

Trustees' Report for the year ended 31st March 2024

Introduction

The directors (who are also trustees) of Action Cancer (the charity) have pleasure in presenting their Trustee Report, a Strategic Report and the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2024.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in Note 1 to the accounts and comply with the charity's Memorandum and Articles of Association, 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 the Republic of Ireland (Charities SORP (FRS 102)). The financial details are set out in the Statement of Financial Activities on page 25 and in the related notes.

Action Cancer is a charity operating in N. Ireland. The charity is registered with the Charity Commission for N. Ireland (NIC 104170) and recognised as a charity by H.M. Revenue and Customs (No. XN48533). It is also a Company Limited by Guarantee (NI 018091). The company is exempt under legislation from using 'limited' as part of its name. The registered principal address and a list of directors who served the company during the year are listed on page 3.

Action Cancer Mission, Vision and Values

Vision: *"A future where cancer risk is reduced, cancers are detected early, successfully treated and people impacted are supported and empowered".*

Mission: *"To save lives, support and improve quality of life for people in N. Ireland through cancer awareness, prevention, detection and support".*

Critical to the success of the Plan and how the charity operates are its Guiding Principles, Values and Behaviours. These are:

Guiding Principles:

1. Our services and programmes are provided **free of charge** to the end user.
2. We deliver innovative services and programmes **proven to make a difference**.
3. Location, impairment, poverty or other disadvantages **should not be barriers to access**.

Values:

1. **Putting People First:** People are at the centre of everything we do.
2. **Making a Difference:** Having a positive impact on everything we do.
3. **Being Accountable:** Operating with full transparency, honesty and fairness in everything we do.

Behaviours: We will...**treat everyone with respect, care, dignity and consideration** by...

1. Listening, hearing and responding to what people say.
2. Working together, supporting, adding value, learning from, and sharing with others.
3. Embracing and developing new ideas, ways of working and technologies.

4. Nurturing, supporting, developing and equipping our people to reach their full potential.
5. Learning from the past, building upon and celebrating our success.
6. Welcoming scrutiny and examination, taking ownership and responsibility for our actions.

Strategic Plan 'For Now and the Future 2022-2027'

In 2022, the trustees approved a 5-year Strategic Plan 'For now...and the future 2022-2027'. A thematic approach to the Plan was adopted and three key themes, of **Saving and Supporting, People and Partnership** and **Reputation and Resilience** identified. Each theme is underpinned by a Key Goal and four Key Supporting Actions. The Plan can be downloaded from the charity's website at www.actioncancer.org.

The charity operates a system of annual Operating Plans. The operational activities for the year being directly aligned to each of the Key Themes, Goals and Supporting Actions of the **Strategic** Plan. The Operating Plan identifies the activities necessary to achieve the Key Actions, as well as the timeframe and resources required to achieve the required outcomes.

Details of progress made in 2023/2024, the second year of the Plan, towards achieving the Strategic Plan's Key Goals and Key Actions is detailed in the Strategic Report below.

Overview 2023/2024

During 2023/2024, the charity celebrated its 50th Anniversary since being founded by the late Dr George Edelstyn in 1973. The initial primary purpose of the charity was to fund research into the combined use of chemotherapy and radiotherapy for the treatment of cancer and the provision of waiting, rest and recovery facilities for chemotherapy patients receiving treatment at Belvoir Park Hospital, Belfast.

The 50th Anniversary year was celebrated at a lunch held for Members and Volunteers at Belfast City Hall, at a very successful fundraising Christmas Ball at the Titanic Centre, Belfast, a staff barbecue and by a Royal visit from the Duchess of Gloucester to the charity's iconic Big Bus at Royal Hillsborough.

As is evident from the financial statements, 2023/2024 was a challenging year due primarily to the impact of inflation and increased wages on the charity's cost base and the ability of people to freely give and donate. Whilst total income in the year from all sources amounted to a very good £4,336,801 (2022/2023 - £4,013,477) total costs, including depreciation increased by £455,859 (10.96%) to £ 4,616,275 (2022/2023 - £4,160,416) resulting in an operating deficit for the year of £262,919 (2022/2023 deficit of £146,939).

The charity's bank and investment portfolio performed well producing income of £54,186 (2022/2023 £46,627) and a realised profit on the sale of investments of £16,554 (2022/2023 - loss of £9,394). At 31st March 2024 an unrealised gain of £115,657 (2022/2023 - unrealised loss of £72,283) was recorded.

