

Lisburn Outlook

Registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, NIC 103202.

Registered postal address:
5 Richmond Mews, Lisburn, Co. Antrim BT28 2AW.

Report to Charity Commission for the year from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024

Governance

Lisburn Outlook was established at a general meeting on 11th September, 2012, at which the current constitution was adopted. It became a registered charity with the Northern Ireland Charity Commission in August 2015.

This is the eighth annual report submitted by the Charity to the Northern Ireland Charity Commission. We continued to submit reports and accounts annually even when there was some uncertainty over the legal requirement to do so.

The Charity is governed by its Constitution, adopted at its inception in 2012 and submitted to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland as part of the registration process in 2015. No changes have been made since then.

The Charity's objects are to assist persons who are blind or partially sighted and live in Lisburn and its environs (the "area of benefit") by:

- (a) organising cultural, social and recreational events and activities for their benefit;
- (b) providing advocacy and support, and promoting better integration into society of blind and partially sighted people and, in particular, working with other organisations and agencies to make public events and facilities accessible;
- (c) fostering cross community integration among those who are blind or partially sighted.

The Constitution stipulates that at least two of the people filling the roles of Chair, Secretary and Treasurer must be blind or partially sighted.

Trustees are appointed at the Charity's Annual General Meeting. The trustees elect office bearers at their first meeting after each Annual General Meeting.

The trustees and office bearers during this reporting period, in alphabetical order, were:-

Heather Carlin (co-opted March 2024)
Liz Goodman (until September 2023)
Audrey Kempton (until September 2023)
Alberta Kenwell
Joanna Jones (formerly Toner) (from September 2023)
Samantha Kincaid
Deborah Maginness (until June 2023)
David Mann
Margaret Mann
Paul Rodgers (until September 2023)

The Annual General meeting was held at the Haslem Hotel, Lisburn, on 23rd September 2023. This was earlier than the previous few years, as the annual accounts had been prepared much more promptly. As usual, reports were received, trustees appointed and future activities discussed.

At the trustees' first meeting after the AGM, Margaret Mann was elected Chair. Samantha Kincaid remained in the post of Treasurer. Joanna Jones was elected Secretary, on the understanding that she would initially share her responsibilities with David Mann as she worked her way into the role.

The trustees met on six occasions during the year under review, by Zoom video conferencing in all cases.

The trustees are increasingly concerned at the difficulty experienced in finding people to serve as trustees or in other voluntary roles.

The Charity has no office premises of its own. Its registered postal address is the outgoing Secretary's private residence.

Public Benefit

The Charity's Statement of Public Benefit is as follows:-

"The Charity's activities mitigate the isolation and lack of social contact which frequently accompany sight loss.

"The charity offers peer support, information exchange and confidence building amongst its members.

"By organising bespoke tours of places of interest and visits to audio described theatre and cinema performances, for example, the charity promotes social inclusion and provides a richer appreciation of culture and history amongst its members than would otherwise be available to them.

"By organising recreational activities such as tandem cycling and walking, the charity offers an opportunity for physical exercise and fresh air which might otherwise not be available through mainstream activities.

"By arranging bespoke classes, for example dancing classes, the charity provides learning opportunities that would not be easily available to a blind or partially sighted person in a mainstream context.

"By exerting influence on the providers of social, cultural, commercial and recreational facilities, the charity also ensures in a more general way that facilities and services in the area of benefit are run in a more inclusive manner.

"Sighted people who are members of the charity or who volunteer with it learn guiding and describing skills and gain a greater awareness of the challenges and barriers faced by people who are blind or partially sighted."

In planning the Charity's activities, trustees have had regard to the Commission's Public benefit requirement statutory guidance.

Membership subscriptions fall due in January of each year. At the time of preparing this report, some 40 people had paid subscriptions for 2024, including both blind and partially sighted and sighted people.

Activities and Achievements

All our activities seek to reduce social isolation and exclusion. They promote peer support, information exchange and fellowship.

In March 2023 we set up a new walking group, meeting fortnightly. This group has continued to function during the year, except for the coldest

months, and has undertaken a number of relatively easy walks in the immediate area.

