

# THE HARMONY COMMUNITY TRUST

## REPORT OF THE COUNCIL

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The trustees present their annual report and the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023.

### REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

<b>Charity name:</b>	Harmony Community Trust
<b>HMRC Charity registration number:</b>	XN 48510
<b>Company registration number:</b>	NI010639
<b>Charity Commission NI number:</b>	NIC 102523
<b>Registered office and operational address:</b>	Glebe House, 23 Bishops Court Road, Kilclief, Co. Down, BT30 7NZ
<b>Auditors:</b>	Baker Tilly Mooney Moore, 17 Clarendon Road, Clarendon Dock, Belfast, BT1 3BG
<b>Bankers:</b>	Ulster Bank Limited, 11-16 Donegall Square East, Belfast BT1 5UB
<b>Solicitors:</b>	Edwards & Co, 28 Hill Street Belfast

### DIRECTORS AND TRUSTEES

The directors of the charitable company (the charity) are its trustees for the purpose of charity law and throughout this report are collectively referred to as the trustees.

The trustees who served during the year were:

Mr S Camplisson (Chairman)	Mrs Judith Thompson
Mrs S Heaney (resigned 17 January 2024)	Ms M E Ridgway
Mr D S Boyd	Mr R Sterrett
Dr Margaret Boyle (resigned 17 May 2022)	Mr Paul Thompson
Mr N Loughrin (appointed 10 April 2022)	Mrs EJ McDonald (appointed 5 September 2022)
Mr WB Osborne (appointed 5 September 2022, resigned 29 November 2023)	
Mr G Morgan (appointed 8 January 2023)	

### Governing Document

The organisation is a charitable company limited by guarantee not having a share capital, incorporated on 8th April 1975 and registered as a charity. 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. In the event of the company being wound up members are required to contribute an amount not exceeding £1. The Memorandum and Articles of Association were updated in February 2016.

### Appointment of Council

As set out in the Articles of Association, members of the trust are individuals who agree to serve on the Council or one of any other recognised committees (presently none). The Council consists of not more than 15 members and it can co-opt additional members to fill any vacancy up to that maximum. Co-opted members must stand for election at the next annual general meeting. Council members are elected for varying periods to ensure that one-third of members retire every year in rotation, so that no member can serve more than 3 years without re-election.

The charity's work focuses on Good Relations programmes with children, young people, adults and seniors. The Council seeks to ensure that the needs of this work are appropriately reflected through the diversity of the trustee body. The more traditional business and community work skills are well represented on Council.

### Trustee Induction and Training

New trustees undergo an orientation to brief them on their legal obligations under charity and company law, the content of the Memorandum and Articles of Association, the committee and decision making processes and the business plan and recent financial performance of the charity. During this induction they meet key employees. Trustees are encouraged to attend appropriate external training events where these will facilitate the undertaking of their role.

# THE HARMONY COMMUNITY TRUST

## REPORT OF THE COUNCIL (CONTINUED)

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### **Organisation**

The Council administers the charity and sets the strategic direction and policy of the charity, meeting around 6 times per year. A scheme of delegation is in place and day to day responsibility for the provision of the services rest with the centre manager together with the administration and programme managers.

### **Related parties**

The charity has a close relationship with the Department of Health, The Executive Office and BBC Children in Need which have provided funding in support of the programmes.

### **Risk management**

The trustees have a risk management strategy which encompasses:

- An annual review of the risks the charity may face;
- The establishment of systems and procedures to mitigate those risks identified in the plan; and
- The implementation of procedures designed to minimise any potential impact on the charity should those risks materialise.

This work has identified only a few minor new risks but it has resulted in better emergency procedures and contingency plans and has given the impetus for better planning. Particular attention has focused on non-financial risks arising from fire, health and safety of residents and staff and food hygiene.

A key element of financial risk is the setting of a reserves policy and its regular review by trustees.

## **OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES**

The company's objects and principal activities are the:

- Promotion of mutual tolerance and understanding through the provision of cross-community programmes for children, young people and adults based at Glebe House;
- Improvement of social welfare, health and physical well-being and advancement of education through the operation of the residential centre.

The main objectives for the year focused on the provision of cross-community programmes for disadvantaged children, young people and adults including senior citizens. The trust is very involved in the community and is dependent on voluntary help in all aspects of its activities. Significant numbers of volunteers are involved in the management of the company and in the delivery of its programmes.

