



Coiste Forbartha Charn Tóchair
Carntogher Community Association

Tuairisc na Bliana

Annual Report

Eanair – Nollaig 2022

January – December 2022



The Trustees, who are also the directors of the company for the purposes of the Companies Act, present their annual report and audited financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2022.

The information with respect to trustees, directors, officers and advisers set out on the information page, forms part of this report.

1.0 Background

Carntogher Community Association was originally set up as an unincorporated association on 8th January 1992 and formally reconstituted as a company limited by guarantee with Charitable Status on 16th December 1998.

1.1 Charitable Purposes & Constitution and how our charitable activities deliver public benefit

The trustees have had regard to the Commission's public benefit requirements and statutory guidance in so far as the charity delivers the following;

(i) to promote the revival of the Irish-language in General and within the Carntogher Area in particular.

(ii) to promote the benefit of the inhabitants of Carntogher and its environs without distinction of age, sex, race, political, religious or other opinion by the advancement of education and the provision of facilities in the interest of social welfare for recreation and leisure time occupation with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants;

(iii) to preserve for the benefit of the public whatever land buildings or other structures may exist in Carntogher and its environs of particular beauty or historical or architectural interest;

(iv) to provide or secure the provision of public amenities in Carntogher and its environs for the benefit of the inhabitants thereof;

(v) the conservation and protection of land in the Carntogher area which is of aesthetic or scientific interest.

1.2 Administration & Governance

Carntogher Community Association is registered with the Companies Registrar under registration number NI035332. It is also recognised as a charity by the Inland Revenue, NIC 104017. Its registered office is at An Carn, 132A Tirkane Road, Maghera Co. Derry BT46 SRE and most of its ongoing operations are also located at this address. The trustees and secretary of the charity are as follows:

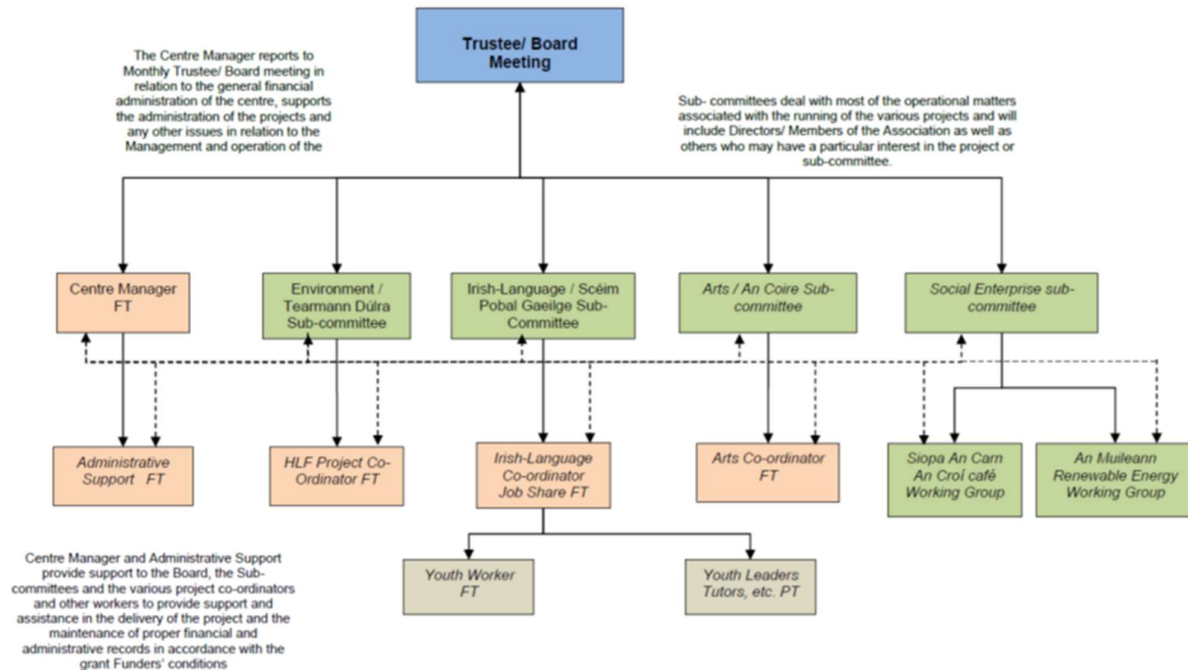
- Liam O Flannagan - Chairman
- Niall O'Kane - Secretary
- John Donnelly
- Barry Glass
- Karen Mills

