

CHARITY REFERENCE NUMBER: NIC103618

**THE UNDERSTANDING CONFLICT TRUST**

**UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
31 MARCH 2023**

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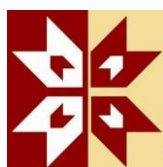
**TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT**

**Independently Reviewed by  
Joseph Walsh FCA  
Belfast**

## THE UNDERSTANDING CONFLICT TRUST

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## Trustees' Annual Report

Year Ended 31 March 2023

The Trustees present their report and the unaudited financial statements for the charity for the year ended 31 March 2023

### Reference and Administrative Details

**Registered Charity Name** The Understanding Conflict Trust

**Charity Number** NIC 103618

**Principal Office** 83 University Street  
Belfast  
BT7 1HP

**The Trustees** Mr John Baird - Chair (deceased – Oct 2023)  
Mrs L Johnston LLB - Acting Chair  
Mrs H Morrow FCA - Hon Treasurer  
Mr F Brady MBE  
Mrs C Stockman BA

**Independent Examiner** Mr J Walsh FCA  
176 Upper Newtownards Road  
Belfast  
BT4 3ES

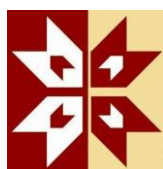
### Structure, Governance and Management

#### Governing Document

The Understanding Conflict Trust is a registered charity with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland

#### Appointment of Trustees

The Chair and the Trustees recruit and select new Trustees as needed. New Trustees are recruited on the relevance of their professional skills, and their potential to make a helpful contribution to the governance of the charity. As part of the recruitment process they are made aware of the Trustee's legal obligations under charitable law, the content of the Memorandum and Articles of Association, the committee and decision making processes, the business plan and recent financial performance of the charity. Once the potential new Trustee has agreed to be considered for the appointment to the role, the Trustees meet to review, and to vote on, the candidate's suitability for appointment. If there is unanimous agreement, their names are then proposed for appointment to the voting members of the Charity at the next Annual General Meeting.



## TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23

### APPROVED AT A MEETING OF THE TRUSTEES

### OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

**The purposes of the charity are stated in our 1991 Trust Deed as:**

**“The advancement of Education, in particular, to promote the understanding of conflict in the community.”**

**The focus of the Trust’s work is associated with the development of reconciliation.**

In shaping our objectives for the year and planning our activities, the trustees have considered the Charity Commission’s guidance on public benefit.

**The direct benefits, which flow from the purpose, include:**

The development of a greater understanding of, and a new openness to, people from diverse, and sometimes previously conflicting, identities; increased personal skill and confidence in citizens dealing positively with conflict; an increased capacity of community organisations to address community conflict constructively; an increase in the number of reconciliation projects and organisations being formed; reduced levels of fear in the community.

**These benefits were evidenced through:**

*Feedback from individuals and existing groups.*

We have had positive feedback from all groups we have worked with.

We have been asked to assist local (United Kingdom) and international (Korea, USA and Republic of Ireland) educators interested in our ‘Nurturing Hope’ materials and its application to Formal and Informal Educators.

In this year our direct work with groups was less owing to the need to finalise our ‘Nurturing Hope’ Learning Materials

**There has been international validation about our practice.**

The materials were finalised in draft form in February 2021.

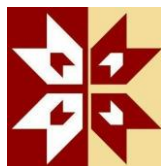
*The establishment of new groups and organisations committed to improve community understanding arising from our work.*

The Trust is working to establish an inter-generational learning community of facilitators associated with the production of ‘Nurturing Hope’. We held a residential learning event for thirty facilitators in November and we intend to hold a weeklong residential Summer school in July at Corrymeela. It is intended to develop resources supportive of faith and inter-faith reconciliation groups as well as a short book for 9–12-year-olds, drawing on the graphics for ‘Nurturing Hope’.

*The uptake and use of published resources that assist an understanding of conflict in the community by individuals and groups making use of the charity.*

Our published resources continue to be actively used.

The printed versions are frequently requested by individuals and groups.



## THE UNDERSTANDING CONFLICT TRUST

We are still exploring the possibility of placing relevant UCT Resources in the Linenhall Library, Belfast.

### *Evaluations of our work.*

The Secretaries continually evaluate our learning approaches.

