

NIC103784

Meadow / Armagh Road Community Association

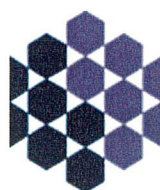
2023 to 2024

# Trustees Report



Society of St. Vincent de Paul

*Funded and Supported By:*



Department for

**Communities**



Comhairle Ceantair  
an Iúir, Mhúrn agus an Dúin  
Newry, Mourne and Down  
District Council



**ea** Education  
Authority



**CONFEDERATION OF  
COMMUNITY GROUPS**

*Geog. undecad*  
*n. A. Rice.*

*CHAIRPERSON.*  
*Treasurer*

# Charity Details

**Charity Name:** Meadow and Armagh Road Community Association

**Charity Number:** Registered Charity in Northern Ireland - NIC103784

**Purpose:** *The Association is established to promote the benefit of the inhabitants of the Meadow and Armagh Road Area, Newry and its environs; to include: (Meadow) - The Fold, Clanrye Avenue, Clanrye Park, Helen's Terrace, Orior Road, Slieve Gullion Road, Iveagh Crescent, Killeavy Road, Derrybeg Drive, Ballinlare Gardens and (Armagh Road) – Violet Hill Avenue, College Gardens, Mountain View Drive, Clonmore, Lisdarragh (hereinafter called "the area of benefit") without distinction of age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnic identity, class, marital status, political or religious opinion, by associating the statutory authorities, voluntary and community sector organisations and the inhabitants in a common effort to advance education, and to provide facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation or other leisure time occupation, with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants.*

## **Charity Trustees as of September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

Mr Gerry Mc Donald (Chairperson)

Mr Brendan Cranny (Secretary)

Ms Noreen Rice (Treasurer)

Mr Niall Quinn

Mr Robert (Bobby) Johnson

Mr Peter Mc Donnell – retired during the year

Ms Helena Young – retired at AGM

Ms Megan Creggan – retired at AGM

Ms Clare Carroll

Ms Aóibheann Mc Corry – retired during the year

Mr Johnny Franks

Ms Aveen Trainor – retired during the year

Ms Darrelle Shields

Ms Sinead Larkin

Ms Dominika Wojciechowska

Note: No other Charity Trustees in the Year to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024

## **Accountant/Independent Examiner**

Gemma Doran

5 Bracken Close, Newry, Co. Down

## **Insurance Broker & Underwriter**

Marsh Insurance Ltd. (Ecclesiastical Brokers)

Bedford House, 16-22 Bedford Street, Belfast.

## **Bank**

First Trust, 42-44 Hill Street, Newry, Co. Down.

# Chairpersons Report

Welcome to our Annual Trustees Report for the period October 2023 to September 2024 and thank you all for taking the time to come along and listen to our report on activities and public benefit for the year. Like so many small grassroots charities we are feeling the demands on our volunteers and our services, and it has been challenging at times to ensure that we remain on top of everything. Sometimes people forget that we are all volunteers, giving our time and effort freely for the benefit of the local community; we are juggling work commitments, family and caring responsibilities, and our own personal lives. As Chair I am very proud of all we have achieved over this reporting period, and I would like to acknowledge and commend the hard work and dedication of everyone involved.

As most of you will be aware, we have management responsibility for a large community centre in the heart of our area of benefit which is owned by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council (NMDDC). We work hard to ensure that there is a direct benefit in terms of access to services and programmes for residents from the community centre base. We work in partnership with a range of like-minded organisations and are delighted to have anchor user groups such as Home Start and Bolster Community working from our centre.

We are grateful to the main funders who have continued to support the work of the Community Association and the development of the Community Centre, and we extend our thanks to the following:

- The Department for Communities & Newry Mourne & Down District Council – Neighbourhood Renewal Programme.
- Newry, Mourne & Down District Council for the funding provided through our Facilities Management Agreement (FMA) to cover essential running costs.
- All the User Groups in the Community Centre for contributing to our generated income streams; this vital money is directly used to support our local community.
- Confederation of Community Groups for 'hardship' support to provide financially struggling households, who meet strict referral criteria, support with utility costs.

I would also like to thank the following for their continued support:

Catherine O'Hanlon – Department for Communities who fund the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme and through it, the NR Outdoor Education Programme.

