NEST (National Employment Savings Trust) to accommodate those for whom it is a statutory requirement.

**TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT (INCORPORATING THE DIRECTORS' REPORT)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2024 (continued)**

Public Benefit to the community

To ensure compliance of Public Benefit, we have a policy of open and inclusive access to MVI's accommodation and programmes.

Purpose (1) *'To involve young people (9-25yr olds) in discovering and living out their full potential and to develop supportive initiatives.'*

MVI YouthWorks

Youth Club

Youth Club continues to be the highlight of the week, with still a good number of children turning up week after week, and a number dropping in and out depending on the weather usually.

Throughout this year we had enjoyed quite a variety of activities and a lot of opportunities to chat with the young people that come along. One of the greatest things that I experienced this year was the interest shown by those of the senior group who wanted to be able to help as a volunteer. We have always found that as our club is for P5-Y8, when children start moving into secondary school they tend to stop coming here. For the last year we have had 2 young men who have been wanting to keep in touch, as well as getting to keep coming to the club. We gave them the chance to be junior helpers, with responsibilities to help throughout the night. This probably wasn't a very strict rule and probably by the end of the year, they were just a couple of older kids joining in the fun.

It was at the end of the year, June 23' that we had a real problem. There were now almost a dozen young people who would be moving into Y9 and therefore too old for youth club. A great problem to have, but not for them. The request was made for what they were going to do if they couldn't attend on Wednesday nights. It was decided that we would allow them to help out alongside some of the other junior helpers, but that there would be more rules for them to follow rather than just coming along for the fun.

We also decided that it was possibly the right time to start up a youth club for secondary school age children. This was set up for September 2023, with Connie taking the lead in this. Unfortunately, with Connie leaving after a year with us we are now looking for a lead person to look after this. Saturday night has been a great opportunity to keep in touch with these older children, but as well having some of them helping out on Wednesday also allows us the opportunity to help develop them, guide them and encourage them to make wise decisions.

IMPACT Girls' Group

Impact continued to provide an opportunity for secondary school age girls to meet together and the hope was that with connecting with Y8 Heads of Year (HoY), we would be able to support more girls with the difficulties that they face transitioning into their new schools.

We did have a good core of girls who we have worked with for a few years, and it is great to see that even though they attend school in Ballyclare they still make the effort to come down. The girls have had a number of visitors in to discuss a wide variety of topics that the girls might be affected by or know someone who has been. Mental health, self-worth, non-verbal communication, energy drinks, bereavement, all of these are prevalent in young people's circles today and hopefully those groups who came and helped will feel they are a step closer to supporting anyone who feels they are in need.

We continued to encourage the Y8 HoY to direct any girls who they may feel would benefit from joining the group. Also, with having some of our volunteers working as assistants in the school, increasing the attendance at SU. We have been able to grow the group to a very pleasing number. We hope that although they are not the same age they develop friendships that can make a difference at any stage inside or outside of school.

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Junior Youth Challenge (JYC) / Good News Club (GNC)

As we finished of the year at JYC we were quite pleased with the attendance of all the children who came along. I think sometimes when we work with young people in Christian context, we can get into a rut of thinking it is always about helping children to learn more about their faith. This is not the case here in Monkstown, as a lot of the kids we are in contact with do not have a faith background. It can be quite tricky to balance that aspect when you have a mixed bag in front of you. It was suggested that we have 2 groups, those who understand a little bit and those who are sceptical or reject what the bible teaches. I think there is some merit in this, but I think that with only a little extra effort we can teach those who have a faith to be able to share that for themselves by building their confidence in their knowledge.

When we returned in September, we were back where we started. The only children who were coming were ones with a faith. We took the opportunity to develop their understanding of what it means to be a follower and even on some evenings rather than teaching them from the front we relaxed on the sofas and chatted through the talks and asked more questions rather than just listening. I found this to be a blessed time and hopefully the kids got something out of it too. Thankfully as the year progressed, we did have an increase in numbers, and it was good to help some children who were considering Christianity and its application to life in general.

We continue to have a good number of kids at GNC, albeit all girls but we will try to rectify this, but it might prove tricky with BB on the same night. It is very interesting to see enthusiasm in young primary school-aged children compared to the P7-age up to teens and the attitude changes towards what is cool or even just fun to do rather than what people think about me and what I'm doing. As we look towards the new year starting it will all be about advertising and encouraging our churches to consider GNC as an option for teaching children about the bible and encouraging them to send children along to hear God's word.

