

**Community Restorative Justice Ireland
Company Limited by Guarantee
Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report)
Year ended 31 March 2023**

Risk management cont'd

- sends quarterly monitoring & finance reports to all its funders and completes Verification Reviews annually
- is an accredited organisation with the Department of Justice
- is inspected by the Criminal Justice Inspectorate for NI
- is the Lead Partner for the Outer West Family Support HUB through the Belfast Trust
- has won the Department of Justice - Justice in the Community Awards – 'Rewarding Justice Champions' –
- has secured the Investors In People standard award in 2018
- has been recognised as a 'Robust' organisation with the Department of Communities - Social Development Programme and is a Lead Partner for the Social Environment Programme - Crime
- has been recognised as a 'Robust' organisation by The Executive Office

Objectives and activities

The charity's objectives and activities continue to be:

- To promote a non-violent approach to crime and anti-social behaviour.
- To raise awareness of and develop within communities an acceptance of the principles of Restorative Justice to create Restorative Communities
- To create an environment where the community/victims of crime and/or anti-social behaviour would feel free to express their feelings.
- Work with the community for a safer community and to ensure full inclusiveness and participation of all communities
- Provide a conflict mediation/resolution and others services/programmes designed to promote good citizenship in the area of benefit to both individuals and community organisations which could not otherwise avail of such services
- Train volunteer practitioners in a variety of techniques which will enable them to deliver programmes of restorative justice.

Operational Overview

Operationally the organisation continued to grow and diversify at pace as evident from the financial turnover. Despite restrictions new funding streams had opened up and the STARS (Striving To Achieve a Restorative Society) which is funded by the Executive Office as part of the Communities in Transition programme and delivered in partnership with NIA, continued to thrive. Also, in this year as part of the same TEO initiative, we successfully tendered a bid to deliver the Community Safety in North Belfast, following on from our success from previous years in Lurgan.

As of 1 April 2021 CRJI have a newly appointed CEO following the retirement of the previous CEO.

Whilst CRJI rose to the challenge of leading on new projects, this was in addition to CRJI's primary work; mediation and community support, CRJI are placed at the heart of our communities and continue to deliver restorative interventions and support to those who need it most.

Training and Development

This was another key priority for the year and whilst face to face delivery of training was generally not available/ significantly reduced, the organisation, through the STARS team, supported by external training providers, maximised the use of online media and delivered a holistic, accredited training programme across a broad spectrum, which included, Internal staff, volunteers, Board members, Community Groups, local Schools and various Statutory Agencies (PSNI, NIFRS, NIHE, BHSCT, BCC, PBNI).

The range of accredited training in this programme included but was not limited to;

- Understanding Restorative Practices
- Choices and Consequences
- Skills for Justice
- Community Safety
- Coaching/Mentoring Skills
- Trauma Informed Practices/ACE's
- Community Resilience
- Community Safety

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- Suicide Awareness/ Mind Skills
- Therapeutic Crisis Intervention
- Domestic Abuse, Bystander

Delivery of these programmes not only raised awareness and defined benefits of restorative practices across community and statutory bodies, it also helped build capacity within communities to take control of issues and develop inclusive and collaborative solutions.

Trustee/Senior Management Joint Initiatives

This was another area impacted by Covid, however, again through the use of online media Trustees and Senior Management were able to work together to progress a number of strategic initiatives that had been under review, for example;

- Development of the Adult Restorative Justice Strategy. Review of output from the Consultation, development of next steps
- Creation and review of internal paper "Drugs In The Community" recommended actions and timescales
- Review of output from the Independent Review of Hate Crime, focus on the recommendations in respect of the role of restorative practices, engagement with DOJ
- Supporting Change, a strategy for women and girls in or at risk of contact with the justice system – Challenging short sentencing and promoting the wider use of restorative practices.
- Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill, providing input and recommendations to the Stormont Executive.

The Trustees and Management team also established a Sub Group to provide written evidence to the All-Party Parliamentary Group Inquiry Into Restorative Practices 2021/2022.

The Sub-Group provided detail evidence of;

- Areas where restorative practices were being applied
- Objective evidence to determine effectiveness
- Examples of what makes a good restorative culture in a setting, institution or community
- Areas where restorative principles are not being applied, evidence of blockages and actions required to overcome.

This proved to be an excellent learning opportunity

Achievements and performance

A detailed report of the charity's activities during the year under review which accounted to 68 pages was presented at the AGM held on the ___ December 2023. A copy of this report is available on request directly from the charity who may be contacted by telephone on 02895212131, or alternatively via the charity website at crjiireland.org.

Social Media

It is also worthwhile mentioning in this report how the organisation took a proactive approach to compensate for the limited personal contact and ongoing restrictions in movement etc.

The development and embedding of a Social Media strategy, has been transformational. It has succeeded in significantly raising the profile of CRJI both nationally and internationally. It has also been greatly received by our funders, community groups and statutory agencies.

Conclusion

Whilst it has been a challenging year, due to changing Covid restrictions, strain on staff, changes to the workforce, operationally CRJI continued to adjust to a new way of working. Through the commitment and dedication of staff and volunteers the organisation actually over-achieved on some initiatives and evidenced the need for the ongoing work at a local community level.

I would like to record my and the trustees thanks to the CEO, Senior Management Team and all the Staff and Volunteers of CRJI for their continued commitment to the organisation.

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As a footnote I think it would be prudent for me to verbalise some of the challenges the Trustees have faced in the current year, which were exacerbated by Covid, as this would be important context in terms of understanding key risks and priorities in the months ahead.

Michael O'Hara
Chairperson CRJI

Financial review

The deficit for the year was £12,471 (2022: Surplus £29,802) which has reduced the total fund balance carried forward to £747,740. The Statement of Financial Activities for the year is detailed on page 9.

Reserves policy and going concern

CRJI state that unrestricted funds if accrued should be used for the purposes which meet the aims and objectives of CRJI:

- To provide funds which can be designated to specific projects to enable these projects to be undertaken at short notice and
- To cover any potential shortfalls without which the CRJI could not function
- To allow for redundancy
- Staff SUBS can be taken out of and paid back into the reserves policy
- Reserves can be used to borrow from re: cashflow of CRJI i.e.: if funders are late in paying grants - this will be paid back to the Reserves bank account as soon as the grant is received.

The Procedures for allocating reserved funds.

- The board should note the amount of unreserved funds monthly and the level of the reserves are monitored and reviewed by the Board of Directors twice a year.
- The Finance Subcommittee should receive, discuss and agree proposals for use of reserve funds. All proposals and discussions will be documented.
- Said Proposals should be brought to board meetings for consideration

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Trustees' responsibilities statement

The trustees, who are also directors for the purposes of company law, 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).

Company law requires the charity trustees to prepare financial statements for each year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and the incoming resources an 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 judgements 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 and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. 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 is 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.

Small company provisions

This report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies entitled to the small companies exemption.

The trustees' annual report was approved on 29 December 2023 and signed on behalf of the board of trustees by:



M O'Hara
Trustee