

Comber Youth for Christ

Annual Report & Statement of Accounts

For the year to 31 December 2023

Comber Youth for Christ, 49 Bridge Street, Comber, Newtownards, Co.

Down, BT23 5AT Registered charity no. 103460

www.thenetyouthproject.org

Annual Report for the year ended December 2023

Financial review

- Financial Performance
- Income
- Expenditure
- Stock
- Gifts and Support in Kind
- Funds Materially in Deficit
- Major Risks
- Financial Management and Reserves Policies

Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023

Reference and administrative details

- Charity Name
- Charity Number Principal Address
- Charity Trustees as of December 2023

Structure, Governance and Management

- Governing Document and Constitution
- Trustee Selection and Management
- Related Organisations Objectives and Activities
- Charitable Objects
- Benefit Statement
- Summary of Main Activities

Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 2023.

The Directors of Comber Youth for Christ are pleased to submit their report and accounts for the period 01 January 2022 to 31 December 2023.

It should be noted that this report is being submitted by the current serving chairperson, who having been a member of the board since 13th May 2019, has been chairman on an interim basis for 2024.

Comber Youth for Christ exists primarily for young people in Comber and the neighbouring areas. We seek to empower young people and to educate and support them in their physical, emotional, physiological and spiritual development, with particular focus on their relationships, sexual health and well-being. We exist also to serve and support the local community and strive to promote a healthy and positive message regarding a young person's place in the community.

The Net Youth Project provides staff and volunteers with many experiences, which can be celebrated, but also learned from. As a result of this learning we have enabled staff to address our specific approach to a model of practice, which relates directly to the young people we regularly engage with: our key stakeholders.

Our focus is centred upon the 'whole-person' approach; simply put, we are about the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual development of young people. This is achieved and is encapsulated by relationship; a respect of young people who are valued for who they are and accepted where they are at.

In our experience, young people refrain from engaging in youth provision because there, to varying degrees, is an expectation of instant conformity - to rules, standards or cultural norms which are imposed, rather than learned. Therefore, in our initial engagement we meet young people where they are at, whether in behaviour, language or baggage - they find acceptance. Such an approach may be foreign to a young person, and it may be time-consuming and energy-sapping for the significant adult.

This process is vital to a young person finding acceptance in a positive community; if they don't find it here, we can be rest assured that it will be found in a less positive, less healthy environment. Our 2021 programme was impacted and shaped by the Covid-19 pandemic and the restrictions on group gatherings and social distancing. However, as restrictions were eased, we were able to adapt our programme, meet in smaller groups, and continue to support young people and families in the area. Pre-booking was in place for a number of programmes, to ensure numbers were limited in line with guidelines at the time. After the Easter break, staff were able to start re-opening the centre for a small number of targeted programmes. In 2021, we did a major redesign of

our outdoor space which proved extremely valuable as groups were able to meet outside.

Here is a summary of our work over the past twelve months:

YOUTH PROGRAMMES

Comber Youth for Christ exists to help young people reach their full potential. We have a number of programmes which are designed specifically to offer a safe space where young people can engage in conversation, ask questions and develop a sense of community with their peers.

Primary Seven group: After the school Easter holidays, staff ran two P7s sessions a week, with limited numbers in line with Covid restrictions. Staff felt it was important to connect with this age group as they prepared to finish primary school and move to secondary.

Junior and Senior Drop In, and After Schools Programme: Drop In was re-started towards the end of the year. Staff noted that these sessions gave them a chance to re-connect with the young people, having missed out on regular contact with them due to lockdown.

Solo: This is a drop-in session specifically run for young people with autism. The group is run in conjunction with the National Autistic Society. The group started meeting together again in Autumn 2021.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Community Support Fund: Owing to the difficult circumstances faced by local families during the Covid pandemic, The Net set up a Community Support Fund. This involved offering practical support, such as food items, or financial support, such as a voucher for local shops/services.

