

Féile an Phobail Limited

(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 company are also charity trustees for the purpose of charity law and under the company's constitution are known as members of the board of trustees.

In this report the trustees of Féile an Phobail Limited 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 the Statement of Recommended Practice (Charities SORP FRS 102 effective January 2015), the organisation has implemented its recommendations where relevant in these financial statements.

Mission, Objectives and Strategy

Mission Statement

Féile an Phobail (Festival of the People) was born out of conflict and today stands proud as the largest and most successful community arts festival in Ireland. Established 36 years ago, the once fledging festival has went on to welcome in excess of 100,000 people every single year to the wonderful city of Belfast and is internationally recognised as being one of the largest festivals of its type in Europe.

The Mission of Féile an Phobail is; "to be the most exciting, creative, innovative and accessible Festival of the cultural arts in Ireland, and in turn positively impact the social, environmental & economic well-being of the people of West Belfast and Ireland"

The Vision of Féile an Phobail is of "A socially and economically regenerated West Belfast where people freely express and celebrate their culture & diversity, develop their creativity through traditional and modern art forms and actively participate in the inter-change of cultural and self-expression across all boundaries".

Objectives

To enable Féile an Phobail seek to achieve it's mission the Trustee's have looked to celebrate the positive side of the community, and has strived to meet the following objectives:

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- To demonstrate at national and international levels the experiences, culture, skills and potential of West Belfast and it's people;
- To further develop social inclusion and cultural diversity by providing opportunities for the expression of Irish Culture in all its forms;
- To promote inter-change with other cultures and communities by encouraging both traditional and modern forms of artistic expression;
- To provide a diverse range of opportunities for community participation and the expression of self-esteem and identity through arts, languages, sports, environment, education and discussion;
- To assist in the economic regeneration of Belfast through provision of cultural activities;
- To provide a comprehensive and flexible annual programme of activities;
- To establish an effective collaborative working partnership with government and key agencies responsible for the arts, culture, tourism and social development;
- Promote the work and skills of local artists by giving them the opportunity to showcase their talent along with national and international artists.

Strategy

Féile an Phobail carry out their objectives through an annual core programme of festivals held at various locations over the course of the year, including the flagship festivals August Féile, Draíocht and Féile an Earraigh. In addition to the festivals Féile an Phobail also provide a year round Community Engagement and Youth Arts Programme as well as year round arts and cultural events and activities.

August Féile is our 'Flagship festival' and is Ireland's Largest Community Festival annually attracting upwards of 96,000 participants. 11 days of 700+ events: exhibitions, dramas, literary events, a children's programme, a disability

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development programme, street theatre, multicultural events, cross community events, international / national musical events, concerts, comedy, and whole range of community arts and drama, 90% activities are free.

Féile an Phobail has developed its Youth Arts Programme for the provision of arts and cultural activities for young people in the community and from other communities across Belfast, delivering a wealth of events for children and young people, particularly between the ages of 8 - 16 and 16 - 25 years, on a year round basis.

The Community Engagement programme engages primarily with 'non-traditional' arts and cultural audiences, including new comer families, refugees, black and minority ethnic communities, as well as engaging with the Protestant, Unionist and Loyalist communities.

Feile an Earragh presents a wide variety of Irish arts and cultural events in the lead up to and during St Patricks Days, such as international music acts, Irish traditional music sessions and dancing, master-classes, school workshops, concerts, tours and walks, debates and discussions, literary events, youth and sporting events and family based activities.

Féile an Phobail measures its success in the reporting period by evaluating the number of individuals attending the relevant events and the general success of the events held, in line with the objectives of the charity.

Structure, Governance and Management

Structure

The organisation is a charitable company limited by guarantee, which was incorporated on 2 October 1995. 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.

The organisation is governed by the Board of Directors and Management Committee, elected as part of the Annual General Meeting. The Trustee's are responsible for the general management and control of the charity. The trustee's give their time freely and receive no remuneration or other financial benefits. The Board of Directors and Management Committee meet on a regular basis in order to review a range of business matters including governance, organisation objectives, strategic direction, best practice, funding and a range of other ongoing relevant issues.

Composition of the Board and Board Appointment Process

Féile an Phobail's trustees are recruited annually at the company's Annual General Meeting. Following selection of the trustees, a board of company directors is elected with the following office bearing positions:

- Chairperson
- Vice Chairperson
- Treasurer

Management

Mr Kevin Gamble has been delegated to overlook the daily management of Féile an Phobail Limited. The Trustee's are responsible for setting the remuneration package for key management personel and this is based on level of funding available, current annual remuneration and any other information the trustee's have available at the time of the review.

Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance

The year ending 31st March 2024 has seen Féile an Phobail continue with its annual core programme of activities (over 700 events delivered) at various locations and venues throughout Belfast over the course of the year, including:

The Festival's flagship August Féile. Running successfully now for 36 years, the August Féile is Irelands biggest community arts festival and summer school, delivering upwards of 700 events across 30+ venues and welcoming local, national and international artists and audiences of approximately 96,000 to Belfast each year.

Féile an Earragh 2024 - A 17 day long programme of Irish traditional arts and cultural activities. An active effort has been made to incorporate more traditional Irish music events into the Féile an Earragh, effectively having a mini-fleadh cheoil. With less 'headline' events and more focus on 'sessions' and workshops and smaller scale concerts, this year's event was about re-establishing an appetite' for Irish Traditional music across the City and supporting the efforts of the City Council to reimagine the St Patricks Day experience in the City.

Youth Arts Programme - The Féile youth arts programme is a year-round weekly programme of engagement and arts programmes working within the local community in areas of high social and economic deprivation and need to increase participation in arts and cultural activities amongst some of the most at need young people.

Community Engagement Programme - The Féile Community Engagement Programme is an annual weekly programme of engagement, outreach, networking and capacity building with under-represented / non-traditional

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groups, including Unionist and loyalist communities, ethnic minority communities, and areas suffering from high levels of need and low levels of community engagement, particularly in arts and cultural activity.

Draíocht – Féile’s annual Halloween festival has grown from strength to strength, which now includes a week long Haunted House experience, community workshops, arts programmes and competitions and cumulates in a large scale Lantern Parade and Fireworks Display, attracting approximately 10,000 people.

How Féile is achieving its objectives and where more progress is required

To enable Féile an Phobail to achieve its mission the Trustees have looked to celebrate the positive side of the community, and has strived to meet the following objectives through the organisations year round programme of events and key Festivals:

- To demonstrate at national and international levels the experiences, culture, skills and potential of West Belfast and its people;
- To further develop social inclusion and cultural diversity by providing opportunities for the expression of Irish Culture in all its forms;
- To promote inter-change with other cultures and communities by encouraging both traditional and modern forms of artistic expression;
- To provide a diverse range of opportunities for community participation and the expression of self-esteem and identity through arts, languages, sports, environment, education and discussion;
- To assist in the economic regeneration of Belfast through provision of cultural activities;
- To provide a comprehensive and flexible annual programme of activities;
- To establish an effective collaborative working partnership with government and key agencies responsible for the arts, culture, tourism and social development;
- Promote the work and skills of local artists by giving them the opportunity to showcase their talent along with national and international artists.

Féile an Phobail carry out their objectives through an annual core programme of festivals held at various locations over the course of the year, including the flagship festival August Féile and Féile an Earraigh. In addition to the festivals Féile an Phobail also provide a number of year round programmes such as the Youth Arts Programme and community engagement programme.

August Féile is our ‘Flagship festival’ and is Ireland’s Largest Community Festival annually attracting upwards of 96,000 participants. 11 days of 700+ events: exhibitions, dramas, literary events, a children’s programme, a disability development programme, street theatre, multicultural events, cross community events, international / national musical events, concerts, comedy, and whole range of community arts and drama, 90% activities are free.

Féile an Phobail has developed its Youth Arts Programme for the provision of arts and cultural activities for young people in the community and from other communities across Belfast, delivering a wealth of events for children and young people, particularly between the ages of 8 - 16 and 16 - 25 years, on a year-round basis.

Oscailt Disability Arts Programme, now incorporated into our Community Engagement and Youth Arts Programming output, is a programme, held throughout the year, to support and encourage the active participation of people with a disability in all Féile events and support them in organising their own events, to showcase the work of artists with a disability and encourage integration/inclusion of artists, participants and audiences.

Féile an Earraigh presents a wide variety of arts and cultural events over a seventeen day period (1-17 March), such as international music acts, Irish traditional music sessions and dancing, master-classes, school workshops, concerts, tours and walks, debates and discussions, literary events, youth and sporting events and family based activities.

Féile an Phobail measures its success in the reporting period by evaluating the number of individuals attending the relevant events and the general success of the events held, in line with the objectives of the charity.

Progress is required in terms of attracting additional investment across all of the organisation’s key events, with particular attention to be drawn to both Féile an Earraigh and the Draíocht festival, which have been identified as having opportunities to further develop. It has also been highlighted that additional staff resources are required to maintain the high quality of events, activities and day to day management and operation of the organisation if it is to continue to develop. To that end, effort will be dedicated to attract additional funding for increasing staff resources, as well as a focus in generating additional sponsorship/income from the private sector.

