

**SUMMER MADNESS (NI) LTD
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)**

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

The trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2023.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charity's governing document, 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)" (effective 1 January 2019).

Objectives and activities

Summer Madness exists to enthuse, equip, and engage the youth and young people of Ireland in their Christian faith so that they may be real change-makers in their churches and communities across the island. The principal object of the company is organising the Summer Madness Christian summer conference. Our aim is to support young people as they integrate life and work and faith in ways that benefit society more widely in improving their citizenship and social responsibility.

Summer Madness runs Ireland's largest Christian youth event. The camp was started by Church of Ireland Youth Department over thirty years ago and now attracts up to 2,000 visitors, many of whom camp on site for the duration of the conference. It usually takes place on the first weekend of July and runs from Friday to Tuesday and, for five years has been held at Glenarm Estate, Northern Ireland. In 2020 the camp was cancelled for the first time due to Covid restrictions. In 2021 we organised a very different style of festival with limitations on numbers and activities. In 2022 we re-located to a site in Portglenone, grazing farmland within the boundaries of the contemplative Cistercian community at Our Lady of Bethlehem Abbey (11 Ballymena Road, Portglenone, Ballymena, BT44 8BL).

In 2023 we returned to the monastery grounds in Portglenone and are beginning to feel very much at home there. The growing relationship with the monastery and Brother Aelred (soon to be Dom Aelred), who leads is already precious enough to believe there could be a God-purpose at work here.

"Make it easier to organise and make it easier to attend."

This is John Kee's mantra for his five-year plan. We are about two years in. There have been significant developments in 2023.

- The Board members all have definable roles through the year and at the festival.
- The team leaders are all-year-round involved and are adopting processes for recruiting and replacing themselves (when it happens).
- The 'silver servers': a growing band of semi- or fully retired volunteers giving of their expertise from their working lives. They are making a huge contribution to admin, management, organisation, logistics, and getting the work done.
- Madapps is now a significant resource to campers before, during and after the festival. Youth groups may also use the app corporately. The Board and Team Leaders also have access to relevant areas of policy, rotas, guidelines and training. Much credit is due to the small team who develop and maintain this digital resource.
- Finance/fund-raising continues to be challenging. The Pancake Parlez (a pancake breakfast in Vicryn, loosely around Shrove Tuesday) created a buzz among potential funders and other Youth Ministry leaders. This will become an annual event, sharing the vision and the opportunities. The financial statement reflects some of the income that came directly from that event.
- We are one year closer to the end of the lease on the ground we now use. Spring 2025 is the target. Conversations with the monastery and the farmer are slow but going in the best direction.
- The festival camping infrastructure continued to grow in terms of the campers. Gathering groups into subcamps with gathering and catering facilities has dramatically improved the camping possibilities for many groups. This can only get better and more used by groups of groups.
- The Constitution has been re-examined for the first time since we became a company (2006). A refresh on the objects to bring us in line with other youth ministries and charities will be presented to the Charities Commission in 2024. The aim is to keep ourselves true to the original vision while also keeping the company described in language that reflects a changing culture of church and society.

SUMMER MADNESS (NI) LTD
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

There are negatives that we should have the courage to mention as well.

- There are alternative camps/festivals appearing in the summer calendar. Delicate discussions have happened but are from over.
- Some team leaders have expressed their time may be drawing to a close.
- Post-covid volunteering has affected many charities and churches. Finding the correct number of leaders for a camping group is difficult for many groups. Summer madness is not independent from their progress and re-growth.
- Camping is not "cool" in every youth leader's experience or programme. Thus, the need for us to make it "easier to attend".

Statement of Compliance

The trustees have paid due regard to guidance issued by the Charity Commission in deciding what activities the charity should undertake.

Achievements and performance

This year's Festival was our second year post-pandemic and saw the ongoing development of the Portglenone site. Access to and around the site before, during and after the festival have been improved. Lane surfaces have been stoned, gates widened, one-way systems in place and better signage. Summer Madness has re-located a few times in the past, so we know about measured and longer-term development and resources. The location of the village, the Big Top, catering, toilets, and car parking have all been improved, although we realise there is always an element of ready, aim, fire...and then reassess. Numbers also increased again taking the festival to closer to 2,000 people participating.

The Festival theme was Power To Change. As always there are different perspectives that we hope our speakers will develop – power to be changed and power to be change-makers. The Mainstage speakers were Pippa Baker (One Hope Project), Rachel Gardner (Youthscape), Esther Swaffield (International Justice Ministries), and Ken Coster (Woodvale Church). We also had rapper Guvna B bringing his own take on the life of faith in a challenging worldscape.

Broader reflections:

The festival has a direct impact on individual lives; and that is at the heart of what we do for sure. But it's not the whole story. We have come to recognise that Madness can act as something of a beacon or catalyst within our society, communities and the church at large...providing a sign of God's activity in the world and a symbol of hope for the next generation.

We are not the end, but rather one of the means. We are here to support the local church and local youth groups that reach out to young people throughout the year. We can see how churches and youth groups are invigorated and renewed through Madness. The church is undoubtedly the hope of the world, but a church without a vibrant youth ministry is unlikely to be growing and multiplying.

Summer Madness really does operate on the basis of partnerships with many organisations and agencies and has built up the relationships amongst the youth ministry community. We have a huge input and support from Youth For Christ, Crown Jesus Ministries, the Hub Chaplaincy, Tearfund, IJM, Youth Link, 24-7 Prayer, Street Pastors, Salt Factory Sports and the Big House.

