

CHARITY REFERENCE NUMBER: NIC103618

THE UNDERSTANDING CONFLICT TRUST

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24

&

UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

31 MARCH 2024

**Independently Reviewed by
Joseph Walsh FCA
Belfast**

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THE UNDERSTANDING CONFLICT TRUST

THE UNDERSTANDING CONFLICT TRUST

2023-24

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT – YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

The Trustees present their annual report and the unaudited financial statements for the charity for the year ended 31 March 2024

Reference and Administrative Details

Registered Charity Name The Understanding Conflict Trust

Charity Number NIC 103618

Principal Office

20 Drumavoley Road
Ballycastle
Co Antrim
BT54 6PG

The Trustees at the beginning of 2023-24

Mr J Baird ARIBA Chair (deceased October 2023)
Mrs H Morrow FCA Hon Treasurer
Ms L Johnson LLB
Mr F Brady MBE
Mrs C Stockman BA (retired 2023)

During this period: The Chair of the Trust, John Baird, died.
Carmel Stockman retired.

The new Trustees are: Mr Jim McMillan and Dr Dong Jin Kim
The Interim Chair is Ms L Johnson LLB

Independent Examiner: Mr J Walsh FCA
176 Upper Newtownards Road
Belfast BT4 3E

Structure, Governance and Management

Governing Document

The Understanding Conflict Trust (established 1991) 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 2023 - 2024

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, Japan, Lithuania, USA and Republic of Ireland) educators interested in our ‘Nurturing Hope’ materials and their use with Formal and Informal Educators.

We are establishing educational links with the Desmond and Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation, South Africa.

From late 2023 we have made the resource available free of charge as Open-Source materials. This will be associated with the provision of a Community of Practice Learning Hub. This development is being funded by a Philanthropic Learning Partner for 2024 - 2025.

