

# Causeway Multi-Cultural Forum

## Trustees Report

**For the financial year 01 April 2022 to 31 March 2023**

Charity number: 102479-0. Registered 5/10/2015

Governing document: Constitution

The purposes of the Forum as stated in the Constitution:

The Forum is established to promote inclusion and diversity in the community, to promote the advancement of education, relieve poverty, and to promote the preservation and protection of health and social wellbeing among inhabitants within the Borough of Causeway Coast and Glens who are members of, or have an interest in supporting, ethnic minority communities and new citizens, without distinction of age, sex, race, political, religious or other opinion. By associating statutory authorities, voluntary organisations and inhabitants in a common effort to promote the advancement of education, and to facilitate the provision of facilities and initiatives in the interests of social welfare, for recreation or other leisure- time occupation with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants; The Forum will raise awareness among the general public of the needs and the experiences of ethnic minority communities and new citizens in the area of benefit.

The powers of the Forum as detailed in the Constitution:

**a.** To facilitate information regarding or secure the provision of social services, educational and recreational facilities, and practical assistance for said inhabitants within the area of benefit; **b.** To assist and inform said inhabitants regarding accessing the provision of welfare rights advice and information and refer / signpost those in need of professional assistance to the relevant agencies; **c.** To provide, maintain and equip or assist in the provision, maintenance and equipment of premises and facilities designed to carry out the objects of the group; **d.** To promote and carry out, or assist in the promoting and carrying out research, surveys and investigations, and publish the useful results thereof; **e.** To organise or assist in organising meetings, lectures, classes and exhibitions, and publish or assist in publishing reports, periodicals, recordings, books or other documents or information; **f.** To obtain, collect and receive money by way of grants, donations, bequests, legacies or other lawful method, provided that the group shall not undertake any permanent trading activities; **g.** To purchase, take on lease or in exchange, hire or otherwise acquire any real or personal property and any rights and privileges necessary for the promotion of the above objects and construct, maintain and alter any buildings or erections which the group may think necessary for the promotion of its objects; **h.** To make any regulations for any property which may be so acquired; sell, let, mortgage, dispose of or turn to account all or any of the property or assets of the group with a view to the furtherance of its objects; **j.** To employ and pay any person or persons, not being a member of Committee to supervise, organise and carry on the work of the group and make all reasonable and necessary provision for the payment of remuneration to employees; **k.** To do all such other lawful things as may be necessary for the attainment of the above objects or any of them.

List of regions: Causeway Coast and Glens District Council

The Forum holds a bank account and all money raised are used for the furtherance of the Forum's activities. The Forum depends on gift aids and grants from various sources in

order to fulfil its mission. The Forum's type of accounts is Receipts and Payments accounts.

The Forum's membership is open to all individuals or groups within the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council as stated in the Constitution.

### Governance

The Forum is managed by an Executive Committee elected each year by the members of the Forum. The Committee meets no less than three times a year to discuss important issues. These meetings were held mainly at the Community Hall in the Church of Christ building, 14 Artillery Road Coleraine.

The Forum's trustees on the date of this report are:

Dr Margarita Vidinova

Mrs Indu Jairath

Ms Jenny Commons

Mr Bert Ritchie

Mr Ahmed Sharieff

The following also served as charity trustees during the year:

Chantal McIlveen-Wright

Maura Conway

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Email: [causewaymcf2019@gmail.com](mailto:causewaymcf2019@gmail.com)

### Activities conducted to achieve the main purposes of the Forum

The principal activities of the Forum, to date, have focused on celebrating cultural diversity to encourage good relations in and across communities. The Forum continued to run a project called "Culture and Language Café" which was very popular. This year the project was funded by Radius Housing. Culture and Language Café is an educational and creative programme providing knowledge about the culture, traditions and language of several countries (Spain, Italy, France and Poland). These countries were chosen as the languages and cultures are popular in NI which attracts people to take part. They also learned about the culture and heritage which opens doors to learning about difference and diversity. We have people from these countries living in NI and this enabled people to communicate in simple terms, basic phrases and understand more about the cultures people live within. More than 70 participants of both ethnic minority background and people from local community attended each French, Italian, Spanish and Polish workshops. This was an online course and therefore it was accessed by a wide range of people. A lot of new relationships were formed and the participants continued to socialize with each other and with the tutors after completing the planned sessions.

The Forum continued to run a Health and Wellbeing programme entitled "Our H E A L T H matters, H – happiness, E –ethnic minorities, A – activity, L – laughter, T –timeless nature, H – harmony" which was funded by the National Lottery Community Fund. This intercultural

programme aimed to create opportunity for both ethnic minority groups and local people, to improve their physical and mental health through exercise and beneficial practices performed outdoors, such as beach yoga, Chinese exercises, walks in a natural environment (green exercise), etc. The project also promoted the study of multicultural traditions by teaching traditional practices which are less well known in this country. Finally it brought people together and encouraged good relations among and between different cultures, by offering fun experience in a safe and healthy environment.

The Forum held Christmas celebrations supported by Radius Housing which brought together adults and children from India, China, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Syria, Poland, Lithuania and Shri Lanka. For many this party was a very welcome opportunity for both children and parents to meet and make new friends and to taste food which was different from the traditional food in their country. As one parent said: "We felt that we belong to one big family". The project encouraged people who were engaged for the first time in a community project, to become better acquainted with the Forum activities and eventually to get involved in other projects, thus contributing to making their community a better place to live in.

The Forum held several story telling workshops in partnership with Armstrong Trust and Liz Weir which encouraged people from different ethnic background to tell stories in their own language, to get involved in creative activities and to learn more about the folklore traditions in different countries around the world.

These activities were made available to the public at no cost, by our volunteers, with the sole purpose of aiding community integration and making the general public aware of the needs and experiences of ethnic minority communities in line with our objectives as set out in the constitution of Causeway Multi-Cultural Forum.

To summarize, all activities this year focused on bringing people together, on education and learning about different cultures, art and heritage and helped to reduce the social isolation and to support family life.

The Forum continued to communicate with the community by regularly publishing various materials of interest and advertising events on CMCF Facebook Page. As the numbers of users who liked the CMCF Facebook Page continued to grow, the potential of the social media to promote the Forum's and other local organizations activities significantly increased.

Statement of the Public benefits resulting from the Forum's activities this financial year:

Benefits of the public events held during the year:

- Contributing to peaceful integration of ethnic minority communities by hosting safe on-line cultural and educational events which reach and interact with both individuals and communities.
- Building mutual respect and understanding by piloting cultural diversity education by introducing various customs, cultural events, traditional food etc.
- Sharing opportunities to interact, exchange and learn from each other.
- Reducing isolation and facilitation of positive integration into the community by bringing people together to celebrate diversity.

Statement of compliance with the Charity Commission's guidance on Public benefit:

When planning our objectives and activities for the year the trustees have carefully considered the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit in order to ensure that the activities have helped to achieve the charity's purposes and provide benefit to the beneficiaries.

#### Financial review

The financial performance in the year ending on 31 March 2023 has been consistent with trustee's expectations. Income receipts at the end of the financial year totalled £509 with no surplus of income over expenditure. The year ended with a balance of £593.94 in the bank, compared with £3058.17 at the same time last year.

#### Statement of Assets and Liabilities:

Whereas the Forum meets to discuss its business in a multi-use community hall, it has no office from which it operates. Other than cash held at bank, the Forum has no other assets or liabilities.

Prepared by Margarita Vidinova, Causeway Multi-Cultural Forum Chair

Date: 29 January 2024