

Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful
Director / Trustees' Report for the year ended 31st March 2023

The Board of Directors/Trustees submits its report together with the audited financial statements for the year ended 31st March 2023.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

The Company is a private company limited by guarantee without a share capital, exempt from using limited, registration number NI038848, is a registered charity, number XR36767 and is also registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, number NIC102973. The names of the present Directors/Trustees, and any past Directors/Trustees who served during the year, are given on page 4, together with the names of the charity's external advisors.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Directors/Trustees

The Board of Directors/Trustees is responsible for the overall governance of the Company. Directors/Trustees have the power at any time and from time to time to appoint any person to be a Director/Trustee and the total number of Directors/Trustees may not be less than three but there is no maximum. Any Director/Trustee appointed shall hold office for a term of four years (subject to meeting the requirements of Article 33) and shall then be eligible for re-appointment, also for a term of four years. The Board elects one of its number to act as Chairperson for the term at their first meeting following the Chairperson's appointment.

The Board meets at least four times each year where Directors/Trustees review strategy and operational performance and set annual operating plans and budgets. New Directors/Trustees meet with the Chief Executive who provides them with all the information they need on the work of the Company which is further enhanced at the meetings of the Board thereafter. Directors/Trustees are encouraged to attend appropriate external training events where these will help their role. The Board delegates the exercise of certain tasks in connection with the management and administration of the Company to staff employed by the Company. This is controlled by requiring regular reporting back to the Board so that all decisions can be ratified in due course.

Statement of Directors/Trustees' Responsibilities and Corporate Governance

The company is registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland.

The Directors/Trustees are responsible for their annual report and for the preparation of financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Company and of the net movement in funds of the Company for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the Directors/Trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable accounting standards have been followed subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; *and*
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

The Directors/Trustees are responsible for ensuring that the Company keeps proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the 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 and to provide reasonable assurance that:

- The Company is operating efficiently and effectively;
- All assets are safeguarded against unauthorised use or disposition and are properly applied;
- Proper records are maintained and financial information used within the Company, or for publication, is reliable; *and*
- The Company complies with relevant laws and regulations.

Statement of disclosure to our auditors

In so far as the Directors/Trustees are aware at the time of approving our Trustees' annual report:

- there is no relevant information, being information needed by the auditor in connection with preparing their report, of which the charity's auditor is unaware; *and*
- the Directors/Trustees, having made enquiries of fellow directors/trustees and the charity's auditor that they ought to have individually taken, have each taken all steps that he/she is obliged to take as a Director/Trustee in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.

Internal controls

Internal controls over all forms of commitment and expenditure continue to be reviewed to ensure their effectiveness. Processes are in place to ensure that performance is monitored and the appropriate management information is prepared and reviewed monthly by executive management and quarterly by the Board. The systems of internal control are designed to provide reasonable but not absolute assurances against material misstatement or loss. They include:

- A Strategic Plan, Annual Business Plan and Annual Budget approved by the Board;
- Regular consideration by the Board of financial results, variances from budget, non-financial performance indicators and benchmarking reviews;
- Delegation of day to day management authority and appropriate segregation of duties; *and*
- Identification and management of risks.

Risk Statement

An internal risk assessment has been undertaken in order to identify the major risks to which the organisation is exposed. These have been identified as:

- Financial - the organisation's funding is uncertain and historic income streams may be at risk. To mitigate against this the Board has formulated a Reserves Policy (see Finance Review below);
- Operational - as an organiser of a wide variety of events and programmes, the organisation takes great care to ensure the safety of all participants and that the appropriate liability policies are in place;
- Operational - failure to meet targets and objectives specified by our Sponsors and funders.

The Board recognises its responsibility for the management of risk and has in place a Risk Strategy, which categorises risk in terms of severity, likelihood and consequence. The Strategy is reviewed annually and risk is monitored regularly.

