

MOURNE ACTION FOR SURVIVORS OF TERRORISM

TRUSTEES REPORT

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

The Trustees have pleasure in presenting their report and the unaudited Receipts and Payments Accounts of the organisation for the year ended 31 March 2024.

PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES

The principal activity of the organisation during the year was operating a Victim Support Group.

The title of the group shall be MOURNE ACTION FOR SURVIVORS OF TERRORISM, hereinafter called "MAST".

CHARITABLE PURPOSE

The objects of "MAST" shall be:

- (i) To bring relief to persons in Mourne who are suffering hardship, sickness or distress as a result of 'The Troubles' in Northern Ireland.
- (ii) To advance the education of the public in Mourne and elsewhere in the effects of 'The Troubles' and especially the effects of 'The Troubles' on children.
- (iii) To provide support and counselling services in Mourne for victims of 'The Troubles' in Northern Ireland.

PUBLIC BENEFIT STATEMENT

The purposes of MAST are :

- 1) **To bring relief to persons in Mourne who are suffering hardship, sickness or distress as a result of 'The Troubles' in Northern Ireland.** We address the social and emotional needs of victims and survivors, their families and carers; we provide recognition and acknowledgement of their trauma. This can lead to increased emotional health and wellbeing, improved self-esteem, reduced anxiety and stress. We demonstrate this by always having an open door to our members where they can come in times of need for advice, friendship, help and guidance. We have background support in place whereby we can signpost members for further help and guidance covering many situations. Our Befriending Service has a listening ear and the facility to accompany members to hospital appointments and this eases the stress for members and their families.

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- II) **To advance the education of the public in Mourne and elsewhere in effects of 'The Troubles' and especially the effects of 'The Troubles' on the children.**
- Our members have the chance to take part in transgenerational activities which allow generations of families to come together and enjoy time together. It gives members a chance to interact with others, both within our own group and with other similar innocent victims' groups that we network with throughout Northern Ireland. This addresses social and emotional needs; gives recognition and acknowledgement of the trauma they have suffered and are still suffering from. We have demonstrated this through local media showing our group taking part in our activities. We network with a group from southern Ireland and have had visits to the Lord Mayor of Dublin and The Dail where we had the opportunity to explain the history of MAST and exactly what we do as a group and how this greatly benefits members. We also had visits from the Irish Dept of Foreign Affairs & Trade. MAST has taken part in several surveys over the years conducted by students in Universities at home and abroad who are studying conflict and the effects on individuals and communities. This then shows the public how MAST has grown over the years and how it continues to benefit its members.
- III) **To provide support and counselling services in Mourne for victims of 'The Troubles' in Northern Ireland.** MAST members are able to benefit from the advice, guidance and support provided through our office. Staff members have been trained by the Victims and Survivors service on mental health issues, what to look out for and who to refer to in cases of need. Members are given social inclusion through organised workshops, training and activities. This also gives members increased self-esteem and inclusion which reduces anxiety and stress. New friendships are formed which reduces social isolation. We demonstrate this by our "Drop -In", listening ear service, befriending services, weekly and monthly group meetings where members can learn new skills through crafts and facilitators and reduce isolation by engaging with others while learning at the same time. Those with mental health problems who request counselling are referred to the appropriate counsellor through the Victims and Survivors Service. This service is provided to members free of charge. MAST beneficiaries are victims and survivors of the troubles in Northern Ireland, their families and carers. There is no harm flowing from this purpose. MAST has no private benefit. These benefits are demonstrated through evaluations following each organised event/activity. Correspondence from members and feedback surveys back this up. MAST's action plan is reviewed quarterly by our funder, Victims & Survivors Service and checks are carried out regularly to ensure that all guidelines are being followed.

MOURNE ACTION FOR SURVIVORS OF TERRORISM**TRUSTEES REPORT (cont'd)****YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024****ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE - WHAT OUR ORGANISATION DOES**

MAST provides a drop-in centre “with an open-door policy” which gives members the chance to seek advice, help with completion of forms, chat and be assured of a listening ear, all in confidence. MAST have two ladies’ groups, one meets each Wednesday for 40 weeks per year and the other is for ladies over retirement age and these meet once a month for 10 months. These ladies’ groups teach new skills to the members and in doing so increases social inclusion, new friendships are formed and maintained and also raises self-esteem. The ladies benefit from talks, presentations and this in turn reduces social isolation. MAST provide educational classes for our members which are run under the heading of personal and professional development and these have proved to be very popular. At Christmas there is an organised dinner with entertainment for the members and this is also very well attended and something that members look forward to each year. We have three respite trips per year which are cultural, educational and recreational. Once a year we have a residential respite trip which lots of our widowed members really look forward to as they are with people who understand the pain of losing a loved one to terrorism. We provide a befriending service for those who cannot attend our organised events/activities. We include second and third generation victims through our transgenerational events as we feel it is important to educate our children on family history and moving forward. As part of our annual programme, we have one of our respite day trips to the Royal British Legion Festival of Remembrance in the Waterfront Hall in Belfast. This is our way of remembering those who we have lost in World Wars over the years and during ‘The Troubles’.

REGISTERED CHARITY

The registered charity number is NIC 104634

PRINCIPAL OFFICE ADDRESS

Reivers House
10 Newcastle Street
KILKEEL
Co Down
BT34 4AF

TRUSTEE BOARD

The Trustees who voluntarily served the organisation during the year were as follows:

Board of Trustees

Sandra Harrison - Chairperson
Ian Johnston - Vice Chairperson
Laura Johnston – Appointed as Secretary 1/11/2021
Aimee Glenny – Resigned as Secretary 1/11/2021
Anne Campbell – Appointed Treasurer 1/11/2021
Joy Rooney
Bobbie Campbell

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FINANCIAL REVIEW

No funds are in deficit. Unrestricted funds held at the year-end are in excess of £15,000 (2023 – in excess of £15,000). The Trustees would like to maintain the unrestricted funds at this level to cover any unforeseen circumstances in the future.

GOING CONCERN

MAST is dependent on continuing funding from the Victims & Survivors Service. However, if this source of funding was not forthcoming in the future, the charity would continue on a reduced voluntary basis until new funders were found. The Trustees are of the opinion the charity will continue in operation for the foreseeable future.

RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS ACCOUNTS

The accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024 were available to the members on 07 June 2024.

These accounts were formally approved and signed by the Trustees on 07 June 2024.

Signed by order of board of Trustees:



Laura Johnston
Secretary