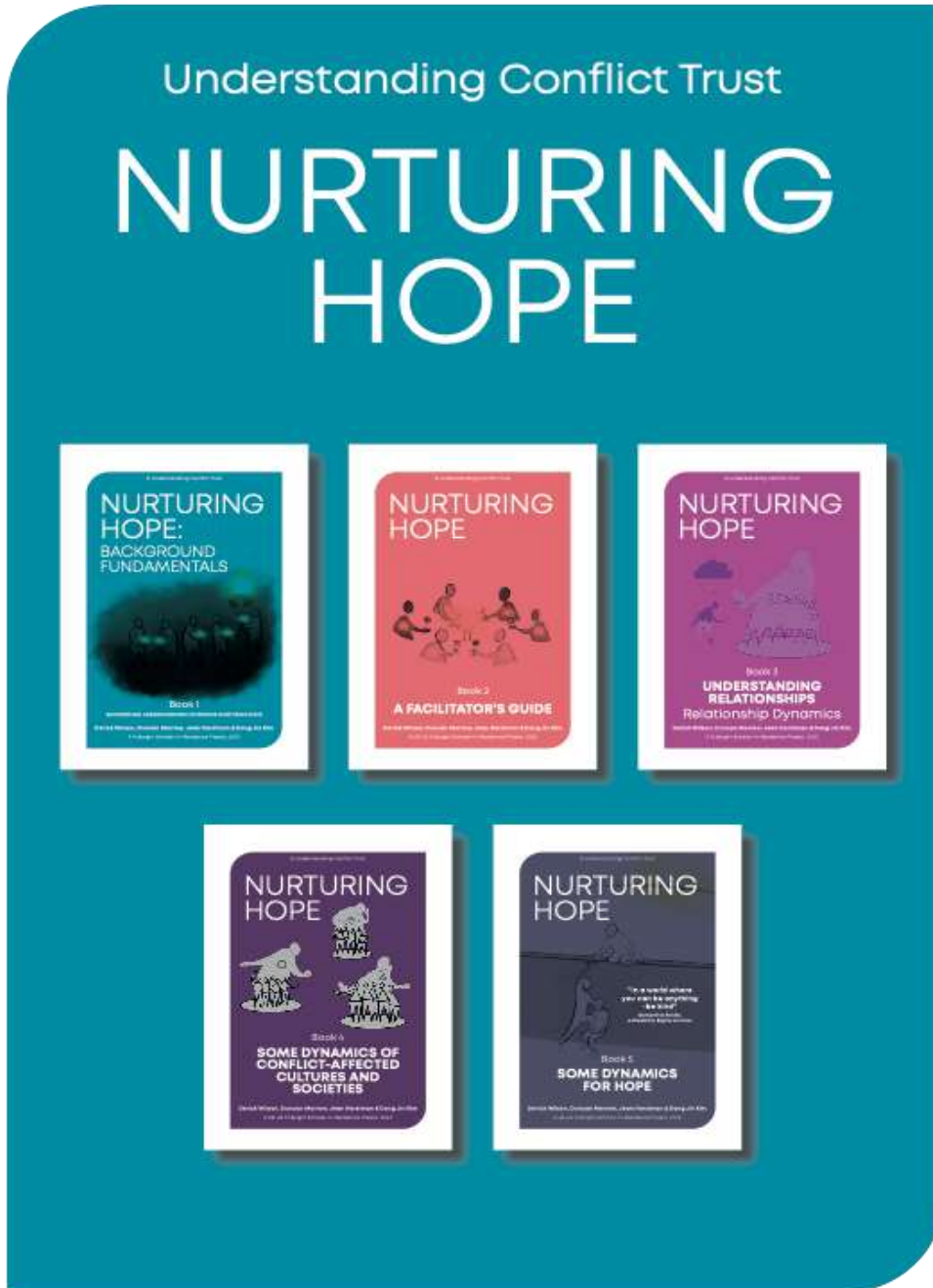


2023 - 2024

STRAND 1

DEVELOPING “NURTURING HOPE”- A REFLECTIVE LEARNING RESOURCE

In this year our direct work with groups was developed through completing a large 5 volume resource supportive of reconciliation practice locally and internationally:



THE UNDERSTANDING CONFLICT TRUST

Through the **Nurturing Hope** materials and Learning Journeys we invite people to critically examine the dynamics of relationships and structures, applying them to their lives and contexts. The materials, which are Open Source, are underpinned by fundamental relational understandings that we are all interdependent human beings (Rene Girard, (MSUP, 2013); Roel Kaptein, On the Way of Freedom, (Columba Press,1993), a founding member of UCT.

From conception we are in relationships of both rivalry and trust. These relational dynamics shape our voice and continually bring us into making choices about the character of our relationships and structures with our different others. We have a choice: rivalry, distrust and conflict or finding ways together into openness and trust.

This reflective learning resource invites us to find our individual voices, to reflect on the reasons we have for living in particular ways, and to give one another spaces in which to exercise choices about either continuing in old ways or making changes.

This practice draws on Amartya Sen's identified need for cultures to support "a reasoned public voice", John and Valerie Braithwaite's work on the need for restorative and reconciling practices in our relationships and organisations and the early work of a UCT Associate, the late Professor Frank Wright, on the dynamics of ethnic frontier societies.

'Nurturing Hope' is a practical resource from Northern Ireland about people understanding the dynamics of relationships and conflict-affected societies and still choosing to promote hope.

In 2019 UCT wished to support the development of accessible learning materials arising from our work over many years.

'Nurturing Hope' is a five-book reflective educational resource for personal and group reflection to support diverse citizens and members of civil society, groups meet together, reflect in a respectful manner, and explore how to promote trust and an openness to the 'different other' in family structures, friendships, workplaces, civic, public, social, economic, cultural, religious and political life in conflict-affected societies.

'Nurturing Hope' is offered as an invitation to join with us, and others, in an adventure of creating new, more open, relational spaces between people, between groups and within institutions in which people take the risk of meeting together, putting relationships with one another before often very deeply held positions or beliefs.

The wider community already involves groups of people in Northern Ireland, The Republic of Ireland, Great Britain, Colombia, Japan, Lithuania, South Africa, South Korea and the United States.