We have held monthly coffee mornings throughout the year under review. These are held in different cafés in and around Lisburn.

We now pay from our funds for light refreshments at coffee mornings, on walks and during tandem rides.

For the first time, we arranged and subsidised a three-day holiday. Fourteen people stayed in the Roe Park Resort near Limavady. Eight of the participants took part in a total of three cycle rides, while others enjoyed walking, shopping, comradeship and the facilities of the hotel.

Other activities were:-

Life-saving and defibrillator training, 19th April 2023 (fees and refreshments paid from our funds)

Visit to play at Grand Opera House, 17th June 2023 (not subsidised)

Picnic in the park, Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park, 29th July 2023 (subsidised from our funds);

Visit to Belfast Mela 27th August 2023 (subsidised from our funds)

bowling evening, 16th November, 2023 (subsidised from our funds);

Christmas dinner at the Ballymac Hotel, 10th December 2023 (part subsidised from our funds);

IT for all seminar, Lisburn Library, 27th March 2024 (no subsidy involved).

Tandem Riding

Our tandem cyclists continued to meet on Saturday mornings from March to November and on Thursday evenings from April to September. We have developed a relationship with the Lisburn Triathlon Club, who have provided some new pilots, and several of our members took part in a duathlon event on 24th March 2024 in collaboration with the Club. We part subsidised some entrance fees.

Our e-tandem had to be replaced under warranty, but is now proving an asset.

Disability Sport NI has provided some funding and training, and so two of our members were pleased to take part in a photocall for them in January 2024.

Value of Volunteers

Many of our normal activities would not be possible without the support of sighted volunteers, and this remained true during the year under review, particularly in respect of our tandem riding and our walking group.

Health and Safety

We continue to require new volunteers to undergo Access NI enhanced disclosure processes. The Atlas Centre in Lisburn provides us with administrative support for this process. We insist that everyone in our tandem cycling group wear an armband containing medical information which first responders may need to know. We have issued guidance as to what information to include. We have also urged everyone attending any of our events to carry similar information with them. We have a specific set of health and safety procedures relating to tandem cycling. Our health and safety policy is on our website and available in hardcopy on request.

Communications

We continue to produce a monthly newsletter, distributed by email and on audio CD. We continue to operate a Facebook page and a web site.

Safeguarding

Trustees are aware of their responsibilities to respond to any indication of the abuse of vulnerable people and to report any incidents or suspicions to the appropriate authorities.

During the year we conducted a thorough review of our safeguarding policy, bringing it up to date with current requirements. We have

appointed a safeguarding and deputy safeguarding champion, and distributed a summary of the policy widely amongst members and volunteers.

Financial Statement

The accounts for Lisburn Outlook have been independently examined by Philip Boyd (IFA) and his sign off is associated with this report on the Charity Commission web site.

With income of £7915 and expenditure of £9806, Lisburn outlook ended the financial year 23/24 with a negative surplus of income over expenditure of minus £1890. Restricted funds expenditure was £2050. The charity does not hold any investments. The main income drivers were LCCC Community Support Grant £2020, Black Santa Grant £1500, Disability Sport NI Grant £500, donation £1177 (including Dr H A Ennis donation £500, Membership fees £426 and Sale of tandem £119. Expenditure this year consisted mainly of Insurance £942.99, monthly coffee mornings £1593, Events Planned throughout the year £5910, Training £512, Tandem maintenance £338 and Communications £454.07.

The main assets held by the charity relate to the provision of tandem riding for blind or partially sighted members. These include 1-ETandem, 8-tandems, a bicycle-tricycle combination, a tandem trailer and a lock-up container. The total value of these assets is estimated for insurance purposes to be £20100.

Section 4 (2) of our Constitution authorises trustees to claim reasonable expenses incurred when acting on the Charity's behalf. Any payments made from the Charity's funds to individual trustees have been authorised and recorded in the minutes of the appropriate Committee meeting. They have been paid only on submission of receipts.

David Mann
Joint Secretary