Mentoring

Mentoring continues to be the focus of our work here. It is a real blessing to be a part of not just a child's life but in the case of TLG, the family. Each week we continue to meet with boys and girls of both primary and secondary age, walking alongside them through their current circumstances. Sometime this can be long periods of silence especially with teenagers, but it is about building confidence and a connection that allows them to feel comfortable in sharing with you or even taking onboard what advice you have for them. We are seeing more and more children in need of support, especially at primary school age. It is great to be able to work with the local churches in providing mentors to go into Hollybank on a weekly basis to be a part of the development of the children of Monkstown and alongside that with the other programs we offer hopefully we are covering as many children as possible.

Learning Hub

Learning Hub continued through the year until summer term ended. We had a constant number of 12, which isn't bad, in fact it is quite nice to work with, but one of the desires was to provide opportunity for as many kids as possible to attend.

We had Play it by Ear, a drama group, and Trisha McNally, an artist, come along through the year and encourage the children to explore new skills and build confidence in themselves and not to be comparing themselves to those around them.

We considered in the new school term to open Learning Hub to P4 children up to P7. We knew this would be a bit of a challenge as we have no prior connection with a lot of these children, and they probably have never been to the Centre or know anything about it. Also, the understanding of P4 children and what is appropriate behaviour is to be experienced. The first few weeks meant a lot of patience with them to help them settle in and to be able to sit, listen and follow instructions. We also noticed a lot more needs from this

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age group, educationally as well as emotionally. Throughout the year we were having to monitor certain children and their behaviour towards each other. Keeping them apart or even speaking to parents to make them aware of what was going on. It wasn't anything more than a dislike for one another or one getting some attention more than the other.

It has been a great year and there has been a lot of learning done from helping with homework, encouraging children to try a little harder or to do a little more than the teacher may have asked for. We focused a lot at the start of the year with handwriting skills. A bit of a bug bear of mine, is that children form letters incorrectly or don't write on lines! It is interesting to see the differing attitudes towards why and how things are done. Children can be very much about what they can get from it and if it doesn't benefit them, they just won't try. If it seems difficult there is no interest in persevering. Encouragement is the key rather than, well that's okay if you don't want to. Again, a valuable aspect is the volunteers that we have supporting us in this work.

Summer Scheme

We held our summer scheme the weeks of 24th July to 28th July and 31st July to 4th August 2023. This year we decided to go for a bit of a science theme, which of course meant lots of mess and creativity and well as (hopefully) expanding our minds.

We were very fortunate to have the weather on our side this year, so we took full advantage getting outside as much as possible. Our trips this year saw us visiting, Stormont and Mo Mowlam playpark, with a lot of walking and searching for different creatures around the walks, we even made it up to the top, which of course meant for children wanting to roll down the hills as we returned. We also visited the Planetarium, Armagh, which was one that a lot of the kids had never done before. Our science experiments allowed us to get messy, wet and to use lots and lots of packing tape. Many an egg was cracked and as far as I'm aware none were put back together again. There were giant bubbles and even square bubbles, yes, square bubbles.

Our second week saw us staying a bit closer to home, with a trip to the National Stadium, Windsor Park for a tour, which was very enjoyable. We also had the support of Trisha McNally, an artist we have used before, who has a great way with the children and lots of great ideas for them to try. A summer scheme never really finishes until we have visited Airtastic, Newtownabbey, and had a water fight. I feel it has even become part of the leaders' highlights as everyone loves a good water fight.

SPARK Newtownabbey

This year we met in Carmoney Presbyterian Church, and we had 4 teams. Ballyclare, Monkstown, Rathcoole, and this year a new team in New Mossley. We had decided to take a break from Ballyduff as there had been a bit of hassle with some of the local lads and it was felt that a year to separate from that might be good. It was also in the pipeline to start up a team in New Mossley, so this was a perfect opportunity to do so.

With almost 140 volunteers going out into these areas we were looking forward to the opportunities that would come our way.

The Monkstown team consisted of 32 volunteers and would be involved again in gardening, sports, children's club, car wash and drop-in. Of those 32 volunteers, only 5 had direct connections with one of the churches from the area. It would be part of the plans to try to encourage the local churches to be more pro-active in participating in the week's activities. That said, we do have the support of the churches in helping with the catering and use of their premises for activities. As the aim is to try to encourage people into church it would be beneficial to have people from the churches being seen as part of the work.

