

Trustees Report 2022 - 23 Coleraine & District Talking News
Charity No: 103499

Introduction

The Coleraine & District Talking News has for 46 years been providing a free audio service to those in our community who have a range of visual impairments. This year we have once again produced on CD 49 weekly 80-minute audio programmes of local community news, useful information on disabilities, items of historical interest, quizzes, humour and music. We aim, in the best tradition of public service, to entertain, educate and inform. We cover the length and breadth of the borough and beyond.

Current listenership.....60

This figure fluctuates annually and throughout the year due to bereavements, relocation etc. Covid affected our listenership significantly with our numbers halving over the course of those two years. However, our service is hugely appreciated by our listeners with whom we continue to maintain a strong personal connection with weekly name checks, birthday greetings and wedding special anniversary congratulations.

Committee.....7 Volunteers.....18 Frequency.....weekly

Trustees

Barry Williamson (Chairperson)	Sharman Wilson (Secretary)
Mary Ellard (Treasurer)	Julie Russell
Maureen McLean	David Terrett
John Cunning (Listener Representative)	

Honorary President

David Barnes

We lost two much esteemed committee members – Stan Lightowler MBE passed away and Elaine Lynch relocated.

We wish to thank our team of loyal reliable volunteer reading teams who turn up every week and whose input is invaluable.

Core Activity / Public Benefit

The purpose of our charity is to support blind or partially sighted people and those living with some temporary or permanent incapacity or disability which makes reading a strain, by the provision of news and other information via audio recordings or digital transmissions together with the discretionary provision of equipment considered necessary to use such transcriptions.

We continue to fulfil our key purpose as stated above. This work has contributed directly to our listeners' ability to take part more fully in local activities and to keep them informed of events relevant to them, thus providing a social outlet to those who might otherwise be isolated from their local community.

Libraries NI duplicates from our master CD and, using the free service provided by Royal Mail, sends out individual CDs to each listener on a weekly basis. Our sincere thanks go to both these organisations for their invaluable help and continued commitment.

There are currently seven Talking Newspapers operating in Northern Ireland with one uploading directly to British Wireless for The Blind website. They are: Ards, Armagh, Coleraine, Craigavon, Fermanagh, Mid Ulster and Omagh.

Finances

It is important to recognise that, while our expenditure is reasonably stable, our income is totally dependent on grants and gifts. Our thanks to Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council whose Social Inclusion Grant provides us with essential funding. The committee continue to research and pursue a variety of funding sources which resulted in a generous donation from Garvagh's TBF Trust. We are happy to report that this year we surpassed our goal of covering our core expenses, ending the year with an operating profit of £329. This was a welcome improvement on the previous year which saw a small loss of £48.

Equipment

We maintain a supply of CDs and Freepost Wallets with Libraries NI in Ballymena. We encountered no technical problems this year and continue to monitor this aspect of our work.

Location

We had to move premises in 2021, due to the sale of the RNIB building in Coleraine where we had been based for many years. Thankfully, Laurel Hill Men's Shed in Coleraine came to our rescue and our studio has been established there for two years now.