Financial review

The Financial Statements deal with all the income and expenditure of the charitable company, as well as its financial position at the year end. The results for the year and the financial position were considered satisfactory by the trustees.

At 31 December 2023, total charity funds were £72,966 (2022: £146,209).

Principal funding sources and how they support key objectives

For our ongoing work we are funded by ticket sales at festivals, regular monthly donors, one-off donations, tax refunds on gift aided donations and grant support from Public bodies. For special projects we seek funding from supportive organisations and individuals.

In previous years the charity received Education Authority Funding in relation to the MadApp. As agreed with the Authority unspent monies received totalling £66,726 was returned during the year to the Education Authority. This has been released and accounted for in the financial statements.

SUMMER MADNESS (NI) LTD
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

Risks and uncertainties

The Board continues to support the need for a 'reserve policy'. This would also bring the company in line with the Charities Commission advice on reserves.

It is the policy of the charity that unrestricted funds which have not been designated for a specific use should be maintained at a level equivalent to six month's support costs. The trustees consider that reserves at this level will ensure that, in the event of a significant drop in funding, they will be able to continue the charity's current activities while consideration is given to ways in which additional funds may be raised. Reserves at 31 December 2023 amounted to £72,966 (2022: £146,209) which includes designated funds of £5,000 for costs in relation to the quest for a permanent site for the annual festival.

Plans for future periods

Our current challenge

Over the past four decades the Summer Madness Board have navigated many opportunities and threats in pursuing their mission to pass on the faith to the next generation. Through times of real community conflict, several re-locations, a massive reduction in church attendance, a global pandemic and major cultural shifts in attitudes, thinking and worldviews the 'annual summer festival' has remained a faithful and very effective tool in reaching young people and invigorating church youth ministry across the country.

The long-term plan

Our goal is to make Summer Madness easier to organise and easier to come to, so that the next generations can avail of similar opportunities to encounter Christ and grow in their faith.

There is no doubt that the landscape has shifted massively post-covid with groups struggling to raise up similar cohorts of volunteers as before and generational expectations around creature comforts - even in the context of camping!

We hope to establish a top-class campsite and retreat / festival space that groups and ministries could use for at least six months of the year. This could facilitate youth outreach programmes, men's ministries, Big Church Day Out - style events and host initiatives that will build up the church and encourage groups to work together for the sake of the kingdom.

The sustainability of such projects becomes more attainable through an appropriate permanent infrastructure and plug 'n play facilities that avoid the need to re-invent the wheel each year. More next time!

Structure, governance and management

The charity is a company limited by guarantee and is constituted under a Memorandum of Association dated 24th June 2005 and is recognised as a charity by HMRC, charity number XR83441 and by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, charity number NIC104975.

The trustees, who are also the directors for the purpose of company law, and who served during the year and up to the date of signature of the financial statements were:

| | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Mr D Johnston | (Resigned 21 September 2023) |
| Mr F McMorrow | |
| Rev Adrian McCartney | |
| Mr D Wilson | |
| Mrs R Alderdice | |
| Mrs J Russell | |
| The Venerable B Forde | |
| Mr J Hayes | |
| Mr J Currie | |
| Mr C Lockhart | (Appointed 1 November 2023) |

**SUMMER MADNESS (NI) LTD
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

As required on an ad hoc basis the trustees discuss the appointment of potential new trustees for appointment to the Board. Suitable people are approached and if they are willing to serve on the board their nominations are put forward for approval by the Board. The trustees are appointed for three years and are available for re-election. New members receive the relevant governing documents and the annual financial report. In practice all trustees stand for re-election each year at the AGM.

Board development

Conor Lockhart was proposed and agreed as a new Board member. He comes among us as a former camper and volunteer at the festival. His professional contribution will be derived from his work as a barrister. Welcome, Conor.

The chief executive officer of the charity is Mr John Kee, Chair of the board of Trustees is Rev A McCartney and Honorary Treasurer is Mr J Hayes.

The Board of Trustees is responsible for all aspects of corporate governance within the charitable company. It meets a minimum of six times a year to define and agree strategic priorities for the charity, monitor progress and review the resources available to sustain the charitable company. The day to day running of the charity is carried out by the Chief Executive, John Kee.

Risk management

The trustees have assessed the major risks, to which the Charity is exposed, in particular those related to the operations and finances of the charitable company. The trustees are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate any exposure to major risks.

Public Benefit statement

Trustees have complied with the duty to have regard to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's statutory guidance on the public benefit requirement, issued under the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008.

Closing comments

Some people just cannot be overlooked and should be named (even though they will hate this). Darren Wilson and his work in developing the site. There is no obstacle that cannot be moved or re-shaped. Alongside him, when it comes to raising the tents and building the camp, Stephen McKinty is unequalled. And back, hidden away in the office, the voice of an angel on that phone constantly – Anne Shields. As you continue in this report you will come to the financial report, prepared for us by Alan Moore of Moore Braniff. Alan's annual comment to us annually is that James Hayes prepares the accounts beautifully and accurately! On top of all of them we need to again thank John for vision, drive, energy, creativity and the simple commitment to keep doing this year after year. You are all much appreciated and admired.

There is a phalanx of volunteers, team leaders, Board members, youth leaders...there is no Summer Madness festival without all of them. Thank you.

At our last AGM in 2023 I stated my intention to step back from the Board and the role of Chair. Avoiding writing my own eulogy here, let me say it has been a great wee journey with you for many years. And don't panic, I will still be in 'staff catering'.

The trustees' report was approved by the Board of Trustees.

Rev Adrian McCartney
Chairman

26 September 2024