As a result of the Operating Deficit and the movement on investments, £147,262 was transferred from total reserves (2022/2023 - transfer from total reserves of £228,616).

Total reserves at 31st March 2024 are stated at £5,446,685 (31st March 2023 - £5,593,947) of which £3,009,054 (2022/2023 - £3,114,397) are deemed unrestricted and usable at the discretion of the trustees.

During the year, the charity's liquidity position remained strong. Total investments and cash held at 31st March 2024 amounted to £3,207,222, a reduction of £95,987 on the opening position at 1st April 2023 of £3,303,209.

Details of the movement and source and application of funds are set out in the Cashflow Statement on page 27 and in the related notes.

Service performance for the year was good. Demand for all services continued to exceed supply with utilisation of services and programmes in excess of 85%. The total number of sessions utilised during the year was 18,525 (2022/2023 - 17,065) of which 88% were delivered face to face and 12% virtually (2022/2023 90% and 10% respectively).

The number of people using the services was 13,922, the outputs delivered and the impacts achieved, all exceeded the targets set. The performance and impact of the individual services and programmes are detailed in the Strategic Report.

2023/2024 was the first full year of delivering the charity's skin cancer detection service, a unique service provided by no other charity in Northern Ireland, the performance and impact of the service has been exceptional.

The charity's school health improvement programmes and community cancer awareness programmes have historically been delivered face to face. During the year, online/virtual Schools Educational and Workplace Learning Portals were developed and launched in early 2024/2025. Face to face programmes previously delivered in schools, community and work place settings will largely end during 2024/2025.

In addition to the development of the Health and Cancer Awareness portals, considerable development and research work was undertaken and progress made towards the establishment of the charity as a centre of Excellence in the provision of Integrative Cancer Care services and programmes. Integrative Cancer Care is a holistic support model for people affected by cancer based around focusing on the needs of the person in relation to Pain Symptoms and Sleep, Mental Health and Wellbeing and Nutrition and Physical Activity. It is planned that elements of the model will be rolled out during 2024/2025.

The charity has developed IT systems covering all aspects of its work. The charity's Client Information Management system (CID), Breast Screening Reporting system and cyber security software and protocols, were all further developed and enhanced during the year. The Cyber Security Plus certification awarded in January 2023 was maintained throughout the year and successfully renewed in April 2024 for a further year.

The impacts achieved and the differences the charity makes to so many people require an immense team effort and the involvement of many stakeholders. The trustees wish to acknowledge and put on record their sincere appreciation to all involved in the charity throughout the year. In particular they wish to recognise the staff of the charity and the many volunteers who freely and regularly give of their time. The tasks undertaken by our volunteers are numerous and include local fundraising, stewarding at events, staffing of shops, peer mentoring, manning reception desks, gardening at ACH etc. It is difficult to quantify and value the cost of the services provided free by volunteers, however we estimate that the annual cost of the time and contribution made is in the region of £500k. The trustees are also very appreciative of the continued support of a number of corporate businesses who provide 'in kind' support. These include Clear Channel NI who donated billboard and adshel advertising space at an estimated commercial value of £146,397 (2022/2023 - £96,383), Manfreight, Dennison Volvo Ltd and A1 Tyres who support the charity's mobile screening unit, "The Big Bus".

The trustees also wish to thank the thousands of people who have supported the charity through regular giving, by donating goods for sale in our charity shops, undertaking fundraising activities, through leaving a legacy, a gift in memory of a loved one or through a contribution having used one of our many services. The trustees also wish to place on record the £1.0m financial support received in the 2021-2024 period from the COVID 19 Cancer Charities Support Fund set up by the Department of Health and administered by the Community Foundation in relation to both the charity's skin cancer detection service and therapeutic and health improvement supports. The trustees also wish to express their thanks for the ongoing support of Walk the Walk Worldwide, a UK Breast Cancer charity who for 2024 provided a grant of £100,000 towards our therapeutic support services and the development of an Integrated Cancer Care model.