Risk Management

The organisation has in place a well-established system of internal controls that governs its operations. These controls have been designed to provide a reasonable assurance against risk and include:

- A Governance Framework;
- Financial Standing Orders and Regulations;
- A long term Strategic Plan, an Annual Business Plan and an Annual Budget for the year, all of which have been approved by the Board;
- Monthly review of financial results by the CEO including variance from budget and variance from cash flow and quarterly review by the Board of these financial performance indicators;
- In depth appraisal by the Finance Committee of financial performance, risks and growth objectives;
- Detailed objectives are set annually for all aspects of the organisation's activities. Progress against these objectives is monitored monthly by the CEO and quarterly by the Board against agreed targets and benchmarks;
- Risk assessments, carried out before all activities are undertaken, regularly checked by line managers;
- Scaled authority levels and appropriate segregation of duties;
- Continual identification and management of risk; and
- A new policy and procedure is in place to ensure we meet the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations.

The Board has a rolling programme to review its Governance Documents and has set up an organisational risk register which allows identified risks to be rated according to the severity, likelihood and impact of the risk occurring.

OBJECTS, OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES OF THE CHARITY

The company adopted revised Articles of Association on 21st February 2022. In accordance with the revised Articles of Association the objects for which the Charity is established are to protect, conserve and improve the environment of town and country in Northern Ireland and elsewhere for the benefit of local people, communities, visitors and the public and in particular to educate and inform the public about the preservation, protection and improvement of the environment, and the impact of individuals' own actions on the environment and to promote awareness of the ways in which the environment is at risk and the ways in which such risk can be minimised.

Our mission is: **to inspire and empower people to create more resilient and healthier communities**

Our strategic aim is to achieve this by facilitating action, informing and educating and influencing policy on

- climate breakdown,
- biodiversity loss; and
- pollution and waste

through a combination of campaigns, programmes, surveys, research and a variety of projects, detailed below.

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE DUTY TO HAVE REGARD TO THE CHARITY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND'S GUIDANCE ON PUBLIC BENEFIT

In setting our objectives and planning our activities for the year the Directors/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 purpose and provide a benefit to the beneficiaries. No harm and no private benefit flowed from the purposes of the charity.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful continues to monitor and review its Board membership to ensure that it is able to effectively deliver its mission. Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful works closely with central and local government on issues impacting on the quality of local neighbourhoods. Liaison with other organisations including An Taisce (in Ireland), Keep Britain Tidy, Keep Scotland Beautiful, Keep Wales Tidy and other global organisations, allows resources and best practice to be shared.

Many areas of work that were seriously impacted by the pandemic, particularly where work on sites or involving volunteers was concerned, has begun to recover. However, the pandemic has changed the nature of how the organisation engages with its staff and the government mandated move to full-time home working has, where appropriate for staff, been retained. Additionally, an experimental four-day working week has been initiated with encouraging feedback from staff and stakeholders.

Environmental Engagement

The annual BIG Spring Clean continued to be seriously impacted in 2022 with volunteer numbers still well down on their pre-pandemic totals.

- Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful delivered the ninth year of the civic pride campaign, Live Here Love Here, through a partnership involving organisations including central government, local government, businesses and other charities. Live Here Love Here included advertising, support for volunteer groups and a small grants programme; significant additional grant strands were secured and administered through Live Here Love Here.
- The Healthy Oceans Healthy Minds programme, supported by the Ocean Conservancy and The Belfast Harbour Commission, moved from virtual to physical this year, providing a varied and geographically spread range of activities;
- Work to reduce litter on our beaches continued to be funded through the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs. It included working with volunteers around our coastline and collecting data on litter types and frequency on 10 beaches including three beaches in close proximity to our fishing harbours. Results remain disappointing with high litter levels;
- Supporting increasing levels of volunteering is building more sustainable and healthier communities through their positive hands-on actions. Beneficiaries enjoy cleaner environments where they live, learn and work. Widening the work we do with people, to include support for a wide array of grant funded projects, carbon literacy training and food gardens, is beginning to build resilience in communities that we believe will be essential in the coming years, given the environmental, social and economic pressures we face.

