

Trustees Report

5th April 2023

The Fermanagh Trust has 3 Patrons and Nine Trustees who oversee the Trust's work.

Ernie Fisher(Chairperson) is Chairman of Fisher Holdings Ltd and former Managing Director of Fisher Engineering Ltd. Ernie has been involved in community life in the Ballinamallard area for many years and is actively involved in a number of organisations including Ballinamallard Development Association and Ballinamallard Enterprise Company Ltd. Ernie was instrumental in establishing the Fisher Foundation a named fund with The Fermanagh Trust, and oversees the work of the Fisher Foundation advisory group. Ernie is Deputy Lieutenant for County Fermanagh and also a Director of the Armagh City Hotel Ltd.

Frank McManus is a solicitor based in Lisnaskea, Frank has a long-term interest in the Fermanagh Gaelic Athletic Association.

Jim Ledwith – the convenor and a founding Trustee, Jim has a long track record of involvement in community life in County Fermanagh, particularly during his employment as Community Services Manager with Fermanagh District Council, which involved working with townland and village-based communities across Fermanagh. Jim is an active member of Sruth ná hÉirne an Irish language conversation circle. A company Director of the Mummings Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation, with a remit for the promoting and widening the understanding of mumming traditions at home and abroad.

Kevin Lunney is Chief Operations Officer at Mannock Holdings DAC. Previously Kevin was Group Development Director of the Quinn Group and General Manager of Quinn Insurance. Kevin is also a Director of various local renewable energy assets. On a voluntary basis Kevin is a Director of Kinawley Community Hall Association and is also involved in supporting post primary education in his local community.

Aideen McGinley has an extensive record of public service in Northern Ireland as CEO of Fermanagh District Council and Permanent Secretary in the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, the Department of Employment and Learning, and CEO of Ilex. A former national trustee of the BBC she is a Trustee of the National Trust and Vice-Chair of The Carnegie UK Trust, a Director of the Aisling centre and a member of the expert panel on City of Culture for DCMS . She is involved in a number of other charities nationally and locally.

Sue Bryson (Secretary) - A Fermanagh native and solicitor by profession and formerly Deputy Chief Executive of the Law Society of Northern Ireland. Sue volunteers in the Concern bookshop and also is Secretary of the shop committee

Secretary and committee member of the Helens Bay and Crawfordsburn Residents' Association and Trustee of Windsor Tennis Club.

Anna Devlin - Anna is a Chartered Accountant and Director of Cavanagh Kelly. Anna leads the Forensic Accounting team and specialises in providing expert reports in a range of commercial and civil litigation matters. On a voluntary basis, Anna is a Director of Enniskillen BID Ltd, a not-for-profit company which promotes the development of business activity within the Enniskillen town area.

Katie Cooper. Katie is a practising solicitor based in Enniskillen Katie is a member of the Enniskillen Model Parent Teachers Association.

Robert Gibson:- a Civil Engineer, was formerly Director of Community, Health and Leisure with Fermanagh and Omagh District Council for 5 years. Prior to this Robert was Acting Chief Executive of Fermanagh District Council, for the last year of that, previously holding a Director role for 14 years. Robert has a long personal commitment to Community issues. Formerly Robert played rugby for Enniskillen RFC and is an ardent Ulster and Ireland supporter.

Advisors

Accountants MacNeary Rasdale & Co. Ltd
Wellington House
30 Darling Street
Enniskillen
BT74 7EW

Solicitors Cleaver Fulton Rankin Solicitors
50 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7FW

2. Structure, Governance and Management.

Trust Deed – Background

The Fermanagh Trust was established in 1995 with the support and guidance of the Barrow Cadbury Trust with four founding trustees.

Trustees

The Trustees are appointed at a meeting of the Trustees. New Trustees are given a briefing on the Trusts work and commitments, responsibilities, etc prior to joining the Trust. This includes a meeting with the Chairperson. We were delighted Katie Cooper became a Trustee this year, bringing a wealth of local knowledge and experience to the Board.

Decisions

The Trustees are responsible for the overall governance of the Trust and also oversee all grant making. The exception is grants of £300 and under which can be awarded by The Director with the support of one Trustee. All major strategic decisions are taken by the Trustees.

