

**Causeway Rural & Urban Network**  
**Company Limited by Guarantee**  
**Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report)**  
**Year ended 31 March 2024**

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The trustees, who are also the directors for the purposes of company law, present their report and the unaudited financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2024.

**Reference and administrative details**

**Registered charity name** Causeway Rural & Urban Network

**Charity registration number** NIC104883

**Company registration number** NI056878

**Principal office and registered office** 1 Brook Street  
Coleraine  
BT52 1PW

**The trustees**

Robert Ritchie  
Angela Welch  
Albert Clyde  
Indu Jairath  
Dorothy Moore  
Thomas McGonigle  
Anthony McGarvey  
Patrick Crothers (Appointed 10 September 2023)

**Network Manager** Ann McNickle

**Company secretary** Robert Ritchie

**Independent examiner** Donaldson & Thompson Chartered Accountants  
3 Limavady Road  
Londonderry  
BT47 6JU

**Structure, governance and management**

The organisation is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 17th October 2005, accepted as a charity by HM Revenue & Customs under reference number XR44321 and registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland on 1st April 2016 under charity number NIC104883. The company was established under a Memorandum of Association which states the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its Articles of Association. In the event of the company being wound up members are required to contribute an amount not exceeding £1.

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#### Objectives and activities

The charitable purpose of the company is: The advancement of community development in Northern Ireland (the "area of benefit") and in particular the promotion of the community and voluntary sector for the benefit by providing services, training, support, information, facilities and amenities to community and voluntary groups and encouraging and assisting such groups and organisations to co-operate to achieve their aims.

- (1) To develop the capacity and skill of residents of communities in the area of benefit that suffer social and economic disadvantage, in such a way that they are better able to identify, and help meet their needs and participate more fully in society.
- (2) The advancement of health and well-being.
- (3) To promote good community relations, religious and racial harmony and equality and diversity.
- (4) To promote such other charitable purposes as may from time to time be determined.

CRUN was established in September 1999 as a network of local community and voluntary groups with the aim of enabling regeneration and encouraging sustainability in local communities through community development processes. The network has worked tirelessly since it was established and currently has a database of over 240 organisations with more coming forward every year. Many changes have taken place over the years and CRUN currently implements a range of training and mentoring programmes in Community Development, Good Relations, Substance Misuse Education and Prevention and Positive Mental Health and encourages an ethos of collaborative working and sustainability to all of its members. Programmes and projects are delivered based on evidence and identified need within the Causeway Coast and Glen's area.

The charity's trustees have had regard to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit.

#### Achievements and performance

CRAB has maintained a level of funded projects to enable the organisation to continue to support the community within the Causeway area. We have adapted our way of working, since the global pandemic and now have a hybrid way of connecting and also engaging with individuals and community groups in the area. However, more groups and participants are wanting to return to 'in person' events.

The continued support from the Department of Communities has enabled CRUN to retain its core staff to oversee the current projects, as listed below, and apply for further funding to 'Empower People Develop Communities Enable Change'

During 2023/24 the projects have adapted and continued to excel within the communities that they support.

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#### Achievements and performance *(continued)*

The YEAR Project, funded by National Lottery Community Fund has been funded since 1 April 2013 and has offered a range of activities. A summary of the key activities that have been undertaken with the young people are:

New young people have been signing up since September 2023, all young people experiencing low self esteem and confidence, anxiety, isolation and loneliness. All young people now coming are also dealing with autism and/or ADHD and/or other learning difficulties such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, however overall contact positive and regular for most young people.

- Youth Led Group Activities
  - Gaming spaces - character design and campaigns -this built personal development, confidence and team work.
  - Talks on blacksmithing and herbal remedies
  - Vinyl cutting and t-shirt printing
  - Young People, Housing and Hidden Homelessness Interactive Training Events
  - 3d model printing and painting
  - Budgeting and job searches
- Accredited Training
  - OCN Crafting was completed and signed off Feb 2024
- Unaccredited Training
  - Journalling, CV Development, Job Searches, budgeting, journalling, herbal remedies, mixed media art and design, glass art and copper foiling.
- One to one support
  - As and when requested by young people, most support given through group work sessions 2-3hrs, 4-7 sessions per week.
- FareShare Project
  - In response to an identified need of service users we have continued the FareShare Project in place with a focus on reducing food waste to remove stigma of young people using a food bank. FareShare supports approximately 20-30 people per week.
- Partnerships & Community activities
  - Young People were supported to work with theatre company to design and deliver interactive training sessions for professionals, parents and anybody currently working with young people experiencing barriers to independent living.
  - Supporting loneliness and isolation research carried out by Noel Wilson through network through University of Ulster, assisted Noel with presentations throughout the Young People Housing and Hidden Homelessness Interactive Training sessions.
  - Partnership work with Community Foundation NI on Community Solutions to Housing and Homelessness Programme
  - To support lifestyle, social and economic independence and inclusion for young people liaising with
    - Links Counselling
    - Jobs & Benefits
    - NRC
    - University of Ulster
    - N.I. Anti-Poverty Network