The Charity also admits additional members who are involved in the management and delivery of the activities of the charity. These are appointed at the AGM and are as follows:

- Martin Diamond
- Pdraig Ó Mianain
- Diarmuid De Brun
- Susan Uí Mhianain
- Shane Ward
- John Mulholland
- Barry Glass
- Karen Mills
- Caoimhe Mhic Thaidhg
- Claire Mulholland
- Pat Mullan
- Caroline Convery

All of the above members have the option to attend the Trustees/ Board meetings and to be involved in a range of sub-committees. The charity has 7 direct employees and its social economy businesses employ over 10 full time and part time employees (6 FTE).

The operational management structure of the charity is as follows.



The Trustees/ Board meeting takes place on a bimonthly basis and the sub-committee meetings generally happen on a monthly basis. Applications for trusteeship/directorship are sought at the AGM which is advertised within the local area.

1.3 Financial Review & Reserves Policy

The Trustees, who are also the directors of the company for the purposes of the Companies Act, have approved their annual report and audited financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2022.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the accounts and comply with the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued in October 2019.

The charity's policy on restricted funds is to separately record donations, grants and other sources of fundraising where restrictions are imposed that are narrower than the charity's overall objectives. The majority of these incoming resources have been utilised in the year for their intended purpose.

The trustees have a policy of designating funds for specific purposes. The charity has received funds from a number of sources to finance the acquisition of fixed assets.

The trustees have established a policy whereby the unrestricted funds not committed or invested in tangible fixed assets of designated for specific purposes ("the free reserves") held by the charity should be between six and nine months of the resources expended, which equates to a minimum of £90,000, in general funds. At this level, the trustees consider that they would be able to continue the current activities of the charity in the event of a significant drop in income. It would be necessary to consider how the income would be replaced or activities changed.

At the balance sheet date, the free reserves, which amount to a deficit of £168,548 does not reach the minimum target level of £90,000. This showed an increase in the deficit of £142,562 from the previous year which showed a deficit in the free reserves of £25,986.

The statement of financial activities for the year is set out on pages 30-31 of the financial statements and shows a deficit for the year amounting to £95,736 (2021: surplus £130,730) This represents both restricted and unrestricted activities.

In order to deliver a long term sustainable position in relation to its core operational costs and the rebuilding of its reserves the Association will continue to adopt the strategy of promoting social economy projects in order to build a source of income including An Croí Cafe, Siopa An Carn (a gift shop/ book shop/ post office), An Teach Glas, self-catering accommodation and a new venture Prionta. To date these ventures have overall generated only a modest income to the Association, but building on the success of these ventures will provide a sustainable income to the Association that will help meet our core costs, allow match funding for various projects and to start to rebuild our capital reserves.

1.4 Investment Policy

While building its reserve, the charity aims to ensure that there is sufficient cash flow to meet its ongoing commitments. Funds that are surplus to immediate requirements will be kept available on a current account and any funds not immediately required will be invested in short term deposit accounts at the most beneficial rates available reflecting the investment period.

1.5 Risk Management

The trustees have reviewed the major risks to which the charity is exposed and systems have been established to manage those risks.

2.0 Charitable Activities - Introduction

2022 was another very challenging year for the Association with the main focus on recovery from Covid 19 restrictions and the return to normal delivery of activities and services. We feel that we have played an important role in helping individuals and our neighbouring communities to deal with the challenges post Covid and we are in a stronger position to deal with future challenges.

Overall, 2022 proved to be another busy year for the Association with a wide range of successful projects promoted during the year and growth of our social enterprises.

The following provides a summary of the activities undertaken through the various projects during the year:

Glór na nGael Competition

Coiste Forbartha Charn Tóchair won a special prize Duais an Oireachtas of (€1000) for 2022. (presented at the award ceremony in 2023).

Gradaim Gnó na hÉireann 2022

Irish Business Awards Scheme 2022

Gradaim is a recognition scheme for businesses that use Irish as part of their businesses, Siopa an Carn and An Croí Coffee House and Bistro were both successful in obtaining a gold medal for achieving the highest standards in three categories, 1. Signage, 2. Branding and Marketing and 3. Irish Language Customer & Client Service.



Scéim Forbartha Líonra Gaeilge

Scéim Forbartha Líonra Gaeilge began in January 2022 replacing the previous SPG project. The organisation was successfully in its application to the funding scheme to secure the community funding for the next 3 years. The funding scheme covers the Irish language officer wage and overheads with a small amount contributing to programme costs.