The Trust has two working committees in relation to Finance and Management, and Strategy. Each Committee which consists of at least two Trustees advise the Trustees on issues impacting the work of the Trust in these specific areas. This structure was put in place following a review of the governance structures by the Trustees. Trustees are also actively involved in grants panels.

The Trust's Director is responsible for implementing the Fermanagh Trust's Strategy.

Affiliations – Membership:

The Trust is a member of Philanthropy Ireland and the Association of Charitable Foundations (UK). The Trust is also a member of the NI.Funders Forum, NICVA and DTNI as well as being represented on a number of local committees / partnerships. The Trust is also represented on a number of local Forums including the Fermanagh and Omagh PeacePlus Partnership.

Statement on Risk Assessment

The major risks to which The Fermanagh Trust are exposed, as identified by the Trustees, have been reviewed and systems have been established to manage those risks. The Trustees recognise the importance of overseeing the Trust assets including the Trust's financial investments, systems are in place to manage this aspect of the Trusts work.

The Trust has been operational since 1995 and has in place sound financial management procedures. These procedures have been guided by advice from internal auditors and evaluated and tested by the Trust accountants and external auditors over the past year.

The Trust has adequate and effective systems of Governance, Risk Management and Control in place.

3. Objectives and Activities.

a) Summary of Trust Objects – from Trust Deed

The Trust was established in 1995 to promote any charitable purpose and to support initiatives which will lead to social and community development to improve the conditions of life for people in the County of Fermanagh and immediate hinterlands.’ In 2002 the Trust Deed was broadened to extend beyond the initial area of benefit to include ‘other exclusively charitable purposes in the United Kingdom and elsewhere which are in the opinion of the trustees beneficial to the community with a preference for those in the area of benefit.’

b) Explanation of the Trust’s aims – including the differences we seek to make through our activities

A significant part of the Trust’s work involves both grant making and developmental support to groups and organisations across Fermanagh and beyond. The Trust utilises its local knowledge and expertise to make a real difference to voluntary work taking place at a community level including providing a range of community education supports to volunteers and organisations.

Shared Education and building effective community relationships remained an important part of the Trusts work, with our focus on advancing Shared Education particularly in the preschool sector, in line with the Trusts overall strategy.

The Trust supported local people both through the provision of grant aid and guidance and support for local community initiatives across Fermanagh. In addition, the Trust supported the implementation of a County wide befriending service, ‘Connect Fermanagh’ which supports vulnerable and isolated people across the County.

During the year the Trust continued to provide a mechanism for local donors, funders etc interested in supporting civil society. The Trust also supports community and voluntary endeavour and has a particular focus on building good relations between the two main traditions living in Fermanagh. Over the past twelve months this has involved the Trust working with over 183 organisations and projects from across Fermanagh and beyond.

c) Main objectives for 2022 /2023

This year continued to be challenging for communities and people. The changing face of volunteering and people's involvement in community life continued to evolve during the year.

The Trusts main objectives as set out at the start of the year evolved in light of this.

The main objectives for the last year included:

- Implement the Trust strategy – 'Investing in Communities 2019 – 2023' focusing on helping groups support local people impacted by the challenging public health environment.
- Work on the development of a new strategy for 2024 onwards
- Developing our grant making programme incorporating targeted grant making.
- Implementing the Trust's community and voluntary support programme including continuing to provide support to numerous groups and organisations across Fermanagh and beyond.
- Support Shared Education including the delivery of the 'Sharing from the Start' project and supporting the ongoing mainstreaming of Shared Education.
- Ensure Fermanagh House operates as an effective and sustainable community networking centre with a particular focus on being available for counselling and other Covid support interventions.
- Explore new philanthropic partnerships.
- Developing the work of the Community Academy.
- Implementing the Community Education Leadership programme and other developmental approaches.
- Support the Connect Fermanagh initiative – a befriending service helping vulnerable and isolated members of the community during the Covid crisis.

d) Trust strategy

The Trust's strategy 'Investing in Communities' 2019 – 2023' provides the foundation stone for the Trust to advance and implement the programme of work over the last year.