Julie Mc Cann & Laura Sage – Newry Mourne & Down District Council

Sean Mc Kevitt – Neighbourhood Renewal Coordinator, Newry Mourne & Down District Council

Kerri Morrow – DEA Newry Mourne & Down District Council

Cathy Mc Mahon – Confederation of Community Groups

Martin Connell – Southern Health & Social Care Trust

Euan Morgan & Janet Naughton – Community Restorative Justice

Newry & Mourne Extended Schools

There are many challenges facing small grassroots charities such as us and one of them continues to be in attracting and recruiting new volunteers. The expectation and pressure on volunteers and community-based organisations only seems to increase, with more reporting and bureaucracy than ever before, and it can sometimes be difficult to stay on top of everything. I'd like to take a moment and thank all our charity trustees and volunteers; you are doing an incredible and often unseen job to keep the community centre running and operating at nearly full capacity, attending numerous meetings to ensure that the needs of our community are being raised and addressed.

I would like to take this opportunity to pass on our sincerest condolences to all those families who have lost loved ones over the past year; we continue to keep you all in our thoughts and prayers.

Finally, I will conclude by thanking our community, without your ongoing support for all that we do there would be little point in continuing. I encourage you to consider getting involved as a volunteer yourself and help develop new and innovative projects to benefit the local community as we move forward.

**Gerry Mc Donald**  
**Chairperson**



*Meadow / Armagh Road Community Centre*

## Financial Review

### Financial Performance

Financial performance over this reporting period has been down when compared to previous years figures. The loss of a long-term anchor tenant in the community centre has resulted in a significant drop in rental income for the period, whilst Trustees have worked hard to ensure that the venue is being hired and utilised as much as possible, we are aware of the need to attract longer term rental income.

Trustees did not apply for any additional external grants during this period, and this also explains a lower income level overall. When we combine this with the ever-escalating costs of utilities and general running expenses for the community centre it is a challenging financial landscape.

### Income:

Income receipts for the year totalled at £20,499 as compared to £32,209 in the previous financial period– see Charity Accounts / Independent Examiners Report for full breakdown of figures.

This income is derived from a variety of sources, with the main ones being.

- £8,130 from community centre activities, including venue hire/rental income.
- £11,369 from the Department for Communities, via Newry, Mourne & Down District Council for the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme (Running Costs).

The Community Association's income remains relatively consistent, and the Trustees are committed to redressing the balance in the next financial period.

### Expenditure

Expenditure for the year totalled at £25,277, compared to £30,236 in the previous financial period. – see Charity Accounts / Independent Examiners Report for the full breakdown of the financial spend.

Expenditure was largely in line with previous years, with the main items including:

- £12,278 community centre activities expenses.
- £11,369 running costs/expenses for the community centre.
- £1,622 for insurance costs.

### Funds Materially in Deficit

As of the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024 the Meadow and Armagh Road Community Association had no funds in material deficit.

### **Major Risks**

Trustees have identified no major risks moving into the next financial period. However, as many organisations face their own funding cuts it is increasingly difficult to attract long term tenants to rent the facilities, and the short-term rentals create more insecurity in our income streams.

Trustees also note the inherent risk in trying to secure external funding streams as a means of sustainability, which is why alternative options are being explored.

### **Financial Management**

The Trustees maintain robust financial systems and have good financial management systems in place; all cheques must be signed by two out of our three cheque signatories. We have successfully held many grants and have always fulfilled all accounting, reporting and monitoring requirements; our annual accounts are independently examined and presented at the Annual General Meeting.

### **Statement of Assets and Liabilities**

The total assets of the Community Association, as of the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024, were £15,102, while liabilities were £3,764, leaving an accumulation fund of £11,338.

## Public Benefit Statement

The Trustees of the Meadow & Armagh Road Community Association confirm that they have complied with their duty under section 17 (5) of the Charities Act 2011 to have regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and that the public benefit requirement has informed the activities of the Meadow & Armagh Road Community Association in the year to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024.

In evaluating public benefit, the Trustees note that membership is open to all residents in the 'area of benefit' – (Full members aged 18 and over, Junior members under 18) – and we strive to provide a range of activities that will cater for all ages but some necessary and reasonable restrictions have been put in place for example, our youth groups' personal development programmes which would not be age appropriate for primary school children; nor would the Over 50's Club be appropriate for the young people. However, many events, activities, seasonal events and fun days are open to all ages in the community.