We continued and delivered a very successful range of activities online and resumed face to face classes again from September.

A full programme was delivered with a range of courses, activities/classes Irish classes for adults, one day intensive courses for adults (Seachtain na Gaeilge) and a Ciorcal Comhrá Conversation circle for adults. Numbers slow to return due to fear post Covid but had recovered by the end of 2022.

Seachtain na Gaeilge – Irish Language Week events included: a Dianchúrsa for adults – Intensive Course – 4 levels, GCSE & As & A2 Dianchúrsaí,

A concert with Gráinne Holland with local Gaelscoileanna, Lá Teaghlaigh// Family Day with Belfast Rhymers, Screening & and Q&A of Doineann , Oíche Ghaelach // Irish Night concert with Clann Mhic Ruairí, Lá na Scoileanna // Schools day for R5 – R7 & P7 from English medium schools

Feis Charn Tóchair providing a range of competitions onsite including music, traditional singing, poetry recitation, art, fáinne competition, scholarship award, writing competitions (with over 625 entries). Recordings of the poems for each age group available on our You Tube channel was of benefit to families and parents in helping their children prepare for the Feis. 25 volunteers to help co-ordinate and deliver the Feis. Children and teenagers from 31 different schools took part.

Dianchúrsa Gaeilge onsite during Féile Charn Tóchair. 4 levels.

Dianchúrsaí Cruinnis – a series of 3 Intensive Accuracy full day courses took place with 20 + adults attending per day

Irish language Editing and Translation course – 8 weeks, online course maximum 10 participants.

Spraoi an tSathairn – Saturday morning fun club through Irish for children in Rang 2 – Rang 4. Activities include – sports, team games, arts & crafts, storytelling 35+ attending weekly.

Club Léitheoireachta – Reading Club – continued online. Books posted out to participants. Met fortnightly to discuss the short story read each week.

Líonra - Since being accepted onto the Líonra project in 2015 the committee has worked tirelessly to get the project across the line. In 2022 funding was finally made available to begin work although the amount granted was much lower than the required amount as outlined in the language plan. A language planning officer has been appointed to co-ordinate the roll out of the plan. Much of the 6 months has focused on creating an action plan and prioritizing activities. We hope to officially launch the language plan in 2023 and will focus on a public awareness campaign about the language in the area and creating a support network to further help the fulfilment of the plan.



Club Oige / Youth Activities

2022 saw an increase in participation across our youth provision with approximately 100 young people registered as well as a further 15 regular voluntary youth support staff to help facilitate the clubs. With the growth in the club this year it was necessary to use different venues to have enough space as well as using Droim nDamh Nature Reserve. We have appointed a new youth officer who is leading the program as well as training the voluntary workers. We increased the number of trips and activities to reflect the demand after the Covid restrictions in 2020 and early 2021. The leadership program is underway and we hope to formalise it in 2023.



Community Library/Leabharlann Phobail

The community library offers a much-needed resource for the local community and during 2022 St Brigids PS / Bunscoil Naoimh Bríd began to visit on a regular basis to support the work of the teachers and parents.

The Library has both an English language and an Irish-language section, together with internet access, computer-based learning material including software packages, DVDs and CDs. The library is also well used by the wider community and its use is continuing to build. The Irish-language section of the library is particularly important in helping to develop a love for learning and reading in Irish outside of a formal education environment.

The Association have identified further need to enhance and update the library and funding has been applied for with plans to expand in 2023.

An Croí Coffee House & Bistro

An Croí staff have worked tirelessly to continue to build up a strong customer base in 2022 and have successfully relaunched the business as a popular eating establishment. Hospitality has been badly affected post covid with lack of staff causing many problems in 2022. These staff shortages has resulted in the café remaining closed on Sunday's. Overall, the café has been performing well throughout 2022 but rising costs, the requirement to register for VAT purposes and the reluctance to immediately pass on these additional costs to our customers has resulted in a loss for the 2022 financial year. Action will be taken to address this in 2023.



Training & Recreational Courses & Classes

A full programme of workshops and classes were delivered in 2022 and these included Pilates, Sewing, health & wellbeing talks, St Brigids Cross making, Paverpol, kids art classes to name a few. The numbers attending course/workshop recovered slowly over the year as people grew in confidence following Covid 19.