We offer this freely as an Open-Source Resource through local meetings and zoom seminars, linked through access to the web site of The Corrymeela Community (www.corrymeela.org) and through a Community of Practice (currently being developed).



The second educational priority-to develop resources that support young people and others gain some distance from relational and societal dynamics that feed rivalry and conflict and that diminish their full potential to contribute to a more open, diverse, shared and just world- was promoted further by the development of a Pilot Seed of Hope Initiative (see below).

SEEDS of HOPE 2023-27

Drawing on our earlier Corrymeela Community experience with 'Seed Groups' and 'cross tradition youth work' in the midst of severe intercommunal conflict (the subject of two highly acclaimed BBC Scene documentaries), 'Seeds of Hope' will offer:



From September 2023: a one-year pilot programme with eighteen 18-27 year-olds developing the 'Seeds of Hope' model.

This will be 8 days / evenings and 3 residential weekends, using the 'Nurturing Hope' Learning Resource.

(see <https://www.corrymeela.org/programmes/nurturing-hope>)

In the Summer of 24: Launching four week-long annual Summer Learning Journeys at the Corrymeela Centre drawing on these materials, reciprocal learning approaches, as well as best practice from partner reconciliation organisations currently in the Republic of Ireland, Great Britain, Colombia (with The Kroc Institute), Japan (Waseda University Reconciliation Initiative), Korea (The Okedongmu Childrens Project, Netherlands, South Africa (The Desmond and Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation), Ukraine / Lithuania (LCC International University, Centre for Dialogue and Transformation), and the United States (North West Vista/ St Philips Colleges, Alamo Colleges and Unrival).

From September 2024-27: Three annual intakes of 24 Young Adults

Affirming Strand 1 of the Belfast Good Friday Agreement 1998

- three one-year 'Seeds of Hope' young adult leadership programmes, with 24 participants in the age range 18-27.
- supporting these 'post agreement generation members' move into positions of governance and leadership in four reconciliation organisations in NI, and

Affirming Strands 2 and 3 of the Belfast Good Friday Agreement 1998

- work with partner organisations in Ireland and Great Britain to multiply similar initiatives.

Internationally

- linking them with young adults from a number of the international organisations, building their individual and future organisational leadership capacities in civil society participation.

The time of the UCT Joint Secretaries and two Associates is given to this pro-bono.

The 'Nurturing Hope' materials encourage people to meet in ways which both reveals our complicity in rivalry and offers us new experiences of relating peacefully. They seek to generate ways in which each person is valued and a future together can be imagined and pursued. Especially at times of great uncertainty and anxiety, this project seeks to offer models of engagement which can be taken up by people in communities, leaders of organisations and political authorities.

Peace is characterised by relations which take the other into account: We have identified them as relationships based on equity, diversity and interdependence. (Eyben, Morrow, and Wilson (1997) *A Worthwhile Venture? Practically Investing in Equity, Diversity and Interdependence in Northern Ireland*. Ulster. 261 pp ISBN 1 85923 082 2)

- Reconciliation is first an experience before it becomes a practice. Trust given and received in one relationship can become a basis for trust to grow elsewhere.
- Spaces where we meet one another and each other's experience without rivalry give us the confidence to raise our voices in public and become human agents for reconciliation.
- Trust like violence spreads mimetically. The key is to start a different cycle.
- The question for all leaders and members of organisations is: what is the tone of relationships you set for those who work and live with you?

Respect, like disrespect, spreads.

Without nurturing relational cultures that are open and welcoming of others the sustainability of any reconciliation process is at risk.

- The question for all leaders and members of organisations is: what is the tone of relationships you set for those who work and live with you?

Respect, like disrespect, spreads.

Without nurturing relational cultures that are open and welcoming of others the sustainability of any reconciliation process is at risk.

Seeds of Hope is a dynamic learning partnership between The Corrymeela Community, Mediation Northern Ireland, TIDES and The Understanding Conflict Trust (UCT) currently funded by donations from the Rotary Clubs of San Antonio Texas, Belfast, Derry and Londonderry, Dublin, Clonmel, The Hague, Lviv; Rotary Districts 1600 Netherlands, 5840 Texas, and 1160 in Ireland; Humanity United and The Understanding Conflict Trust.