Referrals and Signposting - Links Counselling, BRAKE, Triangle Housing, Jobs & Benefits, NRC

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#### **Achievements and performance** *(continued)*

The FareShare scheme has continued to be a great asset to many young people and their support networks. The scheme has allowed YEAR to support young people and their families during the cost-of-living crisis. Everything from weekly food packages to ensuring young families had enough over Christmas to be able to afford heat, electricity, presents for children and food instead of having to choose between presents and food. Parents of young people are supported through the FareShare scheme which decreases the amount of stress in the family home making home life more manageable for both the young people and their support networks. The pop in facility in Room One also provides a safe space for young people to call in to when they just feel the need to have a bit of their own space.

The Brake Project has worked directly with 18 young people since 1 April 2021. We have been able to offer a variety of support to the participants who are engaging including; small group training sessions, 1:1 training sessions, group activity sessions and fortnightly 1:1 goal setting / review sessions.

Group Training Sessions - Groups sessions have offered the participants an opportunity to interact with peers and to develop their skills and qualifications

1:1 Training sessions - 1:1 sessions have been provided to participants who feel unable to engage in group sessions.

Group Activity Sessions - This quarter group activity sessions have included weekly gym sessions, cookery and community project development.

Team Building Activity - We have offered a range of team building activities this quarter which have included The Chocolate Factory and the Cinema.

1:1 Support Sessions - These sessions are completed on a fortnightly basis and take place in local coffee shops, walks on the beach.

The Fresh Start programme funded through Department for Communities 63 women regularly attending across three sites, Ballysally, Killowen and Central Coleraine. All women are recruited from areas of high deprivation and there is evidence of paramilitary behaviour or community tension. All three areas have low numbers of women in community leadership roles.

Ballysally Women's Group meet in Ballysally Youth and Community Centre and investment from this programme allows the use of a large social space, kitchen and adjoining hall where parent-led creche is located. Women within this group are invested in the programme in terms of commitment and volunteering time taking turns to shop, cook, plan sessions and contribute to organised events. Women who attend this group are carers for parents and children including adult children with long term conditions, single parents, cohabiting, married and divorced. A high proportion of this group manage their own mental or physical conditions alongside caring for others. Younger members of this group avail of the creche facility provided and we have nine children under the age of four registered.

The group operates in term time and the focus since November has been money management and mental well-being. Members of the group highlighted the stress of the cost-of-living crisis and two

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#### **Achievements and performance** *(continued)*

child limit for Universal Credit leaving no option but informal money lending and this has been disastrous. As part of the volunteering, leadership and capacity building elements of the programme the group have developed and delivered two successful community events in the community centre. A 'Mrs Claus' Christmas event and a 'Spring Fair'. Everyone was provided with volunteering opportunities and recruited other members of the community to come along and help and over 500 people engaged across the two events. The group undertook a study visit to Belfast Zoo which was very successful and aimed at alleviating holiday poverty in the estate.

We held an information session facilitated by the Northern Ireland Childminders Association going over the detail of how group members could become registered child minders as a potential career. This was hugely informative and was well received.

The Killowen Group has been established since February and have been meeting weekly in the local primary school. They have availed of a programme of mental health, crafting, health eating and talks by local agencies including Surestart and Homestart. For their social action and volunteering project they have taken over a disused community garden in negotiation with the local community association and begun transforming it into a shared space the whole community can enjoy. They have worked hard clearing the site, planning new grown beds, repairing a polytunnel and generally clearing weeds and rubbish. Their aim is to continue their volunteering over the summer to maintain the garden and develop further renovation of the site. The group undertook a study visit to Wild Ireland in Donegal. Suicide Prevention small grants provide much needed support to 11 community organisations/groups and helped over 500 beneficiaries and numerous volunteers providing 1050 volunteer hours for the groups. Some of the activities included in the grant applications have been for people and communities to socialise again in a safe environment. The Community based Suicide Prevention Development Officer's (SPDO) is a joint community resource between CRUN and NACN with the aim of protecting and improving mental health and wellbeing whilst reducing health inequalities. Suicide prevention is a key priority of the CRUN/NACN SPDO which requires action across many sectors including working across early years, education, health, schools, communities, sports clubs and churches.