### **ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE**

The activities, projects and services we employed to achieve the charity's aims and objectives and furthered the purpose of the trust to promote reconciliation were to:

#### ***1. Pursue “the study of the role of traditions in community conflict and the place of tradition in the development of reconciliation in the community.”***

***In the Annual Report for 2021-22 we stated that we would:***

**Finalise the publication of a learning resource for people aged 15+ called ‘Nurturing Hope’.**

This objective was reached in this year and, subject to securing funds for printing and publication, the resource will be promoted in the year 2022-23.

The resource will:

- support people learning about some central societal and interpersonal dynamics that promote separation and distrust in the ethnic frontier of Northern Ireland.
- affirm citizens and groups in their power of human agency to dissolve such dynamics; promote relationships and structures that grow trust, support improved relationships between us, build social capital and establish institutional cultures and societal norms that underpin a shared and open society.

‘Nurturing Hope’ will be a text developed for both a local and international audience.

### **WHY NURTURING HOPE AND WHY NOW:**

**The text below repeats the narrative in earlier reports because the challenge of completing the text extended over two years, 2020-22.**

#### **An Introduction**

We live on hope: the promise that things can and will be made whole, the possibility of a future in which the problems and conflicts of today are set aside, the certainty that something new will happen. Without hope, the world and its problems are a prison from which we cannot escape, and the injustices all around us can never be resolved.

Hope has of course to do with things getting better. But it is not the same as optimism. It is not dependent on events but stays with us even when things are going very badly. Even, maybe especially, in times of political, social or natural disaster, hope is a kind of inner flicker that the events of now are not all there is. It also has to do with the future, with what is yet to come. But even more than the future, hope has to do with now: hope is something that we know because of something that we already know.

Hope is possible because of the glimpses we already see all around us, in relationships, in the natural world, in stories, in insights. For human beings, hope has to do with an end to having to



fight for our being, that we are safe from the things that threaten us and free to enjoy and to create the huge variety of things we call 'life'.

Our world exists between hopelessness and hope. Between a feeling of despair and powerlessness and the possibility of change. For many, the challenges of politics and society are overwhelming. Even those who are currently in charge, fear for the future. The question therefore is: in this situation, what would it mean to 'nurture hope'?

### **Presuppositions Underpinning the 'Nurturing Hope' reflective learning materials**

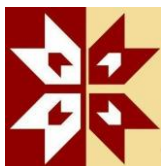
This 'Nurturing Hope' text is designed to explore this question. It is based on a number of presuppositions, some of which are set out in greater detail in the text. Among the most important are:

1. Human beings live in and from relationships. Every unique person is themselves the product of relationships.
2. Human health therefore depends on the quality of our relationships more than on winning the power fights of life.
3. Human relationships are *mimetic*[1]. That means that we interact with each other and learn and change in our relationships with each other. However, it also means that we desire what the other has. We become jealous, we seek to humiliate the others, we are envious of their success or money, we want the life they have and hate the life we have ourselves. The more I want what they have, the more they also want it. The result, if nothing stops us, is that our fights escalate, until we become obsessed. Nothing matters to us except winning the fight. Traditional cultures tried to stop this rivalry for power by focusing it on an external 'other', someone to blame. As long as we could all blame someone else, we stopped, or at least limited, our conflicts. The 'scapegoat' bought peace for the rest of us. Etymologically it comes from 'escape goat'.
4. This process of rivaling for power, resolved by blaming or projecting the fault onto another was so important that it structured everything. Great care was taken to separate people and give each a 'place', whether higher or lower, to prevent rivalry as far as possible.
5. In our modern world, however, we know that these structures and the process hid violence, and hid responsibility for violence. But as the security of the old structures has disappeared, so we face a new problem: we return to the rivalry and violence from which culture protected us, or we try to reinstitute the old structures using ever more violence to achieve it. But the more we do either, the more things simply dissolve into chaos, as the mimetic rivalry escalates.

**This learning project is about 'nurturing hope'. For us that means supporting and generating spaces and places to meet with one another outside of rivalry and violence.**

'To meet outside of rivalry' is to give one another a place: to really listen, to find our own story in hearing the story of others, to experience being held without judgement in our own difficulties, to be forgiven and to admit mistakes without fear that it will be manipulated and to feel solid ground under our feet in a world where so much feels unsafe. This experience is what we mean by 'community', an experience in which each person is enriched by the whole and finds and gives room for others because of that experience.