Engaging with local churches: James McAllister, Centre Co-ordinator, continues to keep in touch with local churches, sharing news, prayer requests and events. Members of local churches are also encouraged to volunteer at the Net.

Engaging with local schools: Staff were able to re-connect with local primary schools in the Autumn term and took part in a number of online assemblies. Connect Young Parents: Throughout the pandemic, the Connect group remained very engaged with the Net. With this in mind, staff wanted to ensure they could offer the group something in-centre as soon as possible. Staff had stayed connected with the young mums and had met for walks and trips to the park trips where restrictions allowed but being able to hold something in-house was a welcome change. The budget allowed us to purchase some new equipment that could be used outdoors in the newly developed garden area; we bought a playhouse, climbing dome and slide, along with some big garden games.

Detached Work/Community safety: This programme was started with the aim of making Comber a safer community for all its residents. A small team, made up of staff and volunteers, engage with young people in the community who gather in 5 areas known for attracting anti-social behaviour. The intention with the detached work is to engage young people in conversation, develop relationships and direct them to our centre provision. As Covid restrictions eased, detached work was a good way to re-connect with young people and engaging in them in conversation.

COUNSELLING & SUPPORT

Counselling: Our counselling programme is another way in which we seek to offer services to support our local community. It has proven to be a valuable service to many young people. We will have a designated space for counselling in our new building, which been available since late 2022.

FAITH ACTIVITIES

Prayer: As restrictions eased and outdoor gatherings were permitted, Prayer Walks were organised. This was an event open to anyone in the community, young people, families, local churches. A prayer week was also held at the beginning of the Autumn term.

VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT

In every area of what we do, we seek to provide the best service to the young people we engage with; whether facilities, resources or programmes. In upholding this value, we also aim to offer the best that we can in terms of volunteer capacity.

We undertake the appropriate application process, provide training relevant to our context, and support volunteers through an induction process; all to ensure our team of volunteers are comfortable and confident in their role.

We have been fortunate to maintain a good number of our volunteers.

Financial Performance

The year ended with a cash and bank balance of £15,942.

The detailed balance sheet can be found below.

Income

Income for the year totalled £108,567.

Figure 1 below shows the income of the current year compared to 2022.

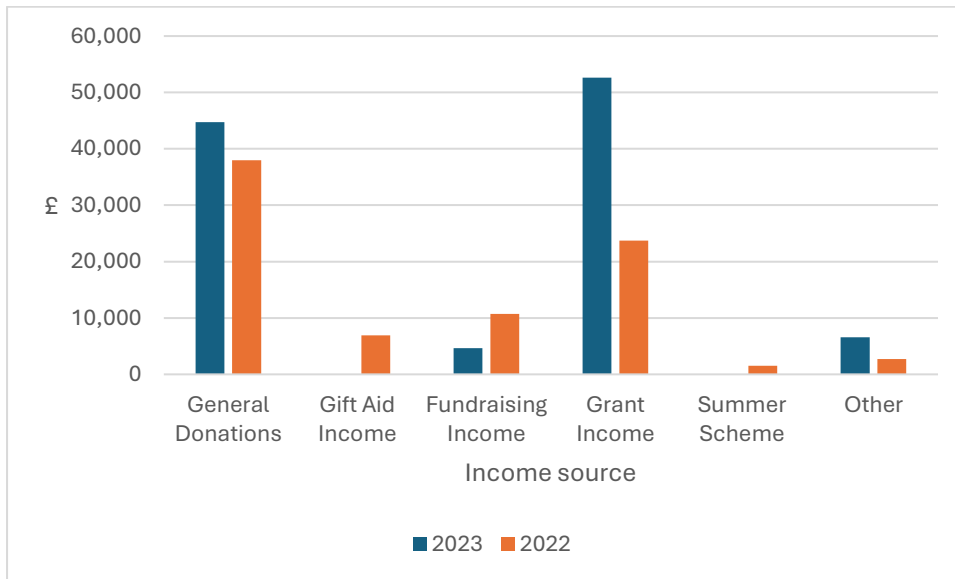


Figure 1: Income for 2023 compared to 2022

During 2023 Comber Youth for Christ sources its funds from multiple sources including grants, regular donor donations and fundraising.