The Trustees advise and guide the Director on the development of the strategy and support the Director and the staff team with the advancement of this work. All of the Trustees play an important role in specific aspects of the emerging and developing work during the year.

e) Significant activities during the year.

This last year continued to see the Trust and the communities we support transition from the impact of Covid. The closure of the NI Assembly alongside the evolving situation at the South West Acute Hospital and across the public health system locally has meant a time of significant uncertainty. The challenges and uncertainty led to the Trust becoming proactive in the public health environment. This work included convening panels and meetings with people with experience from across the public health system.

Fermanagh House continued to see increased levels of activity with the vast majority of user groups and services returning. The decline in Public sector activity in Fermanagh House during the year compared to pre covid period was noticeable.

The Fermanagh Trust continued to provide significant in-kind support to Connect Fermanagh befriending charity ensuring the group develop a solid foundation to build on their work in the future.

The year was the busiest year to date for The Community Leadership Programme working alongside our partners The Holywell Trust and Rural Community Network. We organised and supported a wide range of programmes working closely with our partners. This included the first intake of students, graduating with a Diploma in Community Development from the National University of Ireland in Galway, our partners Rural Community Network led on this work. The Trust was also delighted to see our team of Young Leaders Forum bring their work to fruition. The Trustees and staff team were delighted to facilitate this group of younger people to become actively involved in community life here. With the knowledge from providing this local support the Trust continued to actively engage with regional and sub-regional organisations highlighting the importance of investing in people and leadership in the third sector. The investment from the National Lottery Community Fund has been instrumental in helping The Trust and our partners deliver on this work.

The Department for Communities awarding of a two-year grant from the Community Investment Fund from the 1st April 2022 has helped contribute to the Trust's core costs. The funding supported the Trust to be in a position to advise and support groups and organisations from across Fermanagh, with the Trust providing advice, mentoring, networking support and training.

The Trust continued to be proactive in the development of the Community Academy's work in partnership with the Department and the Resurgam Trust based in Lisburn, transferring knowledge and best practice to communities across NI. This included supporting community-based projects to advance major capital projects in the Urban Village areas of Derry /LDerry and in Belfast. This work continued to see Fermanagh House hosting study visits, mentoring and networking support and delivering training.

The Trusts strategic work on rural poverty continued with The Trust actively supporting a number of grass roots organisations helping make an effective contribution to people's lives across the community.

Throughout the year in partnership with the Early Years Organisation and the National Children's Network we continued to implement the Peace 4 Shared Education Programme Sharing from the Start. The Trust team playing an important role in the roll out of this work, ensuring a smooth and effective role out of the programme. Over seventy-preschools and approximately 2000 children benefited from the programme during the year. The celebration event held in Omagh in June 2022 was a fantastic occasion. As part of our Shared Education work the Trust proactively contributed to the Mainstreaming Shared Education discussions, highlighting the fundamental flaw in the failure of key players in Education not adopting a much needed, systems wide view of shared education.

f) Grant making

The Trust continues its important grant-making including both unrestricted and restricted grants through the named funds. The unrestricted grant-making continued to provide grant awards of up to £3000. During the year, the Trust directly awarded over £290,000 in Grant Aid. The administration of the Fermanagh Recreational Fund continued during the year.

During the year the Trust also advised and supported a number of other regional and national funders helping to advance their grant-making work in Fermanagh. This included effective partnership working, bringing much needed resources to groups across Fermanagh.

Due to the challenges faced by groups facing a significant decline in income, providing fundraising guidance and support to local organisations seeking significant financial support was an important part of the Trusts work. This has involved a range of interventions ranging from holding seminars and workshops to direct one-to-one mentoring support. Seventy-two groups benefitted directly during the year.

The wind farm funds, which provide specific geographical based funding continued during the year to a wide range of small, localised organisations.

The Trusts 'Young Grant-Makers Apprenticeships Programme', brought together young people from across Fermanagh. The young people became active grant-makers awarding grants to Youth based activities in the County and helped guide and inform the Trust in our work. This initiative is a key element of the Community Leadership programme.

4. Achievements and Performance.

a) Review of activities

The last year saw the team emerge from the pandemic, from socially distanced meetings and engaging with policy makers and others online. The team fully returned to Fermanagh House while recognising and embracing the new reality of virtual working and supports.

