

Newry and Mourne Community Transport

(A company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital)

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

for the financial year ended 31 March 2024

The trustees present their Trustees' Annual Report, combining the Directors' Report and Trustees' Report, and the audited financial statements for the financial year ended 31 March 2024.

The financial statements are prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2006, FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their financial statements in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

The Trustees' Report contains the information required to be provided in the Trustees' Annual Report under the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) guidelines. The trustees of the charity are also charity trustees for the purpose of charity law and under the charity's constitution are known as members of the board of trustees.

In this report the trustees of Newry and Mourne Community Transport present a summary of its purpose, governance, activities, achievements and finances for the financial year 31 March 2024.

The charity is a registered charity and hence the report and results are presented in a form which complies with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 and, although not obliged to comply with the Statement of Recommended Practice applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland FRS 102, the organisation has implemented its recommendations where relevant in these financial statements.

Mission, Objectives and Strategy

Objectives

Encourage volunteering through its Dial a Lift and group hire policy where members of that group may undertake MIDAS training to drive vehicles on their group's behalf and also by the Dial a Lift Service funded by the Department for Infrastructure in areas of need and where volunteers are available.

Endeavour to nurture and develop strong partnerships with other local transport providers from the community, voluntary, private, statutory and local government sectors. Working in collaboration with the Southern Area Partnerships Armagh Rural Transport and Down Armagh Rural Transport to deliver the Dial a Lift Service for the registered members.

Focus on unemployment and training. we will market our services at those seeking training or employment opportunities. Newry City is a natural hub for employment and training and we will endeavour to identify those individuals and groups from the rural areas who require assistance in attending educational centres and places of employment.

Give priority to groups/individuals involved in cross community activity and whose aims are to build bridges between different faith communities and ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Address social exclusion in the rural areas of Newry, Mourne & Down District Council Area by providing a Dial a Lift transport service for people with reduced mobility, who are rurally isolated and/or those who are affected by poverty.

Provide transportation services to individuals and groups who are based or live in a rural area of Newry, Mourne & Down District Council Area. Eligible groups or individuals must be based/live outside the urban area as defined by the DFI Urban Disability Action Transport Service and the activities must fall within the following categories:

- (a) Education
- (b) Employment
- (c) Recreation
- (d) Religious
- (e) Training
- (f) Other activities of benefit.

Structure, Governance and Management

Structure

Newry & Mourne Community Transport is a company limited by guarantee and does not have a share capital. It is governed by a memorandum and articles of association and the liability of each member is limited to an amount not exceeding £1.

Newry & Mourne Community Transport has an induction programme for new directors as part of which they are advised of their legal responsibility, main duties and roles.

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The directors have ultimate legal and financial responsibility for the affairs of Newry & Mourne Community Transport, although the management of the organisation is undertaken by the Project Officer and Administration Assistant who report to the Board of Directors at regular meetings. The directors meet on monthly or bi-monthly basis.

The directors of the company at 31 March 2023, all of whom have been directors for the whole of the period ended on that date, unless otherwise stated, are listed on the information page.

Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance

In 2023/2024 Newry & Mourne Community Transport (NMCT) delivered the following DFI supported activities:

- Dial-a-lift, door-to-door transport service for individuals living in rural areas.
- The Assisted Rural Travel Scheme.

Dial-a-lift is a door-to-door transport service for individuals living in rural areas who are unable to or find it difficult to use public transport. Dial a lift can be used to access local services such as: GP / clinic appointments/ Dentist or Opticians, Shopping, Visiting family and friends and many other recreational activities.

DDAT are passionately aware of the need for a service for rural communities which fits between Public Services by Translink and the Private sector (taxis and Coaches). For over 25 years, Community Transport has offered a variety of transport solutions in the South East of NI including Dial a Lift, Group Hire and a social car scheme (staffed by volunteers in their own vehicles). This effort is ongoing and the demand is as high as it ever was and NMCT cannot meet all the demand on its resources.

In 2023/24, uncertainty over sustainable funding created an air of pessimism among CT partnerships and members who have come to rely on the lifeline of community transport. While individual membership reduced to 175, the demand for trips remained strong. 43% of the individual trips were made by people with a disability. NMCT has achieved 7,920 Dial-a-lift trips during the 2023/24 financial year.

Group Hire/Self Drive:

NMCT also provide affordable and accessible transport for our 27 member groups. In 2023/2024 we completed 800 group hire bookings which resulted in 8,435 group hire trips. 25% of these trips were provided by volunteer drivers. Our group membership has been most impacted by the detrimental impact that driver shortages is having across the sector, and the loss of casual drivers who were able to cover evening and weekend Group hire bookings.

Volunteer Social Car Scheme:

We operate a Social Car Scheme (SCS) whereby suitably recruited and trained volunteers use their own cars under the control of our staff, providing a safe, efficient, and affordable door-to-door service as an alternative for individuals that do not have access to their own transport or that of friends and family, and who have difficulty accessing public transport facilities. This form of transport provides a more flexible and accessible one-to-one alternative to the minibus in circumstances where time and specific destination are critical, as in such cases as Social Welfare and Health related journeys when the driver may be required to wait and provide a return journey.

In 2023/24 we provided a total of 335 trips through the social car scheme. 260 of these were Dial-a-lift trips and 53 were Out of Area trips.

Financial Review

The results for the financial year are set out on page 12 and additional notes are provided showing income and expenditure in greater detail.

Financial Results

At the end of the financial year the charity has assets of £207,899 (2023 - £246,011) and liabilities of £17,549 (2023 - £4,774). The net assets of the charity have decreased by £(50,887).