The Coleraine Group has been meeting since February and has engaged in a range of activities including mental health workshops, Accredited first aid training, money management, crafting, and volunteer development. The group undertook a study visit to the Folk Park and are now developing their volunteering project which they are aiming to bring all of the women in the project together to network.

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#### **Achievements and performance** *(continued)*

The Spring programme continued till July 23 with the social prescriber receiving referrals from GP and Primary Care providers in the legacy Coleraine Borough Council area for support with - social isolation, low level mental health, chronic pain and physical inactivity.

In August 23 we started the HELP Project which is funded by the National Lottery Community Fund, with initial project set up - conceptual meetings, establishing referral partners and referral pathways, forward planning/consultations, advertising/branding. Programmes were open for referrals in late September and classes were rolled out from October 2023. The first quarters activities were: yoga, textile art, learning to paint, coffee & connect, crafting and book club - a total of 34 sessions ran until mid-December these were all facilitated in the CRUN building, Coleraine. During this time personal plans were formulated with engaging participants and tailored opportunities identified to provide support on their wellness journey. Signposting was also offered to those who needed guidance outside of the HELP programme.

In January - March 2024 a further 40 sessions covered: yoga, textile art, wellness, craft (all carried on from the previous quarter) with new additions being chair exercise and pain management (as identified by Steering Group and/or referral partners as provision needed). Staff continued to develop wellness plans with the engaging participants both individually as well as in a group setting. In March - May 2024, the number of individual sessions increased again to 53 with the new sessions delivered being pharmacy support and additional chair exercise classes being held in Ballymoney in the evening - to facilitate a request from Ballymoney Family Practice for a mobility and strength exercise to be held in the town for a group of physiotherapy referred patients living in the area and many of who could only access evening classes due to other commitments.

Additional sessions were available to project participants through wider CRUN projects - (ie Women's Group) and these totalled 46 sessions. The ages of participants referred ranged from: 26 years to 81 years and met the criteria of those who are experiencing marginalisation due to their health and wellbeing. A total of 106 referrals were received with 69 referrals actively engaging with the programme throughout the first year.

A Steering Group was established with representatives from referral agencies covering the medical and community referral pathways. The Steering Group have met once a quarter throughout the first year.

The initial 5 Community Wellbeing Ambassadors have now been established and have attended sessions co-designed to their needs in their new roles. A further 4 beneficiaries are ready to join this network in Year 2 as per our initial plan that anyone wanting to progress after a year can put themselves forward to become an Ambassador. Currently we have had 74 beneficiaries and 5 volunteers.

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#### **Achievements and performance** *(continued)*

Suicide Prevention small grants provide much needed support to 14 community organisations/groups and helped over 300 beneficiaries and numerous volunteers providing 250 volunteer hours for the groups. Some of the activities included in the grant applications have been for people and communities to connect and socialise again in a safe environment. The Community based Suicide Prevention Development Officer's (SPDO) is a joint community resource between CRUN and NACN with the aim of protecting and improving mental health and wellbeing whilst reducing health inequalities. Suicide prevention is a key priority of the CRUN/NACN SPDO which requires action across many sectors including working across early years, education, health, schools, communities, sports clubs and churches.

CRUN has also individually worked with many groups offering advice and support on Capacity Building, Partnership Working, Grants Applications, Financial Good practice, Mentoring Support, Charity Commission Applications & Risk Assessment Procedures, which was made more difficult during the pandemic. Fourteen community groups have availed of annual accounts preparation and independent examination as required by the Charity Commission.

#### **Financial review**

The results for the year are contained in the financial statements from page 8. The Network has continued to receive funding from various government agencies and funders to support the varied work that they undertake. This has been received through various tender and grants processes. The reserves of the organisations have been maintained at a constant level to enable it to continue for a short period of time in the event of them being unable to obtain funding, this also ensures that the Company can meet its legal redundancy requirements.

#### **Plans for future periods**

Hopefully the pandemic will start to have less of an effect on the population and we will return to a new normal, with groups being able to meet up. The trustees will continue to build on what Causeway Rural & Urban Network has established over its 30 years and maintain its core values and objectives to ensure the continued development within the communities of the Causeway area and beyond.

#### **Small company provisions**

This report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies entitled to the small companies exemption.

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The trustees' annual report was approved on 5 November 2024 and signed on behalf of the board of trustees by:



Robert Ritchie  
Trustee



Albert Clyde  
Trustee