During the year the Trust have a core staff team of fourteen full and part time employees. The Trust is a Living Wage Foundation employer. We were delighted to welcome Louise Gallen to the new role of Trainee Centre Manager and Jennifer McConnell Finance Officer to the team and said farewell to Pamela Rainey after 20 years of dedicated service.

Our social enterprise - Fermanagh House saw a major uplift in activity and business compared to the previous year. Fermanagh House continues to be an invaluable warm and welcoming space for over 110 groups and organisations every month with over 1000 visitors every week. The Save our Acute Services and Men's Social Health Group were two new groups who have received significant in-kind support during the year.

The spiralling energy bills led to the Trust making significant investment in renewable energy during the year with the installation of a 27kw Solar Pv System on the roof at Fermanagh House.

The Trust consolidated on its work over the past year as evidenced by the work of the various initiatives and funds including the Sharing from the Start Programme, Fermanagh House, Poverty work and proactive community development work. The negative impact from rising prices impacted people right across the Community including local organisations. The Trust was pleased to be in a position to contribute to the Cost of Living – Emergency Leadership Group convened by the Department for Communities Minister, Deirdre Hargey.

The second full year of implementing the Community Leadership programme was a real highlight. Our collaboration work with our project partners the Holywell Trust and the Rural Community Network led to over 300 people benefitting during the year from a range of Community development training and support programmes.

b) Fundraising / Income generation:

The Trust's balanced funding strategy traditionally included investment income, income from Fermanagh House, other income from consultancy work and flow-through funding, support from independent funders plus the support via grant aid from the Department of Communities. We were also delighted to receive support from the Rank Foundation 'Employment and Skills Initiative. The past

year continued to see an uplift in income generated compared to 2021 / 2022, the income generated remained lower than the pre Covid years. The team however embraced this challenging environment ensuring no deficit was incurred.

c). Investment's performance

The Trusts financial investments recorded positive returns during the year. The Trustees have taken a long-term view of the investments and the performance of the portfolio, and this continues.

The year was challenging for investments, the Trust continued to have the majority of our investments in the NI Central Investment Fund for Charities. The Fund is managed by the Department through recognised fund managers, the current fund manager is abrdn formerly known as Aberdeen Standard Capital. The fund's investment policy is guided by a locally based Advisory Committee appointed by the Department, which meets in February, May, August and November each year.

The Fund operates as a discretionary managed fund. Participating charities pool their investments and are given a proportionate number of shares based on the most recent valuation (share price). The Fund invests in fixed-interest securities and selected equities. The allocation between fixed-interest securities and equities is reviewed and adjusted periodically, in line with the Fund's investment policy.

The Trust continues to have other investments in Renewable Energy schemes with Drumlin Wind Energy and NI Community Energy Co-operative.

d) External relationships – beneficiaries, funders, etc

Collaboration and networking with local, regional and national organisations remained integral to the Fermanagh Trusts work with positive relationships with a wide range of organisations. The Trust's membership of the NI Funders Forum, Philanthropy Ireland and the Association of Charitable Foundations ensures the Trust is informed of opportunities and developments in the sector.

Our collaboration with The Holywell Trust and the Rural Community Network continues with the implementation of the Community Leadership training initiative in the West, with investment from The National Lottery Community Fund.

The 'Sharing from the Start' Programme with the Early Years Organisation and the National Childhood Network has resulted in the Trust's continued involvement in a number of Shared Education Forums and networks.

The Trust has maintained a strong working relationship with a wide range of organisations including the Department for Communities. As part of our commitment to reducing bureaucracy in the sector we worked closely with the

Department and were delighted when the Minister announced the plan to introduce a £20,000 income threshold for organisations having to register with the Charity Commission for NI. The Department's core funding is important in ensuring the Trust can deliver the community and voluntary sector support work across County Fermanagh. These relationships helped the Trust advance our work.

The Trusts work with the Community Academy remained an important part of the Trusts 'outward looking' work and working with the Resurgam Trust the Community Academy implemented a programme of mentoring, networking and training support in the Urban Village areas of Derry / L'Derry and Belfast on behalf of the Executive Office. Looking to the future the Community Academy has significant potential to enhance community development practice, research and community leadership in Fermanagh and across NI.