Reserves Position and Policy

Introduction

Newry & Mourne Community Transport (NMCT) aim to provide safe, accessible, responsive and affordable transport to members of the rural community thereby reducing rural isolation and enhancing access to basic services for those that do not have reasonable access to public transport or to a car or a family member, relative or friend that has access to a car.

Current Policy

To trade and deliver services, employ staff, rent premises, purchase / hire / lease vehicles and equipment, purchase goods and services - NMCT must ensure that it has sufficient resources.

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Even when an organisation operates in the most stable of environments where future income streams and expenditure requirements can be identified there will remain an element of uncertainty as to the absolute timing of each individual transaction and also the possibility that unforeseen expenses and liabilities will emerge.

Against this background it is considered good practice to seek to build some financial reserves which will allow us to meet future commitments or unforeseen expenses without a negative impact on our ability to deliver our services or develop our business in the manner planned.

By holding reserves we are able to:

1. Absorb setbacks and take advantage of change and opportunity;
2. Demonstrate that we have thought through how we might secure our viability beyond the immediate future and provide reliable services over the longer term;
3. Demonstrate to potential funders that we are effectively managing our resources, and have given consideration to our long-term plans and viability.

There is no absolute level of free reserves that we as an organisation should hold but when looking at the level of free reserves consideration should include:

1. How secure is our present funding?
2. How long would it take to find alternative sources of funding?
3. If the organisation had to close, how long would it take to wind up in an orderly manner?
4. What costs could be involved in winding up? - consider:
 - a. Redundancy costs
 - b. Other staffing liabilities including maternity / paternity pay
 - c. Legal and accountancy costs
 - d. Time to expiry of lease on property, vehicles and office equipment.

As a general guide an acceptable level of free reserve might be considered to be:

1. Sufficient free reserves to provide cover for between 3 - 6 months in relation to known liabilities; and
2. A smaller additional provision of free reserves for unforeseen liabilities.

N&MCT reserves policy should be reviewed every 3 years and updated at the end of each financial year to take account of any change in circumstance and to recalculate the percentage free reserve based on the 31 March balance.

Newry & Mourne Community Transport had £241,239 reserves at 31 March 2023, £126,563 of which were free reserves.

Principal Risks and Uncertainties

The directors have actively reviewed the major risks which the charity faces and believes that the charity has sufficient resources in the event of adverse conditions. The directors have also examined other business and operational risks, which the charity faces and confirm that it has established systems to mitigate significant risks.

The values and vision for the future for Newry & Mourne Community Transport are to strive to deliver:

(a) Accessibility

A service available to people with a range of disabilities and/or limited mobility.

(b) Volunteering

Encourage volunteering and active citizenship through provision of group hire vehicles on a "without driver" basis and by promoting a Community Car Scheme.

(c) Equality

Membership is open to everyone regardless of age, race, and ethnicity, religious or political beliefs.

(d) Social Inclusion

Target individuals/groups living in marginalized circumstances and geographically deprived/isolated areas regardless of age, ethnicity, faith, gender etc.

(e) Target Social Need & Inequality

Endeavour to provide transport to facilitate training and employment opportunities we will target areas of deprivation

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with onus on health, education and housing.

(f) **Community Cohesion**

Promote interactivity between different faith/cultural communities.

(g) **Partnership**

Ensure that we complement the work of other agencies involved in the development of rural communities.

(h) **Participation**

Ensure that members, providers and users are involved in the development of the company.

(i) **Dignity & respect**

We will ensure that all customers, staff and volunteers are treated with dignity and respect.

Trustees

The trustees who served throughout the financial year, except as noted, were as follows:

Robert Dalzell
William Davis
Raymond Jackson
Denise McLoughlin
Richard Forsythe (Resigned 5 January 2024)
Brian Quinn (Resigned 5 January 2024)

In accordance with the Constitution, the trustees retire by rotation and, being eligible, offer themselves for re-election.

The secretaries who served during the financial year were:

Stephen Yeomans (Appointed 1 March 2024)
Brian Groves (Resigned 1 March 2024)

Compliance with Sector-Wide Legislation and Standards

The charity engages pro-actively with legislation, standards and codes which are developed for the sector. Newry and Mourne Community Transport subscribes to and is compliant with the following:

- The Companies Act 2006
- The Charities SORP (FRS 102)

Grants

The directors are satisfied that the RTF and ARTS grant has been used solely for the purposes intended and in accordance with the terms and conditions of grant.

The Auditors

Daly Park & Company Ltd, (Chartered Accountants), were appointed auditors by the trustees to fill the casual vacancy and they have expressed their willingness to continue in office in accordance with the provisions of Section 485 of the Companies Act 2006.

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 24 June 2024 and signed on its behalf by:

Denise McLoughlin



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STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

for the financial year ended 31 March 2024

The trustees, who are also directors of Newry and Mourne Community Transport for the purposes of company law, are responsible for preparing the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the trustees as the directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law) including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" Section 1A (Small Entities). Under company law the trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company and of the surplus or deficit of the company for that period.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP
- make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether the financial statements have been prepared in accordance with applicable accounting standards, identify those standards, and note the effect and the reasons for any material departure from those standards; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

As explained in note 3, state whether the applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland FRS 102 has been followed;

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006 and. 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.

In so far as the trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information (information needed by the charity's auditor in connection with preparing the auditor's report) of which the charity's auditor is unaware, and
- the trustees have taken all the steps that they ought to have taken as trustees in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's auditor is aware of that information.

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 24 June 2024 and signed on its behalf by:

Denise McLoughlin