Financial Review

The results for the financial year are set out on page 13 and additional notes are provided showing income and expenditure in greater detail.

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Income

The principal source of funding during the financial year was that of grant funding which accounts for £805,268 of £2,097,128 income. Féile an Phobail is indebted to the continued support of these funding bodies and all its sponsors to carry out its objectives and activities. The major funders in the 2023/24 financial year included Arts Council NI (£116,599), Northern Irish Tourist Board (£75,450) Belfast City Council (£443,306), Esmee Fairbairn (£56,667). Without this funding Féile an Phobail would not be able to continue to provide the annual core programme of activities and other related programmes.

Expenditure

During the financial year £2,180,202 (2023: £2,010,134) was spent on the carrying out its activities, including the holding of events, reflecting an increase of £170,068 on 2023. This increase in expenditure was in line with the expectations of trustees due to the increased costs in making 2023 August Féile the biggest to date.

Financial Results

At the end of the financial year the charity has assets of £248,157 (2023 - £353,530) and liabilities of £130,702 (2023 - £153,001). The net assets of the charity have decreased by £(83,074).

Reserves Position and Policy

At 31 March 2024 the company had net assets of £117,455. This was made up of restricted funds totalling £78,219. The charity also had unrestricted reserves totalling £39,236. Included within the unrestricted reserves is £11,240 which can only be realised through the disposal of tangible fixed assets. Therefore, the total surplus of unrestricted reserves, excluding reserves which could only be realised through the disposal of tangible fixed assets at 31 March 2024 was £27,996. The movements in restricted and unrestricted funds for the year are set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Going forward the trustees plan to implement a policy of building reserves and will review the reserves policy accordingly.

Principal Risks and Uncertainties

The major risks to which the entity is exposed, as identified by the directors and management committee, has been reviewed and systems have been established to management those risks.

The principle risk and uncertainty facing Féile an Phobail would be the reduction of grants from major funders. The trustees and management continue to seek additional funding to enhance the charities current activities and mitigate any reduction in monies from current funders.

Plans for future periods

Féile an Phobail plan to continue to offer its annual core programme of activities at various locations and venues throughout Belfast in future financial periods. Post year end Féile 2024 was one of the biggest to date with increased levels of staffing, enhanced August Féile offering more Traditional Irish Music. Féile have secured additional funding to increase the activities available at the Draíocht festival and develop a Christmas programme of activity.

Trustees

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

Samuel Baker
Padraig O'Muirigh
Henry Connolly
Sean Mitchell (Appointed 26 November 2024)
Lauren Slane (Appointed 26 November 2024)

The secretary who served during the financial year was:

Kevin Gamble

Health and Safety

Féile an Phobail ensures the well-being of its employees and event attendee's through the strict adherence to health and safety standards. Systems are in place to ensure that employees are aware of and implement the charity's health and safety requirements. Employees are required to work in a safe manner as mandated by law and best practice.

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trustees and management continue to seek additional funding, both public and private to enhance the charities current activities and mitigate any reduction in monies from current funders.

Féile an Phobail ensures the well-being of its employees and event attendee's through the strict adherence to health and safety standards. Professional event safety and risk organisations and personnel are employed at all major events. Systems are in place to ensure that employees are aware of and implement the charity's health and safety requirements. Employees are required to work in a safe manner as mandated by law and best practice.

Compliance with Sector-Wide Legislation and Standards

The charity engages pro-actively with legislation, standards and codes which are developed for the sector. Féile an Phobail Limited subscribes to and is compliant with the following:

- The Companies Act 2006
- The Charities SORP (FRS 102)
- Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008

Transactions Involving Trustees

None of the trustees had any interests in any contracts entered into by the charity during the year.

Use of Volunteers

Féile an Phobail is indebted to volunteers throughout the year who freely give their time to help the charity put on these events to the highest standard. Without the use of these volunteers throughout these events the charity would not be able to provide the level of activities at the required standard to promote the positive side of the community.

Public benefit statement

In shaping our objectives for the year and planning our activities, the trustees have considered the Charity Commission's guidance "Public benefit: running a charity (PB2)".

Details of trustee training

There were quarterly training sessions for trustees of the Board in relation to their responsibilities and planning for the organisation. Trustees also undertook training within their own organisations throughout the year.

The Auditors

The auditors, Quarter, (Chartered Accountants) have indicated 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 20 December 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



Henry Connolly
Director