

Causeway Multi-Cultural Forum (CMCF)

Trustees Report

For the financial year 01 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

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

Governing document: Constitution

The purposes of the Causeway Multi-Cultural Forum as stated in the Constitution:

The Forum is established to promote inclusion and diversity in the community, to promote the advancement of education 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 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 Causeway Multi-Cultural 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

CMCF holds a bank account and all money raised are used for the furtherance of the Forum's activities. CMCF depends on gift aids and grants from various sources in order to fulfil its mission. The CMCF's type of accounts is Receipts and Payments.

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

CMCF is managed by an Executive Committee elected each year by the CMCF members. 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:

Ms Sandra Raza Simpson

Mrs Maura Conway

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Website: <https://www.facebook.com/causewaymultiforum>

Email: causewaymcf2019@gmail.com

Activities conducted to achieve the main purposes of CMCF:

The principal activities of CMCF have focused on celebrating cultural diversity to encourage good relations in and across communities. CMCF has successfully implemented a project entitled "Celebrating Our Global Family" which was funded by the National Lottery Community Fund through the programme Awards for All. This twelve-month project enabled the fulfillment of the CMCF's objectives to promoting inclusion by supporting ethnic minorities and new citizens, promoting active and positive life style and improving intercultural awareness. The project included wide range of activities grouped into three parts. The programme "Cultural celebration" included 7 events which provided opportunities for cross community engagement, opening with the Indian festival Diwali, followed by celebrations of Chinese New Year, and Ukrainian and Japanese culture. Christmas celebration was also included. Craft workshops, music, dance and sampling food from around the world helped everyone to appreciate more about each other's culture while having fun together. Bringing together people from diverse ethnical and social background, including people from the refugee community and also local residents to celebrate in a safe environment, helped to reduce isolation and prejudice and to improve intercultural awareness. The educational programme "Culture and language café" offered the participants an introduction to the culture, customs and language of Spain, Italy, France and Arabic countries. A one-hour session, for 20 weeks via Zoom, for each language included learning the basics and sharing stories about history, culture, food, etc. Similar sessions were held for 10 weeks for speakers of other languages (ESOL) who wanted to learn English and to create connections. Since it was an online course, it was accessed by a wide range of

people. By including a wide range of cultures and languages, some of which less well known in Northern Ireland, the participants were able to reflect and better understand the diversity of cultures represented in our local area. More than 50 people took part. 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 programme "Being well together" was a 35 weeks programme of positive lifestyle activities such as Tai Chi and forest guided walks which were beneficial for physical and mental health, while addressing issues of low self-esteem caused by the language barrier or isolation. The Tai Chi programme was very successful in terms of improving the physical and mental wellbeing of the participants as indicated in their comments and feedback. The Tai Chi exercises provide many health benefits, particularly if people practice over a prolonged period of time and for this reason the Tai Chi programme continued for another 18 months with the support of Radius Housing. New participants joined and many of them took part in other CMCF activities or become CMCF members.

All activities held by CMCF were made available to the public at no cost, supported by the public funding and by the work of 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, the activities this year focused on bringing people together, via education and learning about different cultures, art and heritage. More than 200 people joined the activities organized by CMCF which helped to familiarize them with the CMCF programme and objectives and contributed to a significant increase in the number of members and volunteers.

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 2024 has been consistent with trustee's expectations. Income receipts at the end of the financial year totalled £12 283.77 with a £8 280.16 surplus of income over expenditure. The year ended with a balance of £8 874.10 in the bank, compared with £593.94 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: 3rd January 2025