Post Office & Siopa An Carn

Siopa An Carn and Tirkane Post office are together a very important part of attracting people into An Carn and in attracting the local community into the building.

Tirkane Post Office is open 5 days a week and helps to provide more opportunities to use the service in the local community. Additional services like Amazon Hub has attracted many new customers to the Post Office and made more people aware of the services on offer.



Siopa An Carn continues to grow and expand as a well established gift/book business. With a full year of normal trading, the staff worked to

From a financial point of view this it was a successful year for the shop with its first full year trading after Covid. It contributed a £5,000 rental to the Association and employs for 4 part time staff. The trading figures for 2022 are expected to remain positive and provide great encouragement to the Association. However, we are in the process of registering for VAT and this is likely to impact our trading figures. Efforts to improve our online presence will be the key focus again in 2023 and developing a range of Irish language products.

Féile Charn Tóchair 2022

The festival is now into its 25th year and this year the Association made every effort to make it our biggest yet. The festival committee planned a full programme of events that can be found on our website: www.ancarn.org. Events included: Rith An Carn, Family Funday & BBQ, Archaeological walk by Thomas McErlean, Irish mass at Granaghan Mass Rock, Gig with Goiste, Colaiste Charn Tóchair, Adult Dianchursa, picnic at Drumnaph and Historical talk on Carntogher mountain. With over 1000 attendees, the festival proved very successful. The festival received funding from Foras na Gaeilge and Arts Council NI towards marketing, capital items and entertainment.



Drumnaph Community Nature Reserve

The three-year Drumnaph Heritage Lottery Project was scheduled to finish at the end of March 2021, however, due to the lack of activity in 2020 as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, we applied to HLF for an extension which was granted. The project was extended until May 2022 and finished throughout the year.

Capital Works

The extensive capital works programme to improve the reserve infrastructure, resurfacing of laneway entrance, creating new reserve paths/routes, installing additional gates and fencing to better manage conservation grazing, installing a toilet block and fitting out a vernacular barn to provide accommodation have all been completed.

New Children's trails were introduced on the reserve - Both the Slí na Sí and the Ogham Hunt opened in early 2022. A Donation Post has been installed on the site to raise funds for ongoing maintenance and has been well supported.

Visitor Numbers:

<u>MONTH</u>	<u>VEHICLES</u>	<u>PEDESTRIANS</u>
Apr-22	3794	6068
May-22	4027	5191
Jun-22	3807	5768
Jul-22	3650	5535
Aug-22	3768	6120
Sep-22	3205	4482
TOTAL	22251	33164

Events and Activities

During January – May 2022 we held a small number of activities as the project was nearing completion. Parent & Child Stool making, Log Hive workshop, Willow weaving baskets workshop and Annual Litter pick. At the end of May, we held a celebration event to mark the end of the 4 year project involving funders, partners and community representatives.

At the end of October, we held our Samhain Festival of Light which was a huge success. It was held over 2 nights and 600 people attended. Over 100 volunteers worked throughout the weekend in very challenging weather conditions to ensure the festival was a great success.



Cairde Dhroim nDamh Funding Record 2022

FUNDER	DATE	TOTAL AWARDED	PURPOSE
Mid Ulster Council	April 2022	£960	Adopt a Spot – Litter picking equipment
Dept. COMMUNITIES	MAY 2022	£4734	Fridge / Baler / Marquees
FORAS NA GAEILGE	APRIL 2022	£2300	LANTERN WALK
FORAS NA GAEILGE	AUGUST 2022	£5000	Spraoui events
FORAS NA GAEILGE	DECEMBER 2022	£5000	Equipment – benches/ archery equipment etc
		£17994	

An Coire / Arts Council Project Funding

Carntogher Art Programme continued to rebuild the arts within the community following the difficulties created by Covid. The programme has been varied and inclusive with the programme reflecting previous years and recommendations being implemented. The programme delivered 18 separate workshops/classes including the regular painting, fused glass, kids dance and wreath making. However, a number of new workshops like coppersmithing, afternoon tea & crafts and Weaving Wall Art proved extremely popular among participants. A total of 13 different events have happened within the programme so far including a number of music events – Lí Ban, Goiste, Jack Warnock & friends and Kathryn Mullan CD launch. A few other highlights included the annual Samhain event that attracted over 600 people to Drumnaph Nature Reserve, Culture Night involving telling the story of the Ballinscreen Harp through stories and music and Grainne Holland – Ceol na Síog show through Irish.