Throughout all these activities the plan is always to be able to show that Christianity is a faith displaying compassion, co-operation, and faith, which we feel is what is lacking in our society today. Seeing people in

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our community interacting with each other and going the extra mile to help people with things that we not considered previously. The gratitude shown by people and the willingness to have conversations shows the need to be in the community and engaging with people where they are.

Staffing

As always, our staff are great and thoroughly on point when it comes to our programs. We are very blessed to have such good connections with our partner churches, who support us financially as well as with personnel.

It has been great to have been able to continue our programs, especially Robyn being on maternity leave, with Connie covering. We have been able to keep Connie on until August. She has been such a great fit to the team. This has been a great year and as we move into 24/25 we can only hope and pray that we continue to serve the community of Monkstown in Jesus' name.

Bryan, Ben, Caitlyn, Cherifa, Connie, Jessica, Jodie, Robyn and Colin

Monkstown Village Garden (MVG)

Áine Gilchrist completed her first year as Garden Manager in MVG and continued growing vegetables/flowers, delivering workshops and programmes, supporting volunteers, raising funds/resources and engaging with local community.

Volunteers

MVG continued to be well supported by a team of regular volunteers, usually every Monday evening (Spring-Autumn, 6.30-9pm) and Tuesday/Thursday (10-1pm). Monday's are usually for workshops and programmes. We have said goodbye to some of our regular volunteers who have properly retired or moved on, as well as welcomed a few new regular volunteers. On average the garden has 15 regular volunteers, who contributed over 500 hours from August 2023 to March 2024. Volunteer ages range from 17 through to those in their 80s and we continued to support volunteers who had additional needs.

MVG benefited from a weekly group of students from Abbey Community College, Year 8 and Year 10 on alternate weeks, through the academic year, who moved much of the mulch around the site.

Many of our improvement projects in the garden continued to be delivered by volunteers' hard work – laying mulch, stones and building wooden shelving/benches.

Volunteers have been invaluable when running events and projects in the garden – helping with preparation, delivery, refreshments and tidying up.

Thank you to everyone who helped in any way this year in the garden!

Networking/Partnerships

MVG continued to develop existing and create new partnerships and connections with local groups, individuals and businesses, as well as further afield including A Rocha, Eden Community Action Group and Social Farms & Gardens (UK & Ireland). These connections brought local individuals and groups into the garden for regular sessions, workshops and one-off visits. MVG visited other gardens and projects, helping share best practise. We continued to encourage the local community to use MVG to enjoy the benefits of being in a green space, even for social/leisure use. (Ten Coffee customers used the garden Pergola Area, particularly when the weather was good, and especially on weekends.) Other connections, local and beyond, have been:

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- Abbey Community College – Learning support Unit
- A Rocha – formal partnership launched summer 2023
- 1st Monkstown Scouts – Beavers, garden workshop, November 2023
- Garden Show Ireland – Mayor's event May 2023
- A&NBC - Best Kept Garden Awards November 2023
- Mental Health Wellness Hub, Whiteabbey Hospital – garden visits 2023-24
- COGS – Workshops 2023 & 2024
- Newtownabbey Rotary
- Community Gardens Ireland (all island) online conference – March 2023
- Whiteabbey Community Garden & GrowNI community Garden (Belfast)
- Green Flag Awards ceremony 2023
- Existing MVI Facebook page and new Instagram @MonkstownVillageGarden

Grants/Resources

MVG received funds this year both through on-going relationships and by successfully applying for grants (financial and in-kind):

- Community Involvement Grant (NIHE) – Growing Social, men's mental health, 6-week wellbeing programme, with Rosie Donnelly.
- New Horizon - £1000 worth of gardening equipment, including one pallet of compost.
- Keeping NI Beautiful – Free gardening resources give away.
- Areas at Risk funding – Flower pots & wreath making workshops.
- Monkstown Community Forum - Garden Manager and Dfl garden development.

Training

Áine undertook the following training relating to MVG.

- CPR training – Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council (A&NBC) supported.
- Eden Community Action UK – online 6-week course.

Events

MVG continued to offer regular workshops, programmes and events through the year, in MVG and at other locations. These helped improve community gardening skills, bringing people together, reducing isolation, as well as creating nature-based resources for their homes and gardens. These events were well supported and were facilitated with help from MVG volunteers.