## **ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE**

### **Projects and centre activities**

In 2022/23 the trust continued its recovery from the low levels of face-to-face activities imposed during the pandemic, and progressed the implementation of the recommendations of the Williamson Review of governance and management in the Trust, working towards a more sustainable future. We filled the newly restored post of Director and Andrew McCracken took up the post at the beginning of April 2022.

During the year we strengthened our Council of Management by bringing in four new members. In doing so we added significantly to our collective skill set.

With a new Director in post the trust was better placed to deliver on our Strategic Plan 2021-24, and to plan and build for our second half-century of programmes at Glebe House. This work included the establishment and nurturing of new partnerships with organisations across the region and more locally.

An important new venture that we embarked on in April 2022 is the Seedbed gardening and environment initiative. This volunteer-led project has added a new dimension to the work of Glebe House and has attracted people who had no previous experience of Glebe House, increasing our cohort of volunteers. This has been crucial in the trust's response to events in the 2023/24 year. The Seedbed has contributed significantly to our efforts to more fully realise the potential of Glebe House as an asset for the local community in the Kilclief/Strangford/Lecale area and has brought many participants working together. It has also welcomed some Syrian refugees who have played a role in the development of the Seedbed.

## **THE HARMONY COMMUNITY TRUST REPORT OF THE COUNCIL (CONTINUED)**

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### **Projects and centre activities (Cont'd)**

We continued to create, expand and deliver our suites of programmes for young children, teenagers and adults, addressing the effects of life in our divided society, deprivation and rural isolation. In spring 2022 we recruited a third programme worker whose focus was the programmes for younger children. We had around eighty children and young people and similar numbers of adults taking part. The very positive feedback from participants and, in the case of the children and young people, their parents and guardians is powerful testimony to the transformative impact of Glebe House in the lives of individuals, families and communities.

In September 2022, with the help of an ad hoc group of local volunteers, Glebe House become home to a family of Ukrainian refugees. With professionally qualified volunteers the Trust provided English language tuition to the parents and to several other Ukrainian refugees in the area.

One element of our efforts to put the Trust on a more sustainable footing has been the development of a new website and a more impactful presence on social media.

After the year end, in April 2023 the Trust was advised by The Executive Office that funding from the Central Good Relations Fund was under threat as a result of the budget reductions being imposed on Northern Ireland by Whitehall. This loss of our largest single grant of recent years was all but confirmed in the summer and confirmed on 1 September. This loss, and associated further losses, necessitated the temporary cessation of our programmes for children and young people and forced the Trust to make all five remaining staff redundant.

Since then a growing group of volunteers has been creating, planning and delivering programmes for adults and fundraising activities, and has been preparing applications for funding to restart programmes for children and young people.

### **Programmes**

#### *Funding*

During the year our programmes and operations were supported financially by The Executive Office; the Department of Health; the Department for Communities; the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade; BBC Children in Need; the Arts Council for Northern Ireland; Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, the Halifax Foundation, Cooperative Alternatives (through the Cultivating Community Farming programme), the AXA Parks Fund, and PowerNI.

#### *Children and youth*

The Children and Youth Programme had a very successful year. We started a dedicated programme - Youth Impact - designed by teenagers for teenagers. In December we had our first residential weekend since before the pandemic. We were able to engage with 78 young people over the course of the year, filling 310 child spaces on 16 different programmes. This included a five-week summer scheme; Easter, Halloween and Christmas schemes; a series of day trips, and several one-off events including a fun day which welcomed over 200 people to Glebe House. Programme participants came from Bangor, Newtownards, Killyleagh, Downpatrick, Castlewellan, Ardglass, Saul, Strangford and Kilclief.

Our programmes offered the young people a selection of fun and inclusive activities designed to provide opportunities to meet new friends and have the freedom to express themselves in a safe, supportive environment. The participants took part in a variety of programmes throughout the year. These programmes focused on topics such as online gaming awareness nature and wellbeing, creative thinking, positive relationships, social development and teamwork.

## **THE HARMONY COMMUNITY TRUST REPORT OF THE COUNCIL (CONTINUED)**

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### *Adult programme*

2022/23 had a very full programme of activities for the participants of the Adult Programme with the combination of themed events, workshops and study tours proving very popular. This programme targets disadvantaged people of all ages who have limited opportunities for social and educational interaction and relevant and positive cross-community engagement. The majority of the participants in this project were aged over 60, as this was identified as a sector of the local community most interested in this programme. There were approximately equal numbers of participants from either side of our traditional community divide, mainly from working class backgrounds, though a number were of other socio-economic backgrounds or did not identify with these classifications. We aimed for an equal male/female balance, but a large majority were women.