The grants this year were received from Ardbarron, Ards and North Down Borough Council, Education Authority (EA), Asda Foundation, Joseph Rank Trust, Policing and Community Safety Partnerships, and John Atcheson Foundation.

There was no gift aid received in this year as it was not applied for. Fundraising is a key component of the organisation for both raising funds and raising the profile of the organisation.

In 2023, £4,626 was raised from fundraising activities such as coffee mornings, bag-packs and a car show at Second Presbyterian Church, Comber.

The remaining income comes from regular donations from supporters and local churches which continues to be a focus for The Net.

Expenditure

Expenditure for the year totalled £119,548 and a breakdown of this is shown below in Figure 2.

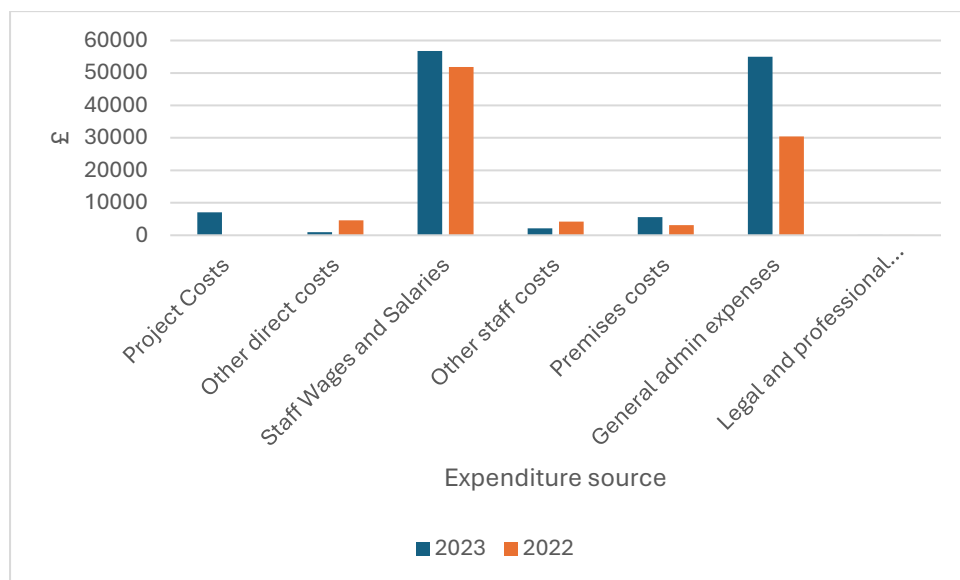


Figure 2: Expenditure for 2023 compared to 2022

Staff wages and other staff costs continue to be the largest expenditure. As the programmes are run by The Net's three members of staff, this is the main expense for all programmes. Other staff costs include pension payments and staff training and welfare expenses.

Premises costs include:

Rates - £192

Light and heat - £3,676

Cleaning - £1,725

Insurance - £2,146

Mortgage interest and charges - £1,639

Subscriptions - £277

Staff wages - £56,771

There were also repairs and maintenance expenses of £32,079 for work completed at 47 Bridge Street.

Major Risks

Based on this year's accounts, Comber Youth for Christ has no major risk concerns. Going forward the Board is aware that as we continue to have 3 members of staff employed throughout the year, more donations or grants will be required to maintain the programmes and avoid the deficit incurred this year.