Environmental Quality

- The Northern Ireland Environmental Quality Forum (NIEQF), established by Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, brings together Councils and other stakeholders to establish a joined up approach to address local environmental quality issues. The work of the NIEQF again centred on the Enforcement subgroup;
- Increasing levels of enforcement remains important to our work particularly whilst postcode continues to play a large part in the likelihood of incurring a fixed penalty notice;
- Our 2022/23 litter surveys, covering all eleven councils, showed levels of litter had roughly flat-lined with 16% of transects failing the standard, compared to 15% in 2021/22. However, the Local Environmental Audit and Management System (LEAMS) score increased from 66 to 72, meaning average cleanliness has improved. Presence of dog fouling decreased significantly for a second year running, occurring on just 2% of transects in 2022/23, down from 6% in 2021/2022 and from 13% of transects the previous year. Money spent on street cleansing remains at approximately £31m annually;
- The Live Here Love Here Green Business Awards are used to deliver the Translink SPIRIT programme;
- Nine beaches (up from four in 2022) and nine marinas (up from six in 2022) were awarded the prestigious international Blue Flag in 2022, having met the strictest Bathing Water Directive quality standards, educational activities, cleanliness and provision of facilities;
- Nine beaches received Seaside Awards;
- Green Flags for public open spaces were awarded to 93 sites (up from 84 in 2022);
- All the awards ensure our beneficiaries experience high quality, cleaner and greener environments.

Environmental Education

- Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful is Northern Ireland's Full Member of the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE). The CEO of Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful was elected onto the Board of FEE in 2016 and currently serves as FEE Treasurer;
- Numbers of Eco-Schools achieving the international standard (Green Flag) was 344 in 2022/23 meaning at the end of March 2023 30% of schools held the Green Flag. Global targets now exist for schools to achieve such a standard and this is already reflected in the draft Northern Ireland Environment Strategy. Schools hold a Green Flag for two years before requiring reassessment;
- The FEE Young Reporters for the Environment programme ran for the eleventh year.
- A new programme, 30 Under 30 Climate Changemakers, was piloted with the first cohort of 30 young people selected to participate. By agreement, this is based on the international Environmental Education 30 Under 30 programme operated by the Northern American Association for Environmental Education.

FINANCIAL REVIEW AND RESULTS FOR THE YEAR

The Statement of Financial Activities on page 8 is designed to reflect all incoming resources receivable and expenditure incurred during the year irrespective of when income is actually received and payments made. Total incoming resources for the year amounted to £5,251,596 (2022: £3,537,003). Total resources expended of £4,884,906 (2022: £3,482,721) resulted in a net surplus of resources for the year of £366,690 (2022: surplus of £54,282). There was a balance on the Live Here LoveHere restricted fund at the year-end of £40,125 (2022: £nil). The balance on unrestricted funds at the year-end was £779,690 (2022: £453,125) which is free and represents the reserves available to the Director / Trustees to help fulfil current and future plans. Breakdowns of the amounts recorded for incoming resources and resources expended are given in notes 3 and 4 to the accounts.

OUR SUPPORTERS

Without the strong ongoing commitment and support of many organisations it would not be possible to work effectively towards our vision. We want to thank the organisations that funded the charity during 2022/2023 including The Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, all eleven councils, the National Lottery, The UK Community Renewal Fund, Cookstown Textile Recyclers, Danske Bank, Garfield Western Foundation, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Radius Housing, Translink, Trocaire, Belfast Harbour Commission, Moy Park, The Weatherbys, Foundation for Environmental Education, Apex Housing, and NI Fishery Harbour Authority. We especially thank all the volunteers who freely gave their time once again this year to help keep Northern Ireland beautiful, whether through litter picks, community, sport and school based projects or as one of the expert judges and assessors for the various award programmes.

