

THE FOCOLARE TRUST NI

TRUSTEES REPORT

Structure, Governance & Management in Northern Ireland

The charity was established in Northern Ireland under a trust deed dated 4 January 2010.

The trustees are assisted in the planning of the programme of activities by an Extended Focolare group.

Charitable Status

The Trust has been accepted as a charity for tax purposes by the Inland Revenue. The HMRC reference number is: -

XT21933

The Trust has been registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland from 2nd June 2015 under the Charity number:-

NIC102512

Statement of Compliance

In setting our objectives and planning our activities for the year the trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit to ensure that the activities have helped to achieve the charity's purposes and provide a benefit to the beneficiaries.

Principal Activities

The Focolare Movement is an international organization, which started in Italy in 1943 and is active in all five continents. It is an ecclesial movement, open to collaborate with people of all faiths or without a faith background. Its specific aim is to contribute to establishing unity in all areas and spheres of life by working to fulfil the words of the Gospel "May they all be one" (Jn 17:21). The General Headquarters of the Focolare Movement are in Rome and the movement operates through "regional areas" which support each other through an international sharing of goods and resources.

In Northern Ireland, the Focolare supports community building between people from different cultural and faith backgrounds and seeks to equip people with skills for building peace and reconciliation.

Focolare in Northern Ireland is also closely linked in its activities to the Focolare in the Republic of Ireland and co-organizes island-wide events. Focolare Centres are situated in Belfast, Dublin and County Kildare, promoting and coordinating Focolare life and acting as activity hubs for the wider local community.

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As part of a commitment to evangelize, first and foremost themselves, through these centres, leaflets with a commentary on the monthly “Word of Life” and a related daily motto on social media are produced and distributed throughout Ireland and form the basis for actions and sharing of experiences of God’s Word lived.

The animators of The Focolare Trust NI, who meet on a regular basis to focus on the formation of their members, help to promote unity in the family, in youth life, in the workplace and form people to become builders of a society based on mutual love and respect. This involves working on projects related to providing courses or actions which promote faith, friendship and understanding between different Christian denominations, interfaith and intercultural dialogue, parenting, fundraising and other topics relevant to the needs of society.

Since the pandemic the meetings of Focolare can be either face-to-face or hybrid which has the advantage of allowing more people to take part.

Members of Focolare in Northern Ireland are actively involved in the international project #daretocare, an international campaign that promotes active involvement with, and appreciation of, the most vulnerable in society and commitment to the health of the planet by having care as the guiding principle of action. This project is linked to a social media platform on: <http://www.unitedworldproject.org/en/daretocare/>

An informal walking group inspired by the values of Focolare and open to everyone meets on a monthly basis. Walks and picnics are organised to engage with people from different cultural backgrounds to get to know one another and to foster a spirit of sharing, friendship and belonging. This group is expanding its outreach to asylum seekers and migrants.

Members of Focolare Northern Ireland have established a group called “Dialogue for Africa” in which Focolare members from the island of Ireland and the continent of Africa engage in a mutual getting to know each other and building relationships. They meet on a bi-monthly basis via zoom and getting to know one another is mutually enriching. Through this group, financial support has also been given to Focolare projects in Africa, such as the project: “Kindergarten” in Bobo Dioulasso (Burkina-Faso). On their own initiative, members of this group raise money to support these and other projects.

Members of Focolare Northern Ireland continue to support the Focolare EcoPlan which aims to promote concrete actions for the healing and protection of people and planet.

Focolare EcoPlan – a powerful initiative - Focolare Movement

Members are also committed as Laudato Sì animators and take part in activities at national and European level.

Members of Focolare in Northern Ireland are actively involved in their churches and local communities (for example in Armoy, Lurgan, Derry/ Londonderry, Coleraine and Belfast) to build bridges across communities and offer their service as an expression of their commitment to live out the Gospel’s message of “May they all be

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one” (Jn 17:21). This ranges from working together to support refugees to working with youth groups, parish and diocesan groups and university chaplaincies.

Focolare NI participates in the national Inter-Church Meeting and in the last year was invited to the General Assemblies of the main Christian Churches in Ireland. We are also taking part in the on-going synodal process of the Catholic Church.

The Focolare Trust NI actively promotes and practically supports various cross-community initiatives that give a witness of different Christian denominations working together, for example the "4 Corners Festival", the "DOCK Café", the "Friendship club" or the "Week of prayer for Christian Unity" events.

Members of Focolare Northern Ireland also facilitate the sharing and redistribution of goods to people in need.

Members of Focolare support other registered charities (for example "Embrace NI", Youth Link NI) to foster the aims of creating a more welcoming society for all, especially for migrants, asylum seekers and refugees.

On a monthly basis the Focolare Trust NI organizes friendship-dinners for people from different backgrounds, Word of Life meetings, Women's lunch group and meetings for clergy, all to foster a spirit of community and sharing.

The Focolare Trust NI facilitates participation at an international level by organising and accompanying groups to international conferences and events with the aim of developing skills in dialogue, exploring projects for "the common good" and supporting fundraising activities for these goals, for example the Living Peace Project, the United World Project, the FormaT formation programme and the Together4 Europe project.

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Financial Review

The Trustees have a procedure now in place to review the accounts and to formally draft a Reserves Policy appropriate to the needs and aims of the Trust going forward. The charity's accounts will be prepared each year to 31 March. These accounts cover the year to 31 March 2023 and show a surplus of £5,233

Risk Management

The Trustees are aware of the risks to which the charity may be exposed. A formal risk assessment process and strategies for dealing with identified risk areas is being formalised.

SIGNED: Emmanuel Mc Govern
Trustee

DATE: 14/11/23

SIGNED: Porelley
Trustee

DATE: 14/11/23