Thanks to the continued support of our funders, Arts Council NI & Mid Ulster District Council, who continue to support us in the delivery of the arts to our community. The project has been running very successful over the past 8 years in attracting new people to experience the arts and also develop the skills of those in the local area and further afield. A full programme has been planned for 2023 & can be found on our website www.ancarn.org



Self Catering Accommodation – An Teach Glas

Since opening in June 2015, An Teach Glas Self Catering Accommodation has been growing steadily and has gained an excellent reputation among visitors. Over the past 8 years we have welcomed visitors from all over Ireland, France, Spain, Scotland and America who have experienced the 4* facilities on offer.

Occupancy Rates

In 2022 we experienced the first complete year in business since 2019. As can be seen from Table 1, our average occupancy for the year was 37%. As can be seen in Table 3, the average occupancy rates for small service accommodation in the North is 39%, which we fall shortly below.

A) Table 1: Occupancy rates in 2022

2022							
Teach Loch Bran				Teach Shuí Finn			Average % rate per month
Available bed nights	Occupied bed nights	% rate	Available bed nights	Occupied bed nights	% rate		
January	31	13	42%	31	9	29%	35%
February	28	2	7%	28	8	29%	18%
March	31	3	10%	31	2	6%	8%
April	30	21	70%	30	26	87%	78%
May	31	13	42%	31	8	26%	34%
June	30	16	53%	30	16	53%	53%
July	31	21	68%	31	15	48%	58%
August	31	27	87%	31	18	58%	73%
September	30	3	10%	30	7	23%	17%
October	31	4	13%	31	6	19%	16%
November	30	5	17%	30	10	33%	25%
December	31	5	16%	31	13	42%	29%
Average %			36%			38%	37%
		133 days			138 days		

Table 2: Occupancy rates in 2021 (including Jan – April when there were long term bookings & services were down due to Covid)

2021							
Teach Shuí Finn				Teach Loch Bran			Average % rate per month
Available bed nights	Occupied bed nights	% rate	Available bed nights	Occupied bed nights	% rate		
January	31	31	100%	31	31	100%	100%
February	28	28	100%	28	28	100%	100%
March	31	31	100%	31	31	100%	100%
April	30	30	100%	30	30	100%	100%
May	31	8	26%	31	3	10%	18%
June	30	7	23%	30	5	17%	20%
July	31	25	81%	30	22	73%	77%
August	31	26	84%	31	26	84%	84%
September	30	12	40%	30	13	43%	42%
October	31	17	55%	31	7	23%	39%
November	30	2	7%	30	23	77%	42%
December	31	10	32%	31	12	39%	35%
Average %			62%			64%	63%
		227 days			231 days		

Table 3: Average Occupancy Rates for 2021 and 2022 of small service accommodation (formally guesthouse, bed & breakfast, and guest accommodation) in the North collected by NISRA

Month	2021 Room Occupancy	2022 Room Occupancy
January	0%	12%
February	0%	23%
March	0%	32%
April	0%	39%
May	29%	40%
June	28%	47%
July	47%	50%
August	44%	56%
September	44%	50%
October	31%	37%
November	28%	32%
December	15%	
Average	33%	39%

The Association continued to use on-line booking sites such as AirBnB, Booking.com and TripAdvisor to help to attract more guests to stay in 2023.

The houses continue to be increasingly popular, especially amongst larger groups of people and families, and the Association had increased prices for the first time since opening in 2021 to reflect the standard of services provided and the increase in costs of bills.

The houses and café are starting to work alongside each other to encourage those staying to avail of the other services provided in the An Carn Complex – we are offering a discounted breakfast for guests staying on longer stays. We are intending to extend this deal to other local accommodation providers in attempts to increase footfall during the quiet, breakfast hours in the café. Plans are also under way to create our own website to allow for online booking direct in 2023.



Tionscadal Forbartha Gnó/ Business Development Project

We received 3 year funding from Ciste Infheistíochta Gaeilge to employ a Business Development officer for supporting and developing existing and new Social enterprises at An Carn. The aim of the project is to create more streams of income, and to help the organisation become more sustainable and independent of funding. In 2022, the officer worked closely with our social enterprises – Siopa An Carn, An Croí, An Coire, An Teach Glas and Prionta to enhance their services and support their needs. In 2023, the focus will be on developing a business plan for Spraoi Ltd (Irish Language Events Company).