We worked closely with small voluntary community groups and isolated individuals, in the Newry, Mourne and Down and the Ards and North Down council areas. The participants would not have had the opportunity to meet outside of their own areas nor had any other contact with “others” apart from through this programme.

We organised more than 100 workshops on a wide range of topics including circus for older adults, crafts, Chi Me, exploring art, pottery classes, photography classes, bocchia (a game like bowls), cookery classes, an RNID workshop, genealogy, and Christmas Decorations. Our longer day events included a Chinese New Year celebration, International Women’s Day, an Easter Event, a Halloween event and a Christmas Celebration.

Trips included the Con O’Neill Tour of east Belfast; Belfast Harbour Commission, Sinclair Seamans Presbyterian Church & St Joseph’s, Sailor Town, two plays by Patricia Downey, one about online bullying and suicide and the second focussed on the Shankill bombing, Belfast City & Milltown Cemeteries, and Queens University and Botanic Gardens.

The majority of the participants of the Glebe House Adult Programme live alone, with a sizeable number in rural situations. Many have shied away from social contact since the pandemic but this programme provides vital opportunities to connect and have fun with others from both their own and other communities in a safe setting.

### **Looking ahead**

The people who have felt the worst impacts of the pandemic and the continuing cost-of-living crisis are those who were already the most disadvantaged in our society and who experience the daily realities of poverty, social exclusion and inequalities. During 2022/23 the cost-of-living crisis became even more acute.

In addition, in Northern Ireland the barriers and distances between our communities are still real and are reflected in the two-year period of political vacuum and stand-off. Building positive community relations is a work in progress.

Loneliness is recognised increasingly as major issue impacting many people’s well-being, particularly (although not exclusively) among older people. The problem of isolation is all the more acute and chronic in rural areas. This is reflected in the high level of demand for our Adult Programme, and the value of the programme for the people who take part is evident in their comments at the end of this report.

The need for what we offer at Glebe House has never been clearer than it is now. Our work at Glebe House is ultimately about relationships: the friendships that begin and grow; the self-esteem that recovers and flourishes; the joy of being together and discovering things together.

### **Staff and volunteers**

The loss of our staff in autumn 2023, with their extraordinary dedication, expertise, knowledge, creativity and energy, was a major setback for the Trust and the whole Glebe House community, particularly in view of the growing need for the work that we do. All who are involved in Harmony Community Trust including all those whose lives are changes by our work, are in their debt.

Volunteers are essential to every aspect of the work of Harmony Community Trust. We are grateful to the volunteers who work on our programmes, who help with fundraising and other aspects of our work, and who since our financial challenges of 2023 have worked hard to make sure that Harmony Community Trust can continue its work into the future.

# **THE HARMONY COMMUNITY TRUST**

## **REPORT OF THE COUNCIL (CONTINUED)**

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### **PUBLIC BENEFIT**

The directors confirm that they have had due regard for the guidance produced on Public Benefit by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, and are pleased to report that during 2022/23 they have continued to meet the Public Benefit requirement by the provision of programmes and activities for adults and young people as described in detail above which expose the participants to different communities and cultures, offering educational workshops and opportunities for individuals in the local community to participate in a social environment.

### **FINANCIAL REVIEW**

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) – Charities SORP (FRS 102). Council reports that the Statement of Financial Activities reflects Net Outgoing Resources in 2022/2023 of £56,484.

Post April 2023 a significant funding cut was imposed and in September 2023 the decision was reached to make all staff redundant and reduce our programme activity to those that could be operated by our enthusiastic volunteers. The Trustees are looking into all means of generating funding to enable the Trust to continue to achieve its charitable objects, whilst at the same time containing running costs as necessary, so that the Trust may continue to operate within its available financial facilities to enable the Trust continue to meet its liabilities as they fall due.

The property was revalued professionally in 2023 resulting in a value of £600,000 being reflected in the accounts by way of a prior year adjustment as is required for a change in accounting policy. Net assets at 31 March 2023 were £601,080.

### **Principal funding sources**

Harmony Community Trust was funded and supported during 2022/23 by The Executive Office; the Department of Health; the Department for Communities; the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade; BBC Children in Need; the Arts Council for Northern Ireland; Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, the Halifax Foundation; Cooperative Alternatives, through the Cultivating Community Farming programme; the AXA Parks Fund, PowerNI; and the Public Health Agency Clear Project.