Hope of this sort is like putting 'planks under our feet'. All of sudden we can stand up, not as enemies but as fully human persons, able to make choices and take responsibility. **For as long as we are fighting our enemies, justice always risks becoming revenge.**



## THE UNDERSTANDING CONFLICT TRUST

Just because we are no longer rivals, we can see the reality around us, and begin to make changes and act differently and unexpectedly. Because we are mimetic, hope spreads, just as rivalry does.

Like a virus, hope also spreads and brings down the hopelessness around it. Experiences of real freedom and belonging stay with us in darker times. Having hope means we look for opportunities, not resign ourselves to fate.

Being alongside people who are full of hope, gives us hope, and vice versa. An experience of hope in small things gives us courage to do difficult things when we are in public view.

**This project comes out of lived experiences in situations where ‘optimism’ has sometimes been difficult.**

Northern Ireland has been a place of recurrent conflict and injustice. Learning not to become part of the rivalry, while in the midst of conflict, has been an experience of great hope, shaping new ideas of how justice and reconciliation might be approached.

Korea has been divided for more than 70 years, after many decades as a pawn in great power politics. How do we sustain hope, even when most of the cards seem to be in the hands of weaponised groups.

In the United States, we have watched as divisions have become culture wars and the opportunities for really being together and listening have disintegrated.

Japan and Korea have a conflicted history between them that needs acknowledged and healed.

**Nurturing hope is, in our view, a human necessity.**

No matter how difficult our circumstances, only hope will make it possible for us to stay human, to say anything useful about justice and to act differently, and in a way that reflects hope not fear. We believe that nurturing hope is also urgent. These materials have been gathered as a route map, offering some steps toward meeting in a way that allows hope to emerge. We look forward to hearing from you as you work with them and find your own ways.

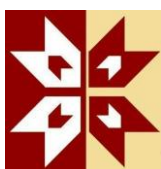
**During 2022-23**

**The Secretary** gave his time to completing the above learning resource; offering panel contributions to three Fulbright UK Seminars; speaking at a number of inter-faith seminars on reconciliation; contributing to the reflective process on reconciliation within the Corrymeela Community and speaking at a number of Irish School of Ecumenics seminars on challenges facing Ireland, North and South.

**The Associate Secretary of the Trust is currently a panel member of several Public\*Civil Society initiatives.**

***1. Develop “the exercise and development of a training, supervisory and consultative relationship with community and professional groups”***

The Secretaries gave pro-bono time to: the Corrymeela Community, Ballycastle offering pro-bono **training** on peace building and reconciliation practice.



**2. Develop “the authorship, publication and distribution of materials, videos films, papers, books and other documentation... in compliance with the objects.”**

We have continued to gather materials developed by (the late) Roel Kaptein and (the late) Frank Wright, Duncan Morrow and Derick Wilson since 1991.

**3. Prepare academic articles relevant to peace and reconciliation practice:**

Keynote Lectures, Academic Papers and Chapters for a number of books have been prepared for publication.

**PLANS FOR FUTURE PERIOD 2023-24**

**The main purpose and object of the trust when established was:**

**“The advancement of Education, in particular, to promote the understanding of conflict in the community.”**

The focus of the Trust’s work is associated with the development of reconciliation.

In terms of fulfilling this charitable purpose and object in 2023-24 the Trustees are supporting:

**1. The publication of the learning resource for people aged 15+ called ‘Nurturing Hope’.**

Subject to securing supportive additional funding, an Open Source Resource will be provided via the Corrymeela Community website. The resource draws on the extensive experience of the Trust since 1991 and supports the building and securing of relationships and structures that embed reconciliation.

The resource will support people learning about some central societal and interpersonal dynamics that promote separation and distrust in the ethnic frontier of Northern Ireland; and affirm citizens and groups in their power of human agency to dissolve such dynamics; promote relationships and structures that grow trust, support improved relationships between us, build social capital and establish institutional cultures and societal norms that underpin a shared and open society.