New Social Enterprise – Prionta Ltd

We established our new printing company in October 2021 with the aim to design and print gift in Irish. We created our own line of Christmas gifts and décor, including pyjamas, cushions and mugs, and sold these mainly to Siopa an Carn, where they proved to be a huge hit. We also sold these to other distributors, Cultúrlann Uí Chanáin and Cultúrlann MacAdam Ó Fiaich.²² In 2022, we had no production due to staff shortages. It is planned to recommence the business in 2023.

Future Projects –

The Association is continually working on new project ideas and these include for 2023:

1. Dormant Account – Long Tern Sustainability & management of Drumnaph
2. Drumnaph house & Barn – Hostel Accommodation

Use of the An Carn Facilities by other organisations

The An Carn centre is used by a number of other organisations, both commercial and voluntary.

Carn Wheelers

Carn Wheelers is the local cycling club and is based at An Carn. It uses the centre as a base for its regular monthly meetings and provides an opportunity for cooperation on activities and events. An Carn currently provides the facilities at An Carn free of charge to Carn Wheelers.



North West Mountain Rescue.

The North-West Mountain Rescue is based at An Carn and uses the centre for its regular meetings and for training events and activities as well as publicity etc. Again there are opportunities for co-operation between the mountain rescue and the Association in relation to the provision of First Aid courses and helping out at Rith An Chairn. Both groups continued to work together in 2018/2019 on Carntogher Resilience Project.



Club Óige Luraigh

Club Óige Luraigh continues to provide a range of activities through the medium of Irish for children from 8 to 18 years old. The young people play an important part in organising and delivering the events themselves and these events and activities provide an important opportunity for children to use their language within an informal and fun environment.



Sperrin Walkers Club

Sperrin Walking Club uses the An Carn centre for their monthly meetings and any training courses they deliver. We hope to establish strong links with the group in order to deliver a Carntogher Walking festival in the future.

Community First Responder Scheme – Dalriada Urgent Care



This community scheme involves volunteers from the local area who are working together with Dalriada Urgent Care to deliver grass roots medical care for members of the community. The scheme offers an essential service and support to medical professional. Quarterly training and training for new volunteers is facilitated at An Carn.

Ceoltóirí Luraigh – Machaire Rátha / Carn Tóchair

Ceoltóirí Luraigh make regular use of the buildings at An Carn for their weekly classes, which cater for approx 150 students over a range of instruments including banjo, fiddle, accordion, bodhrán, guitar, tin whistle, flute and a growing Grúpa Ceoil. On an annual basis they avail of the facilities at An Coire for a concert where these classes are showcasing their ability to their families in a state of the art venue. The committee also hold meetings at an Carn on a monthly basis.



Conclusion

During the 2022 year the Association continued to perform an important community function within the Carnogher area. The Association has continued to provide important support for a range of other organisations within the area and hopes to further extend this with ongoing collaboration and partnership building.

The sheer range of projects promoted by the Association is an ongoing challenge to its operation as a single Management Board and the Directors are currently undertaking a review of the management structure of the group to delegate much responsibility for the delivery of the various projects to a range of sub-committees.

In the process of doing this we are taking the opportunity to broaden the involvement and membership of the Group to attract people who have an interest in each of the various projects, but who may not have been interested in being involved on a general management board. If successful, this will further strengthen the function of the Association locally and in turn strengthen the viability.

2023 will be another exciting year for the Association with plans to implement better management structures and the ongoing development at Drumnaph Nature Reserve, new projects and plans to develop tourism in the area.

Statement of trustees' responsibilities in respect of the annual report and the financial statements

The trustees are responsible for preparing the financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view, in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice of the state of the affairs of the charity and of the statement of financial activities of the charity for that period. In preparing those financial statements the officers and members of the committee are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the accounts; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the club and that help ensure that the accounts comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Statement of disclosure of information to auditors

So far as each of the trustees in office at the date of approval of these financial statements is aware:

- there is no relevant information of which the charity's accountants are unaware; and
- they have taken all the steps that they ought to have taken as trustees/directors in order to make themselves aware of any relevant information and to establish that the charity's accountants are aware of that information.

Auditors

EM Accountants, 42A-44A New Row, Coleraine, offer themselves for re-appointment.

Small Company Rules

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions relating to companies subject to the small companies regime within Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

This report was approved by the trustees on 21st December 2023 and signed on their behalf by:

Niall O'Kane, Company Secretary
Carntogher Community Association