As in the past we have relied on donations from participants and donations from numerous individual donors and friends. We thank all our funders, large and small for their continued support without which the continuing provision of services by Harmony Community Trust would be impossible to maintain.

The hard work of the small team of 2 full-time and 5 part-time staff assisted by numerous volunteers and committee members in 2022/23 is acknowledged. Without their commitment, adaptability and thrift, it would not have been possible to maintain the facilities and run the programmes. The Trustees are working to secure funding to re-establish staff positions and re-build the programmes. Thanks must also be given to the many children, young people and adults who passed through our doors and continue to be the inspiration that keeps us going.

### **Investment policy**

In the present financial position, no investment policy is currently relevant.

### **Reserves policy**

The reserves are currently invested in the property and free reserves are not anticipated to be available for a number of years. The trustees are currently negotiating and considering the disposal of assets which are surplus to requirements which will generate resources to create an adequate level of reserves. In achievement of this the trustees are concentrating on keeping tight control of costs whilst seeking additional sources of funding and fundraising opportunities.

# THE HARMONY COMMUNITY TRUST

## REPORT OF THE COUNCIL (CONTINUED)

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### PLANS FOR FUTURE PERIODS

The major financial target for the trust is to ensure sustainability for our programmes. With ongoing tightening of statutory funding availability and the short term nature of such funding, particularly the lack of funding for Community Relations programmes with young people, the trustees continue to develop programmes which will generate additional direct funding and attract grants from non-statutory sources.

We are optimistic that in spite of the setbacks of 2023 we will continue to meet the challenges that 2024 and beyond brings, ready to adapt to the changing position of the community in Northern Ireland, but only too aware that the demand for the services we offer is undiminished and indeed increased by the ongoing effects of the pandemic, even if changing in emphasis. The demand for Glebe House and our programmes and the ideas that have been incorporated into our future plans are indications that there is still an important role for Harmony Community Trust to play in the life of Northern Ireland.

As well as continuing our ongoing cross-community programmes with children, young people and adults in 2023/24, we will be developing the following initiatives to be implemented as and when possible:-

- Expanding our programme throughout the Newry Mourne and Down Council area, as well as adjacent communities in Ards and North Down and Lisburn and Castlereagh, with a focus on promoting good community relations in a shared society.
- Organising residential community relations programmes for children, young people and adults from disadvantaged communities.
- Developing adult programmes including study seminars, workshops, work-study programmes and study tours.
- Restoring a Teenage programme with a focus on citizenship and volunteering.
- Continuing to provide respite breaks for children from the Health and Social Care Trusts and umbrella Care Organisations.
- Developing an integrated programme of independent living and new opportunities for children and young people with learning disabilities.
- Promoting the inclusion of the ethnic and national minorities in our community.
- Recruiting, and supporting more volunteers and providing Leader Training.
- Organising cross-community day events for seniors in Newry Mourne and Down District and Ards and North Down.
- Marketing Glebe House and encouraging the use of the facilities by self-programming groups supported by Glebe House staff.
- Developing the Seedbed community gardening and environmental stewardship project.
- Developing the natural habitat at Glebe House for environmental and educational projects.
- Continuing to build on our fundraising and marketing strategy to increase our income generation.

**THE HARMONY COMMUNITY TRUST  
REPORT OF THE COUNCIL (CONTINUED)**

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**RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COUNCIL**

Council is responsible for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the directors have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). The financial statements are required by law to give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company and of the Income and Expenditure of the company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the directors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

Council is responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) – Charities SORP (FRS 102) and Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

**AUDITORS**

A resolution for the reappointment of Baker Tilly Mooney Moore as auditors of the Trust is to be proposed at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting in accordance with Section 485 of the Companies Act 2006.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

To everyone who volunteered their services, tribute is paid. The work of the Trust could not go on without their continued and dedicated efforts.

To everyone who generously contributed to our funds, grateful thanks are given. Due to the large number of donations, it is not practicable to record them all in this report. A list of donations of one hundred pounds or over is given in note 2 to the accounts.

To the all the Principal Funders listed in the Financial Review above thanks for generous grant-aid towards the operating costs of the Trust.

Glebe House  
23 Bishopscourt Road  
Kilclief  
Strangford  
Co Down  
BT32HZ

By order of the Council

*Mr S Camplisson*  
Chairman 25/03/2024

Registered in Northern Ireland No: NI010639