RESERVES POLICY

The Directors/Trustees believe that the Company should hold financial reserves because:

- It has no endowment funding and is currently dependent for income upon Government Grants from year to year, which are subject to review and experience periodic hiatus;
- It requires protection against and the ability to continue operating despite unforeseen setbacks; and
- It requires the ability to be able to take advantage of change and opportunities to further its objectives.

The Directors/Trustees believe that the level of unrestricted reserves should be the equivalent of between six and preferably 12 months' operating costs calculated and reviewed annually. Reserves should be built up to the desired level in stages consistent with the charity's overall financial position and its need to maintain and develop its charitable activities.

The level of total unrestricted reserves stands at £779,690. With operating costs (restricted and unrestricted funds - excluding direct programme costs) currently amounting to approximately £1,700,000 per year, this would mean a target reserve balance of between £850,000 and £1,700,000. The level of reserves held is therefore below (91.75% of) the minimum requirements of the Reserves Policy.

Details of the Company's funds are shown in Note 12. An analysis of the Company's net assets between the funds is given in Note 13. The Directors/Trustees consider that sufficient resources are held in an appropriate form to enable each fund to be applied in accordance with any restriction imposed.

EMPLOYEES

The Company aims to be an organisation for which employees enjoy working and where they feel supported and developed. Employees are kept fully informed about its strategy and objectives, as well as day to day news and events. Regular information about the organisation is available through meetings and e-mails. All employees are encouraged to give their views and suggestions on performance and strategy. The Company supports equal opportunity. A working from home policy was introduced in 2017/18 and was extended in scope at the onset of the pandemic.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

The Company will continue to secure the necessary political support in the Local Council structures and in the Assembly to help deliver relevant aspects of the draft Programme for Government.

We remain focused on business development to broaden the income available to the Company to deliver on its vision and mission. The vision and mission, and accompanying strategy to deliver on them, reflects the increasingly urgent and serious nature of the environmental crises faced by humanity including climate breakdown, the increasing rate of extinction events and environmental pollution.

The DAERA grant will be used particularly to increase our ability and activity to effect behaviour change and where necessary to support enforcement.

On-line tools continue to be developed to meet local needs. We will continue to strengthen our digital and social presence.

Board membership is continuously under review to ensure the necessary range of skills is available to advise the Company.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS/TRUSTEES

The following held office during the year:

Lesley Bourke, Jim Bradley, Linda Bradley, Susan Christie, Anna Lo, Brian Monroe, Eimear Montague, Robert Thompson, Tim Walker and Aaron Ward.

Eimear Montague joined the Board on 19th October 2022.

John Thompson joined the Board on 19th October 2022.

Aaron Ward joined the Board on 19th October 2022.

Jim Bradley joined the Board on 16th February 2023.

Lesley Bourke resigned on 19th October 2022.

After the year-end date, but before the adoption of the accounts:

Stephen Finlay resigned on 30th August 2023.

The principal officers and professional advisors for 2022/2023 were:

<i>Chair</i>	<i>Vice Chair</i>	<i>Chief Executive</i>	<i>Finance Director</i>	<i>Company Secretary</i>
Susan Christie	Stephen Finlay	Ian Humphreys	Brian Monroe	Ian Humphreys

Principal Bankers:

Danske Bank
Donegall Square West
Belfast
BT1 6JS

Statutory Auditors:

Diamond & Skillen
Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditor
Sinclair House
89/101 Royal Avenue
Belfast
BT1 1FE

By order of the Board Diamond & Skillen were appointed auditors to the company and are deemed to be re-appointed in accordance with Section 487(2) of the Companies Act 2006.

Registered Office:

Bridge House
2 Paulett Avenue
Belfast
BT5 4HD



Ian Humphreys – Secretary
29th November 2023