Nurturing Hope will be a text developed for both a local and international audience and UCT will support its development locally and internationally especially through holding **four residential Schools at Corrymeela between 2021-2023.**

There have been facilitator training events in November 2021 and November 2022 bringing 30 people together with Nurturing Hope.

It is intended to have two weeklong Summer Schools for 80 people in 2022 and 2023.

**2. The Trust intends to establish a Community of Practice Learning Hub**

**Local:**

With our own resources and a grant from the Education Authority (NI) we will establish a local learning hub.



## THE UNDERSTANDING CONFLICT TRUST

This will be aimed at:

A wide network of local youth workers, teachers and community development practitioners.

A number of formal and informal educators.

People and groups involved in practical reconciliation work.

### **International:**

We now have learning partners committed to the wider reconciliation task in the United States, South Korea.

This we will nurture and widen collaboratively.

### **3. We hope to develop additional learning resources with The Lyric Theatre, Belfast.**

### **FINANCE**

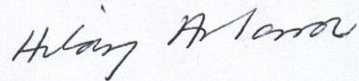
We are currently speaking with potential philanthropists to secure finance to fund places for local and international young adults from underserved populations to attend.

The Trustees' Annual Report was approved on the 24/1/24 and signed on behalf of the Board of Trustees

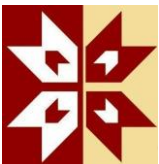
By:



Linda Johnston LLB  
Acting Chair



Mrs H Morrow FCA  
Treasurer



# Independent Examiners Report to the Trustees of The Understanding Conflict Trust

Year ended 31 March 2023

I report on the accounts of the Trust for the year ended 31 March 2023, which are set out on the following pages.

## Respective responsibilities of charity trustees and examiner

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 65 of the Charities Act
- follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Commission under section 65(9)(b) of the Charities Act
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

## Basis of independent examiner's report

I have examined your charity accounts as required under section 65 of the Charities Act and my examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland under section 65(9)(b) of the Charities Act.

My examination included a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also included consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as charity trustees concerning any such matters.

My role is to state whether any material matters have come to my attention giving me cause to believe:

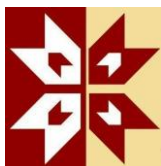
1. That accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 63 of the Charities Act
2. That the accounts do not accord with those accounting records
3. That the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act
4. That there is further information needed for a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

## Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination and have no concerns in respect of the matters (1) to (4) listed above and, in connection with following the Directions of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, I have found no matters that require drawing to your attention.



Joseph Walsh FCA  
Institute of Chartered Accountants Ireland



## Statement of Financial Activities

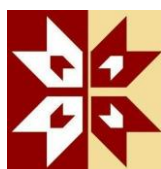
Year Ended 31 March 2023

	Note	2023 Unrestricted Funds £	Total Funds £	2022 Total Funds £
<b>Income and endowments</b>				
Donations and legacies		9,300	9,300	16,884
Charitable activities		36,961	36,961	-
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>46,261</b>	<b>46,261</b>	<b>16,884</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>				
Expenditure on charitable activities		(53,987)	(53,987)	(10,035)
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>(53,987)</b>	<b>(53,987)</b>	<b>(10,035)</b>
<b>Net income and net movement in funds</b>		<b>(7,726)</b>	<b>(7,726)</b>	<b>6,849</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>				
Total funds brought forward		10,886	10,886	4,037
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<b>3,160</b>	<b>3,160</b>	<b>10,866</b>

The statement of financial activities included all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

All income and expenditure in the current and prior year related to unrestricted funds.



## THE UNDERSTANDING CONFLICT TRUST

### Notes to the Financial Statements

Year ended 31 March 2023

	Note	2023 £	2022 £
<b>Current assets</b>			
Cash at bank and in hand		3,160	10,886
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year		0	0
<b>Net current assets</b>		<u>3,160</u>	<u>10,886</u>
Total assets less liabilities		<u>3,160</u>	<u>10,886</u>
<b>Net assets</b>		<u>3,160</u>	<u>10,886</u>
<b>Funds of the Charity</b>			
Unrestricted funds		3,160	10,886
<b>Total Charity Funds</b>		<u>3,160</u>	<u>10,886</u>

These Financial Statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on and are signed on behalf of the Board by:

Mrs Linda Johnston LLB - Acting Chair

Mrs H Morrow FCA – Hon Treasurer