### Summary of Main Activities

We have management responsibility for a large, Council owned Community Centre and, it is from this community base, that many of our main activities are delivered. Our community office is regularly open for residents to call in for information, signposting, social contact and access to Wi-Fi. Our community centre is open each day with different activities and services available, we are delighted to have both Home Start and Bolster Community operating consistently from the centre and offering additional services to benefit the local community.

The community centre continues to be a very popular venue for birthday parties, and other family celebrations and we encourage people to get their dates booked into our diary early to avoid disappointment.



Our volunteers and trustees have been busy delivering our own programme of activities, events and opportunities over the year. Our Tuesday night youth group continues to grow, and it is brilliant to see so many children turning up each week to get involved in a range of different games, team-building activities, arts & crafts and much more.



The weekly Community Bingo nights are as popular as ever and remain an important vehicle for bringing the community together, reducing isolation and providing a safe and warm place for new friendships to develop and for everyone to enjoy some light-hearted fun.



The community centre was buzzing for the annual Halloween Fancy Dress Disco, and we were delighted to see the array of costumes on display; we'd also like to thank all the parents/caregivers for getting involved in the spirit of the event and helping to make it such a success.



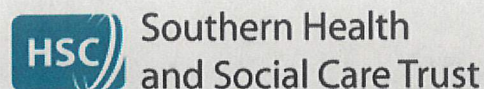
At Christmas time we ran a Craft Fayre in the community centre, and we were really pleased with the diverse range of stalls and



crafts available for purchase. It was heartening to see so many residents attend over the course of the day and they were treated to some fabulous entertainment from a local brass band, along with festive hot chocolate and marshmallows for the children and the young at heart.

We were delighted to be able to invite 130 senior citizens to our annual Christmas dinner at the Canal Court Hotel, Newry. This was a wonderful event and an excellent opportunity to bring so many isolated, older residents together for an afternoon of fabulous food and entertainment. Throughout the year, we have continued to run our older people's group and have had many different activities and opportunities available, as well as signposting them to other valuable services locally.

We have continued to work as active partners on the Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership and through the Neighbourhood Renewal Health Sub-Group and the Neighbourhood Renewal Outdoor Education Programme, we were able to get access to a wide range of health programmes for the Community Centre and provide children and young people access to outdoor activities. The physical activity programmes ran throughout the year in the community centre and offered the local community free opportunities with no barriers to participation. We are grateful to the Southern Health and Social Care Trust for managing this programme.



Throughout this reporting period there have been a range of additional opportunities on offer for children and young people, these have included:

- Arts & Crafts Workshops at different times of the year where the children got to make cards and decorations for upcoming seasonal events and celebrations.
- Valentines Disco.
- St Patrick's Day Celebrations.
- Four-week kids multi-sports programme which offered the children/young people



the opportunity to try out a whole range of different sports activities and engage in some fun competitions.

- Summer Scheme programme with a range of activities & games.

The family trip to Funtasia Theme Park, Drogheda was completely booked out;

thanks to the NR Outdoor Education programme for covering these costs.

Our annual Family Fun Day had an exceptional turnout, due in part to the glorious weather on the day, we were thrilled to have so many families choosing to spend their day with us and celebrating all that is good within our community. Everyone enjoyed the Magic Show and entertainment that followed, the outdoor games were energetic and competitive, the range of inflatables kept the children and young people busy, our face painters were exceptionally talented, and all thoroughly enjoyed the treats from the barbeque.

Trustees have also been mindful of the ongoing impact of the cost-of-living crisis on many households throughout this area; as a designated Neighbourhood Renewal area due to the high levels of multiple deprivations prevalent, these pressures are felt more acutely on already struggling households. We have maintained close working links with the local St Vincent de Paul chapter and have referred many families on for additional confidential support. Likewise with Community Advice for support with access to benefits and assistance with the completion of claim forms; and we have been working with Clanrye Group Ltd and have assisted with referrals and signposting to their Social Supermarket Scheme.

The Trustees of the Meadow and Armagh Road Community Association have continued representing the area on several different partnerships and networks to ensure that the needs of the area are being addressed through the proper channels. These include the Newry Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership and associated sub-groups; Newry Mourne & Down District Council DEA Forum, Confederation of Community Groups, the NIHE Housing Community Network, and inter-agency meetings.

# Photographic Highlights



# Photographic Highlights