- Flower pot planting workshops x 4 – September & March (80+ pots – Areas@Risk programme funding)
- Christmas wreath workshops x 2 – December (30+ wreaths – Areas@Risk programme funding)
- Volunteer Thank You events – volunteer week June 2023 and Christmas 2023
- A Rocha – Partnership launch event June 2023 with A&NBC's Mayor and other guests
- Abbey Presbyterian Church – Abbey Tots (40+) workshop May 2023
- Church of the Good Shepherd – Christmas table-top decoration workshop
- Plant & wooden planter distribution – various through year

Awards

MVG entered for the following awards

- Green Flag Award 2023-24 was maintained and application was submitted for 2024-25, as well as Pollinator Award. Awaiting outcome July 2024.
- Runner up – Sustainable Planting Award – A&NBC Best Kept Garden Awards 2023

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Garden Improvements 2023-24

- New low fencing along the service yard edge, including three new gates. New large entrance gate installed along fence facing Cashel Close.
- Flag pole for Green Flag award – Council to install raised bed beneath.
- Stones laid around newest raised beds at the rear of the polytunnel. This area is now all-weather usable (8 builders' bags – Growing Social)
- New petrol lawnmower purchased for grass areas.
- Orchard area and shrub bed area mulched (15 tonnes – distributed by Abbey Community College pupils).
- New flooring laid in polytunnel along seating benches due to wear/tear.
- Additional water bins installed along polytunnel to save even more rain water.
- New staging shelves for plants and outdoor workbench built at back of polytunnel and small patio area laid.
- New signage is planned for later in 2024.

Áine Gilchrist, Garden Manager

Purpose (2) *'To provide a modern, comfortable and inviting meeting place at the centre of the Monkstown Community.'*

Accommodation

MVI holds a 900+ year lease for the accommodation on a significant portion of the first floor of Monkstown Village Centre. This accommodation includes Meeting Rooms 1, 2 & 3; Kitchen; Youth Area and Resource Rooms 1 & 2. This is managed by Alan Johnston (Development Manager, Monkstown Village Centre).

Licensees and other users

Abbey SureStart use MVI's Upper Rooms, under license, on a daily basis. They have been with us since moving into the building in 2007. Homecare Independent Living who were also long-term license-holders, ceased to require premises during November 2022. Newtownabbey Pilates, another long-term 'user', occupies one of the rooms on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings. St John Ambulance (NI) is under license for the upper floor on Tuesday nights for their Cadet programme and selected weekends for training. A knitting group has developed since lockdown and meets on a Wednesday evening. A scrapbooking group along with Junior Youth Challenge and a Good News Club meet on a Thursday evening along with Senior Youth Challenge meeting monthly on a Saturday evening. Ad hoc/regular users complete this vital source of income for Monkstown Village Initiatives.

The re:think/re:act project has now reverted to its original space following its use of the boardroom, for its sessions with clients, after Covid-19.

During the summer months, MVI partnered with Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council (A&NBC) to provide a School Uniform Re-Use scheme. Uniform donations were received during July and distributed during August. Thanks to Irena and Susan who co-ordinated this service. It is anticipated that this scheme will run again in the summer of 2024.

Thank you to facilities' staff and volunteers, in particular, Dorothy Robinson, who has regularly closed up the building, at the end of evening programmes, for a number of years. Debbie Smyth opens and closes at other times, keeping the community space and offices clean, tidy and smelling great! David Graham and Roy Millar (Forum staff) assist with room preparation and clearance.

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We aim to make all people feel welcome. Accommodation has been found to be excellent by our users, and our facilities show a high level of demand from business, statutory, leisure, fitness, health and care-providing organisations.

A Premises grant was received from A&NBC during the 2023-2024 year. This is the second year of a three-year application previously made for Facilities, Garden, re:think and YouthWorks projects.