Capital Expenditure and Grant Support

During the year the trustees approved a business case for the replacement of the charity's breast screening system at a projected cost of £500k. This capital expenditure will be phased over a four period to 31st March 2027. In 2023/2024 the breast screening assessment and reporting software and associated hardware was upgraded and replaced at a cost of £107k. During 2024/2025 tenders for the replacement of the Mammomats (X ray machines) onboard the Big Bus and at Action Cancer House will be issued with the aim of having the new machines operational by March/April 2025. The estimated cost of the Mammomats is £360k. To offset this very considerable capital expenditure applications were made to a number of Philanthropic Trusts and Foundations. The trustee's wish to place on record their sincere appreciation and thanks for the grant support received from Ulster Garden Villages and the Garfield Weston Foundation who have committed £60k each and from the McClay Foundation who have committed £70k towards the cost of the replacement Mammomats.

There is no further capital expenditure planned for 2024/2025.

Reserve Policy

To allow the charity to be managed efficiently and to provide a buffer for uninterrupted services, the trustees annually review the reserves of the charity. For 2024/2025 the trustees have concluded that a reserve equivalent to six months of running and salary costs should be held.

Total Reserves at 31st March 2024 are stated at £5,446,685 (31st March 2023 - £5,593,947) of which £3,009,056 (2022/2023 - £3,114,397) are designated as unrestricted and usable at the discretion of the trustees. With this level of unrestricted reserves, the charity's unrestricted reserve cover remains a healthy 8 months, 2 months above policy.

The trustees, despite the principal risks and uncertainties being faced by the charity, are satisfied the current level of free reserves and available liquidity remain adequate to meet the foreseeable requirements of the charity.

Governance and Management

The role of the trustees individually and collectively, meeting as "the Council of Management" is to ensure the charity is effectively governed, that it complies with all relevant legislation including its Memorandum and Articles of Association and company law.

The charity's principal governing document is its Memorandum and Articles of Association, which were last reviewed and approved by members at the charity's 2021 AGM.

The charity has a 'Guide for Council Members' and 'Internal Control Procedures' documentation that, along with the Articles of Association, assists the trustees in the oversight of the charity.

The Council of Management is required to meet at least four times per year. It delegates aspects of finance, governance and services, to sub-committees comprising of trustees and senior management. Operational matters are delegated to the charity's management team.

The Council met on six (five in 2022/2023) separate occasions during the year to monitor performance against plan, to consider the overall governance regime of the charity and to consider its future strategic direction and long-term sustainability. The Audit and Governance Committee met on five (five in 2022/2023) occasions whilst the Professional Services Committee met on three (three in 2022/2023) occasions. An Annual General Meeting was held in Belfast in November 2023 to which all members were invited. The principal business transacted at the AGM was the appointment of two new trustees and the updating of Members on current and future planned activity.

Council / Board Composition

The charity's Articles of Association allows for up to ten trustees/directors to be appointed, three of whom must be fundraising/community group members, three from a medical or related background and three from a business background.

Trustees/directors are elected at the AGM on the basis of nominations from the membership and through the Council of Management. The trustees/directors operate in accordance with the rules set down in the Articles of Association and the Standing Orders.

When new trustees/directors are appointed, they are provided with an in-depth introduction to the work of the charity. A robust induction process briefs them on all key aspects of the charity and the regulatory framework within which it operates. Trustees are also briefed on their individual and collective legal responsibilities as directors and charity trustees.

During 2023/2024 the chair of Council, Ms Jane Adrain and company secretary Ms Ann Bowen, both having served nine years on Council were required in accordance with the Articles of Association to retire being replaced by Ms Kelly McBride and Mr Les Drew. In January 2024, Mr Clifford Coulter resigned from Council and was replaced through co-option in April 2024 by Mr Lowry Grant. The trustees wish to express their sincere thanks and appreciation for the commitment and service of Jane, Ann and Clifford to the charity.

The trustees of the charity receive no private benefit from their involvement in the charity. In 2023/2024 no trustee or connected persons received remuneration, expenses or payment (2022/2023 - £nil).

There were no conflicts of interests declared by trustees during the year (2022/2023 - none).

Principal Risks and Uncertainties - Risk Management

The ultimate responsibility for the management and control of the charity resides with the trustees and as such, their involvement in the key aspects of the risk management process is essential, particularly in setting the parameters of the process and in the review and consideration of the results. The trustees have delegated elements of the risk management process to the Chief Executive and management team, whilst ensuring that they, as trustees, review and consider the key aspects of the process and results. The task of monitoring the charity's corporate governance systems and procedures is delegated to the Audit and Governance Committee. Prior to the commencement of each financial year the

Audit and Governance Committee is required to approve the annual Risk Management programme detailing:

- The process for identifying and quantifying risks and potential liabilities.
- The development and maintenance of a Corporate Risk Register and reporting process.
- Details of corporate processes to ensure all significant risks and potential liabilities are addressed including effective systems of internal control and how risks are managed and their potential impacts mitigated.
- Contingency plans to offset the impact of adverse events.
- Audit arrangements including; internal audit, clinical audit, H&S review.
- Training and development provided for trustees, staff and volunteers on understanding and managing corporate, financial and operational risk

For 2023/2024, the Risk Management Programme and Framework was approved in March 2023. During 2023/2024, the Audit and Governance Committee considered quarterly the charity's corporate Risk Register assessing in detail the risks to which the charity was exposed and the actions in place to ameliorate, as far as possible, the occurrence and impact of the individual risks. The Risk Register as at 31st March 2024 was considered by the Council of Management at its June 2024 meeting.

In total 86 Risks have been identified. Based on a scoring matrix of Likelihood (1-5) x Impact (1-5) x Controls (1- 3) 74 (86%) are deemed to be low risk (Green), 11 (13%) medium risk (Amber) and 1 (1%) risk (Red) The highest risks as measured by weighted score are:

1. The impact of hyperinflation on the charity's cost base. Weighted Score 32 (Red)
2. A cyber-attack leading to failure or corruption of systems. Weighted Score 24 (Amber)
3. Failure to comply with legislation and regulations re the Big Bus. Weighted Score 24 (Amber)
4. An ageing SMT Team. Weighted Score 24 (Amber)
5. Failure to maintain or retain appropriate IT resource. Weighted Score 24 (Amber)
6. Staff recruitment difficulties/loss of key personnel. Weighted Score 18 (Amber)
7. A rapid movement towards a cashless society. Weighted Score 16 (Amber)
8. Inadequate finance to invest in IT and systems upgrades Weighted Score 16 (Amber)
9. Other charitable causes - natural and humanitarian disasters (Ukraine). Weighted Score 16 (Amber)
10. Lack of Volunteers. Weighted Score 16 (Amber)
11. Group fatigue. Weighted Score 16 (Amber)
12. Security of data and Information. Weighted Score 16 (Amber)

Key controls used by the charity to manage risk include:

- Comprehensive strategic and operational planning, budgeting and reporting.
- Experienced and professional management team and trustees.
- Established organisational structure, lines of reporting, segregation and delegation of duties.
- Formal written policies and protocols for all activities.
- Establishment and regular reporting of Key Performance Indicators and targets.
- Retention of good unrestricted reserves.
- Staff and Volunteer training and development.
- Insurance and the use of professional advisors.

There were no health and safety, vulnerable persons or other issues arising during the year requiring reporting to statutory and regulatory authorities or to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland.

Data Protection and Information

The trustees are very conscious of their responsibilities regarding the use and protection of data both in relation to client personal data and its use for fundraising and other activities. The trustees are satisfied that appropriate policies, processes and procedures are in place supported by adequate staff and volunteer training to ensure as far is possible, the charity is compliant with the requirements of GDPR 2018.

Uncertainties and Going Concern

It is recognised by the trustees the charity is operating in very uncertain and financially challenging times and these conditions will remain for the foreseeable future. However, the reputation of the charity is good, its services and programmes effective and proven to make a difference, the loyalty of its supporters and clients high and, its income streams diverse. The charity has in place a very experienced and qualified management team and very strong people and governance protocols.

The trustees are satisfied that the current reserves and liquidity of the charity are adequate to ensure the ongoing and uninterrupted performance of the charity throughout 2024/2025. The trustees consider there are no material uncertainties that cast significant doubt on the charity's ability to continue as a going concern and the financial accounts have been prepared on that basis.

Statement of Directors' Responsibilities

The directors are responsible for preparing the Directors' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations. Company law requires the directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the directors have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under company law the directors must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the directors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then 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 financial statements and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business

The directors are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

External Audit

AAB Group Accountants Ltd and its successor firms have been the charity's external Auditor since March 2011. They were reappointed in January 2023 for a further period not exceeding three years.

Disclosure of Information to the Auditors

So far as each person who was a trustee/director at the date of approving this report is aware, there is no relevant audit information, being information needed by the auditor in connection with preparing its report, of which the auditor is unaware. Having made enquiries of fellow directors and the company's auditor, each director has taken all the steps that they are obliged to take as a director in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.

On behalf of the Board

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelly McBride". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'K'.

Ms Kelly McBride
Secretary

Date: 28th November 2024