Figure 3: Balance Sheet 2023 from Charity Accounts

Comber Youth for Christ Limited			
Registered number:		NI066947	
Balance Sheet			
as at 31 December 2023			
	Notes	2023	2022
		£	£
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	4	148,982	165,371
Current assets			
Debtors	5	2,132	2,495
Cash at bank and in hand		15,942	30,594
		<u>18,074</u>	<u>33,089</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	6	(8,092)	(9,433)
Net current assets		<u>9,982</u>	<u>23,656</u>
Total assets less current liabilities		<u>158,964</u>	<u>189,027</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	7	(57,181)	(68,242)
Net assets		<u>101,783</u>	<u>120,785</u>
Total Funds			
General Funds	8	68,608	72,859
Restricted Funds	8	33,175	47,926
Shareholders' funds		<u>101,783</u>	<u>120,785</u>

The directors are satisfied that the company is entitled to exemption from the requirement to obtain an audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit in accordance with section 476 of the Act.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

The accounts have been prepared and delivered in accordance with the special provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime. The profit and loss account has not been delivered to the Registrar of Companies.



James Finlay
Trustee

Approved by the board on 23 September 2024

Reference and Administrative Details

Charity Name

Comber Youth for Christ, also known as The Net.

Charity Number

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland, no. 103460

Principal Address

49 Bridge Street, Comber, Newtownards, County Down, BT23 5AT

Charity Trustees as of 31 December 2023

Mrs Judith Hoey

Mr Robert John Dalzell

Mr Daniel Rosbotham

Mrs Naimh McElroy

Mrs Laura Kerr

Mr Kevin Finlay

Mrs Roberta Watson

Mr Michael Gibson

Structure, Governance and Management

Governing Document and Constitution

Comber Youth for Christ is governed by its memorandum and articles last amended September 2019. Comber Youth for Christ is run by the board and its staff and, as of December 2021, we had 3 members of staff, reduced to 2 staff since September 2023 and 8 board members.

Charities Trustee Selection and Management

Comber Youth for Christ is managed by the board of directors (charity trustees). Trustees are appointed by the board through nomination. In the year to December 2023 Board meeting recorded for Jan 26th Sept 25th and Nov 4th a total of 2 meetings took place other meetings were informal.

At each meeting a youth report was given by one of the members of staff, and any issues arising were raised by the chairman for discussion and input from the Board. The Annual Report and Statement of Accounts are approved by the trustees.

Objectives & Activities

To develop and deliver programmes to parents and carers in church and other community settings, addressing in particular teenage risk-taking behaviours through the application of parenting skills and strategies. To train and resource those working with

young people, including teachers and youth workers, around the physical, emotional, physiological and spiritual development of young people and their relational and sexual well-being. To engage with political representatives, government departments and statutory bodies in the development and implementation of holistic policy with regards to Relationships and Sexuality Education and Sexual Health Promotion. To support the Church and wider faith 10 community in actively addressing issues pertaining to relationships and sexuality. To engage with media in relation to project activity and the promotion of our vision. To network and partner with individuals, agencies and churches, locally and internationally, in the pursuit of our vision.

Public Benefit Statement

The board of Comber Youth For Christ confirm that they have complied with their duty under section 17 (5) of the Charities Act 2011 to have regard to the charities Commission's guidance on public benefit and that the public benefit requirement has informed the activities of The Net in the year to December 2020.

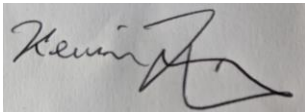
Summary of Main Activities

Comber Youth for Christ offers the following as their core activities:

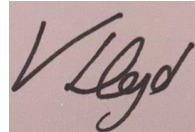
- Junior and Senior Drop in
- After School programme
- Connect Young Parents
- Solo
- Detached work
- Mentoring
- Counselling
- Prayer meetings

Comber Youth for Christ offers these programmes to the community regardless of personal circumstances, race, gender and ability. We work in Comber, but people attend from the wider area. Our focus is centred upon the 'whole-person' approach; simply put, we are about the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual development of young people. This is achieved and is encapsulated by relationship; a respect of young people who are valued for who they are and accepted where they are at.

Approved and adopted on 30th October 2024 and signed on the board's behalf:



Kevin Finlay
Chairman



Victoria Lloyd
Finance Director