Purpose (3) *'To develop and provide mental health promotion and support programmes.'*

re:think/re:act (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Service)

2023/24 has been a very busy year within the re:think/re:act project. Membership of our Flourish group has grown steadily over the year. This is mostly due to existing members recommending the group to friends and neighbours, which I think is the best form of feedback we could receive. These days we can expect 30+ individuals in attendance at our monthly gatherings. Over the year we organised a variety of speakers and activities which as always were loosely based around the 5 Steps to Wellbeing. I say 'we' but this past 12 months it has mostly been Dorothy Boyd (Dot.) who has organised the speakers and I am very grateful for her ongoing help and support. Monthly activities have ranged from a Beetle Drive to planting hanging baskets, with input from organisations as diverse as Diabetes UK and the local Neighbourhood Policing Team! We are grateful to all our 'speakers' for taking the time to talk to the Flourish group. Thanks to funding from Antrim & Newtown-abbey Borough Council we were once again able to provide a fun Christmas event and also visit the Secret Garden in Dundonald for lunch and a very informative talk on growing plants and flowers. Both events were thoroughly enjoyed by all who participated but I think the highlight of the year for most Flourish members was 'Tea with the Mayor' in March. Our thanks to local Councillor Mark Cooper for his invitation.

In May (2023) I delivered a Stress BEAT programme to the P7 pupils in Hollybank PS. As this was late in the school year it was difficult to fit in all the sessions, P7's these days have very busy schedules! As a result Miss Brett, Miss Craig and I agreed to do this year's programme in February/March (2024) which is earlier the usual but worked really well so will probably be repeated next year. Also in March I delivered some stress awareness workshops for youth leaders and young people from the Church of The Good Shepherd as well as starting a Stress BEAT programme with our own Youthworks Girls' group, Impact.

As always 1-to-1 CBT sessions made up the bulk of the work of re:think/re:act during 2023/2024. A substantial number of clients seen this year were dealing with difficulties either directly caused by, or exacerbated by, the Covid-19 pandemic. I think it will be many years before we realise the true extent of the impact the pandemic has had on people's mental health.

In my report last year I highlighted the issue of funding, or rather lack thereof. With this in mind we launched our 300 Appeal at last year's AGM. The aim of the appeal is to find 300 individuals who would be willing to commit to a standing order of (at least) £10 per month so we can keep this vital service going. The response to this has been positive and I am very grateful to everyone who has signed up, but we still have a long way to go. I am very grateful to Abbey Presbyterian who allowed me time during their community service to highlight our 300 Appeal. Hopefully I will be able to convince other churches in the wider area to do the same.

I appreciate you taking the time to read this report. If you would like to know more about any of the services offered by the re:think/re:act project please do not hesitate to contact me.

(Some funding for 1-to-1 CBT, and the Flourish and Stress BEAT programmes came through Monkstown Community Forum's Mosaic Project, an Areas at Risk programme from Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough

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Council/Department for Communities. The Service also benefitted through the purchase of client sessions by Monkstown Community Forum on behalf of the Monkstown community.

Rosie

Organisation-wide funding information

Monkstown Village Initiatives is engaged to deliver programmes within Monkstown Community Forum's Mosaic Project through its YouthWorks, rethink/react and gardening departments. Mosaic is an Areas at Risk project funded by A&NBC and DfC (currently funded until 31st March 2025).

A&NBC funding was received in the form of a Community Development Grant during this period.

Glenabbey (Church) contribute financially (monthly) to the ongoing work of Monkstown Village Initiatives and some of its members have been involved in volunteering roles, mostly within MVI YouthWorks.

Using [Stewardship.org](https://www.stewardship.org) we offer a facility to receive gifts and donations through the MVI website.

Plans for the future

The charity intends to continue the activities outlined above in the future. The directors and staff are mindful of the challenging times we are in and will continue to review/assess opportunities which will further the charity's goals of: addressing educational under-achievement, mental health issues and encouraging people to make connections with each other.

Statement of Trustees' responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also directors for the purposes of Company Law) are responsible for preparing the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations. Company law requires the Directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity as at the balance sheet date and of its incoming resources and application of outgoing resources, including income and expenditure, for the financial year. In preparing those financial statements, the Directors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going-concern basis unless it is not appropriate to assume that the charity will continue on that basis.

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The Directors are responsible for maintaining proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. 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.

Statement of disclosure of information to Independent Examiners

We, the Trustees of the charity who held office at the date of approval of these Financial Statements, as set out above, each confirm so far as we are aware that:

- there is no relevant information of which the charity's independent examiners are unaware; and
- we have taken all the steps that we ought to have taken as Trustees in order to make ourselves aware of any relevant information and to establish that the charity's independent examiners are aware of that information.

The Board of Directors approved this report on 12 SEPTEMBER 2024



Stephen Acheson, Director/Chair
Company Registration Number: NI06396