During the year the Trust Director was an active Advisor Network member of Engage Britain. Engage Britain's mission is to help find ways forward on the biggest challenges facing society through active citizen engagement, and learning from grass roots organisations.

5. Financial Review.

a). Financial position of the Trust

The Trust is in a strong financial position, with a diverse range of income including private donations, charitable foundations, support from the Rank Foundation, SEUPB and the Department for Communities alongside and income generated from Fermanagh House and consultancy work. The Trustees continued to oversee the Trustees investment strategy during the period including our investments in the NI Central Investment Fund for Charities.

b). Financial Management systems

The Trust has in place sound financial management procedures which we are confident are robust and appropriate in terms of good governance.

c). Statement on Reserves

The Trust has in place the necessary accessible reserves to cover 6 month's core costs. The Trust will endeavour to ensure this level of reserves is maintained.

d). Principal funding sources

The Trust continues to have a healthy mix of private donations, income generation and external funding support. The financial support from a number of Charitable Trusts and Funders continues to be appreciated as without it, many of the Trusts activities would be impossible or significantly reduced. A number of

staff are engaged on time limited projects funded by particular funders, and this work will continue subject to funding being secured and as deemed appropriate. Income generation from Fermanagh House continued to be important and will remain a sustainable source going forward.

e) Investment Policy and Objectives

The Trust aims to maintain the value of the capital invested whilst maximising returns. The Trustees have recognised the need for a regular review of the Trust's investments, overseeing these through engaging with the investment managers, considering quarterly reports and regular meetings to discuss the Trust investments. The Trustees will continue to keep a close eye on equity investments with a view to safeguarding the capital value of the Investments.

6. Plans for Future Periods.

The Trust five-year strategy 'Investing in Communities 2019 – 2023' continued to guide and inform the Trust's work.

The Trustees and team started to look to the future and the development of a new strategy, the strategy committee met on a number of occasions to both review current work and explore the opportunities and the challenges facing the community and the Fermanagh Trust in the future.

Fermanagh House continues to be an important resource for our work in supporting civil society locally. The Trust continued to oversee this community resource for the people of Fermanagh by working with and supporting not-for-profit initiatives over the coming period. The Trust is mindful of the significant impact the proposed closure of the Lakeland Forum and new development will have on Fermanagh House and will work closely with Fermanagh and Omagh District Council as the implementation of their plans develop.

The Trust work on Shared Education, built on the Trust's knowledge and experience in this area.

We continued to utilise our knowledge and experience in this area to engage in and inform the Department of Education on the development of their Mainstreaming Shared Education work. Over the coming period we will continue to build on the work with Early Years and the National Children's Network implementing the Peace 4 Sharing from the Start programme.

Civic society and volunteering continues to evolve and we recognise these changes will continue to have a huge impact on the Trusts work and the organisations we support. The Trust is committed to continue to convene, and support grass roots community organising and leadership. We are particularly mindful of the key challenges in Health care and the environment. In both of

these areas we are committed to being proactive and drawing upon our resources and networks to make a difference.

The Trust is committed to the implementation of the Community Leadership in the West programme building the knowledge and competence of volunteers and staff across the community and voluntary sector in Fermanagh and beyond including the delivery of the Young Leaders Forum.

The Trust also remains committed to supporting the newly established charity Connect Fermanagh and help to firmly embed this County wide befriending service for those members of the community who are vulnerable, anxious, lonely or isolated across Fermanagh over the coming years.

Trustees' responsibilities statement

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the Financial Statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice). The charity trustees are required to prepare financial statements for each year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable trust and the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

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

Auditor

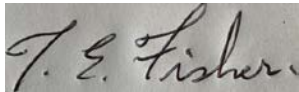
Each of the persons who are a Trustee at the date of approval of this report confirms that:

- So far as they are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the charity's auditor is unaware; and

- They have taken all steps that they ought to have taken as a Trustee to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's auditor is aware of that information. The Trustees' Annual Report was approved on 27th November 2023 and signed on behalf of the board of trustees by:

Ernie Fisher

Sue Bryson



Chairperson

Secretary