Building on the initial week long summer Learning Journey in 2022 we have developed a further event for 75 practitioners from 14 countries, including from Northern Ireland, Ireland and Great Britain.

NURTURING HOPE
A Learning Journey

PROVISIONAL DATES 2024-2027
 • Monday 15 to Saturday 20 July 2024
 • Tuesday 24 to Sunday 29 June 2025
 • Tuesday 23 to Sunday 28 June 2026
 • Tuesday 22 to Sunday 27 June 2027

The Corrymeela Community
Ballycastle, Northern Ireland

"We must learn to live together as brothers [and sisters] or perish together as fools."
Martin Luther King, Jr.

'Nurturing Hope' is a five-book reflective learning resource on the possibilities and practice of reconciliation written by Derick Wilson, Duncan Morrow, Jean Hartman and Dong Jin Kim and published by The Corrymeela Community, Northern Ireland. It is available as an Open-Source Resource. <https://www.corrymeela.org/programmes/nurturing-hope>

As part of our commitment to continuing to renew our experience and practice in reconciliation, this 'Learning Journey' offers an opportunity to bring people from different backgrounds together to explore our challenges and share our questions and learning in an atmosphere of freedom and challenge. It is our conviction that working together we can find ways which both encourage and support our work and lives.

The 'Nurturing Hope' resource emerged from our experiences of exploring reconciliation while living and working in Northern Ireland, and elsewhere. Hope for us is the certainty of possibility, even when things seem difficult. During our time together we learned that hope is nurtured in relationships, made possible through working, playing and sharing together in an open manner, which takes seriously the fact that our peace in the past has too often been bought at the expense of others.

We are inviting you to join us on this Journey.

"You can take something broken from the past and from that you can make something new that symbolises looking forward and the future"

The Reflection Space, Belfast City Hall

We hope that the 'Learning Journey' will offer those who take part space in which to:

- Experience and use the Nurturing Hope resources.
- Understand the destructive relationships we find ourselves in and explore ways out.
- Consider how trust and hope can be nurtured and sustained in personal, community, and political life.
- Explore the dynamics of desire, violence, and scapegoating unearthed in the work of Rene Girard.
- Consider what practices might support reconciliation and restoring relationships.
- Make friendships and professional relationships with others seeking ways to move from division to interdependence.
- Contribute to an intergenerational and intercultural global community of practice committed to building cross-tradition and trans-local relationships in conflicted societies

"Racism thrives where hope dies. When darkness reigns, there is very little room for grey. Everything is binary. We lose our humanity because there is no light to show us that we are so much more alike than we are different."

William E Strickland,
Founder, Manchester Bidwell Corporation
and leading USA social entrepreneur

Why Gather? To reflect and learn together, to expand our learning, and to make new plans together.

Where? Corrymeela Reconciliation Centre in the beauty of the North Antrim Coast overlooking Rathlin Island.

Summer Learning Journeys are established:

- To encourage young adults coming into leadership in diverse societies.
- To encourage all participants in the work of promoting more interdependent and just societies.
- To enable civil society organisations to support the development of new and emerging leaders.

The core learning community will be made up of:

- A group of local participants who will be completing a one-year programme called 'Seeds of Hope'. This year long initiative supports a group of 18-25 year olds from diverse backgrounds to equip themselves to play a greater part in civil society in Northern Ireland. 'Seeds of Hope' is a dynamic partnership between The Corrymeela Community, Mediation NI, Tides, and The Understanding Conflict Trust (UCT).
- Young adult leaders from a variety of reconciliation partners in the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain, Colombia (with The Kroc Institute), Japan (Waseda University Reconciliation Initiative), Korea (The Okedangmu Childrens Project), Netherlands (The Hague Rotary Club), South Africa (The Diamond and Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation), Ukraine / Lithuania (LCC International University, Centre for Dialogue and Transformation), and the United States (North West Vista/ St Philips Colleges (Alamo Colleges).
- Peace and Conflict Studies university students supported by different Rotary Clubs.
- Adults involved in reflective and reciprocal learning approaches working in diverse civic and educational organisations, who wish to learn and share experiences with the above participants and with members of The Corrymeela Community.

Resource People

The main resource is those of us who come as participants, prepared to share our failures and successes, willing to explore the questions and challenges we all face.

We will also have a number of experienced practitioners attending the event.

The emphasis will be on learning with one another and supporting one another in exploring the options and choices open to us in our own localities.

Throughout the five days we will be invited to reflect personally and collectively.

July 2024 only Residential (for five days): £575
Accommodation and Meals: £375
Tuition/Event fee: £200 (will fund other reconciliation programmes)

July 2024 only Non-Residential (for five days): £450
Meals: £250
Tuition/Event fee: £200 (will fund other reconciliation programmes)

A very limited number of bursaries are available on a need basis.
Please contact us at understandingct@yahoo.co.uk

To register your place or to find out more, please contact us at understandingct@yahoo.co.uk

Seeds of Hope is a dynamic learning partnership between The Corrymeela Community, Mediation Northern Ireland, TIDES and The Understanding Conflict Trust (UCT) currently funded by donations from the Rotary Clubs of San Antonio Texas, Belfast, Derry and Londonderry, Dublin, Clonmel, The Hague, Liviv, Rotary Districts 1600 Netherlands, 6840 Texas, and 150 in Ireland, Humanity United and The Understanding Conflict Trust.



2023 - 2024

STRAND 4

DRAWING HOPE

Okedongmu Children in Korea (OKCK) is a South Korean peace NGO founded in 1996 by people who love children with the hope that children from North and South Korea can put their arms around each other's shoulders as they share the 'same heights'. OKCK works to prevent the history of conflict and division on the Korean Peninsula from repeating itself and help children grow into citizens who can share their hearts and pursue peace.

Drawing Hope is born out of more than two decades of exchange between Korean children on both sides of the peninsula, the Korean diaspora in Japan, and beyond.

Through the eyes of children's self-portraits and self-introductions, the exhibit brings to life the hopes, dreams, and visions of the future from the youngest generations living in a divided peninsula.

The exchange of drawings is a glimmer of hope, a space to meet each other, drawing out the hope from within us to **reimagine a world free of division and violence in the spirit of childlike wonder, where beauty lies in seeing each other in full colour.**

WHY NORTHERN IRELAND?

Though far in distance from the Korean Peninsula, Northern Ireland shares a common history of division and conflict. As the capital, Belfast has also been the site of countless encounters of political change and reconciliation between communities. In particular, Ulster University's campus in the city centre opened in 2023 as a symbol of peace and hope, marking the 25th anniversary of the signing of the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement. The exhibit aims to serve as a platform for "**translocal¹ learning**" and reciprocal empowerment of members of civil society in divided societies, especially through art and peace education.

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 learning resources continue to be actively used.

The printed versions are frequently requested by individuals and groups.

We are preparing to offer the Nurturing Hope free to those who wish it via an Open-Source mechanism.

We have established a growing local, Irish and British, and International Learning Network.

Evaluations of our work.

The Secretaries continually evaluate our learning approaches with Trustees.

¹ **Translocal Learning**

Unlike the unidirectional knowledge transfer between international expert and local beneficiaries, the trans-local learning demonstrates aspects of reciprocal empowerment in which local people can have authority in the knowledge shared and generated from local-to-local interactions. International experts are inclined to teach local people with the intention of changing the local society, however, local people in trans-local interactions are primarily interested in learning how to make a positive change to their own society, thereby asking questions rather than teaching. In this way, trans-local learning between different conflict-affected societies features mutual capacity building and solidarity for peace and reconciliation, which leads to self-determination and confidence in action. The trans-local learning spaces are where people can both maintain and transcend their locality without relying on universalised and/or standardised international knowledge. In the trans-local learning journey, those who are resisting protracted mimetic rivalries in their own context can be ontologically secure with their fellow learners from other contexts, without being scapegoated.



ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

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

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

During 2023 - 2024 we also:

1. Developed “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. Developed “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. Dong Jin Kim has recently published several books on reconciliation.

3. Prepared academic articles relevant to peace and reconciliation practice:

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

2024 - 2027 - FUTURE PLANS

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.

The time given to Nurturing Hope by The Trust Secretary, Associate Secretary and Learning Associate are pro bono.

Background

In our view (Morrow, 2023), reconciliation as a political and civil society challenge has been consistently diluted and relegated in importance in Northern Ireland, relegated in importance by the needs of opposed political traditions less willing to embrace reconciliation in its fullness.

We are now committed to strengthen the ability and capacity of citizens, young and old, to commit to growing experiences of peace (Dong Jin Kim, 2022) in relationships, groups, and organisations through reciprocally empowering one another's practice, locally and internationally (Kim, 2022). This draws on best current practice internationally and the promotion of a reasoned public discourse (A. Sen, 2009)

Our understanding is that civil society activities, within a broader reconciliation vision, are essential to the securing of wider inter communal understanding and the creation of a more open, shared society.



THE UNDERSTANDING CONFLICT TRUST

In 2023 we had the support of Paul Lee, as **UCT Fellow working with The Corrymeela Community** with considerable local and international experience to assist with the four strands of practice above. We are grateful to Humanity United for this support and to Paul for his skill and tenacity.

Nurturing Hope Developments: We are working with an independent foundation that has committed to ongoing support for 2024 and beyond. This strategic learning partner wishes to support us with £32,000 in 2024 -2025.

Seeds of Hope: Currently we have secured £33,000 from the San Antonio Rotary Club for Seeds of Hope.

The San Antonio Rotary Club is applying to The Rotary Foundation for a multi-year, programme grant.

The Summer Learning Journey in 2024 has 75 local and international registrations from our diverse partners and is fully funded.

We are discussing the main roll-out of three years' work (2024 - 2027).

The Trustees' Annual Report was approved on the 29/10/2024 and signed on behalf of the Board of Trustees

By:



Ms L Johnson LLB - Interim Chair 29/10/24

Mrs H Morrow FCA - Hon. Treasurer



Independent Examiners Report to the Trustees of The Understanding Conflict Trust

ended 31 March 2024

I report on the accounts of the Trust for the year ended 31 March 2024, 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.



29 November 2024

Joseph Walsh FCA
Institute of Chartered Accountants Ireland



Statement of Financial Activities

Year Ended 31 March 2024

	Note	2024 Unrestricted Funds £	Total Funds £	2023 Total Funds £
Income and endowments		-	-	-
Donations and legacies		18,957	18,957	9,300
Charitable activities		-	-	36,961
Total Income		<u>18,957</u>	<u>18,957</u>	<u>46,261</u>
Expenditure				
Expenditure on charitable activities		(15,620)	(15,620)	(53,987)
Total Expenditure		<u>(15,620)</u>	<u>(15,620)</u>	<u>(53,987)</u>
Net income and net movement in funds		<u>3,337</u>	<u>3,337</u>	<u>(7,726)</u>
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds brought forward		3,160	3,160	10,886
Total funds carried forward		<u>6,497</u>	<u>6,497</u>	<u>3,160</u>

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.




Notes to the Financial Statements

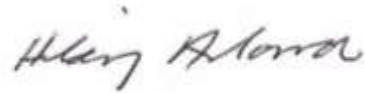
Year ended 31 March 2024

	Note	2024 £	2023 £
Current assets			
Cash at bank and in hand		6,497	3,160
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year		0	0
Net current assets		<u>6,497</u>	<u>3,160</u>
Total assets less liabilities		<u>6,497</u>	<u>3,160</u>
Net assets		<u>6,497</u>	<u>3,160</u>
Funds of the Charity			
Unrestricted funds		<u>6,497</u>	<u>3,160</u>
Total Charity Funds		<u>6,497</u>	<u>3,160</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 - Treasurer

