

Lower Shankill Community Association

Trustees' Annual Report

Year ended 31 March 2024

The trustees 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 Lower Shankill Community Association

Charity registration number NI 105712

Principal Office 21 Percy St
Belfast
BT13 2HS

Trustees and Committee Brian Watson
Derek Hamilton
Robert Harris
Nichola Harris
Sarah Drake

Independent Examiner Vivien Davidson, MIAT
65 Carnaghliiss Road
Nutts Corner
BT29 4TT

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Structure, governance and management.

The management of Lower Shankill Community Association is made up from a number of representatives from the local churches and nominees from a range of local community organisations.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to drive social change by breaking the cycle of long term deprivation by tackling social exclusion, poverty, and social injustice through supporting community-based action and influencing policy development.

Core Members:

Lower Shankill Community Association

Affiliated Members:

The management committee is elected at the Annual General meeting after nominations have been received from the local community organisations.

Objectives and activities

Lower Shankill was established in response to an identified community need. There was a failure by the statutory agencies to fully address the various issues highlighted by the community.

The Association is established to promote the Advancement of Citizenship and Community Development. The benefits to the public are open and accessible programs for developing and promoting civic values through encouraging voluntary and community activity by assisting with the development of the community through Physical, Economic and Social renewal. We promote Social inclusion through volunteering and hosting a range of activities to involve all sections of the community and through the provision of dedicated community facilities. The following benefits flow from our purposes; Residents are active and involved. Community groups are resilient and thriving. People have access to services and support. Community buildings are welcoming and inclusive. Community groups are influential and engaged. These benefits are being demonstrated through a number of avenues, helping to establish new voluntary organisations to meet a need which is not currently being met. Assisting voluntary and community organisations in extending their activities to further benefit the public. Extending the participation in the voluntary sector of sections of the community who are underrepresented within the sector. Improving the services of the voluntary sector in terms of efficiency,

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effectiveness and quality. Providing a range of locations and buildings to host activities. The charity's beneficiaries are those individuals living or working within the geographical catchment area as described in the governing document of Lower Shankill Community Association.

The group was established to promote the benefit of the community, without distinction of gender, political, religious, or other opinions, by the provision of education, cultural, recreational, and training, employment and counselling facilities to improve the quality of life of all within our catchment area.

In achieving these objectives Lower Shankill Community Association promotes and deliver a number of inter related projects. These projects are designed to remove and break the cycle of deprivation, reduce and alleviate poverty that is prevalent in the community. The projects include women and youth programmes, elderly health project, sporting and recreational activities, the promotion of neighbourhood renewal; including physical development, social development, capacity building, education and training, community safety and cross community good relations building.

Strategic Aims

- To work in partnership with community and voluntary organisations to achieve social change and to promote the rights of those most disadvantaged and excluded in our society through the delivery of a range of relevant programmes and proactive development initiatives.
- To work with a range of other groups to maximise the resource available for effective support work that is consistent with the objectives of Lower Shankill Community Association and with the priorities of the local community.
- To challenge, inform and influence policy and practice, locally, citywide and regionally.
- To increase social capital and support community development work throughout the community with individuals and established and emerging groups where it is most needed.
- To contribute to the building of a more sustainable community infrastructure which gives a collective voice to our area's needs.

Of central importance to Lower Shankill Community Association in achieving a positive impact on multiple deprivation through partnership is the delivery of a range of "in house" initiatives. We are meeting the needs of the local community through the provision of support under nine main themes.

1. Building strong, safe, attractive and sustainable communities.
2. Helping people move towards and into work as well as increasing the skills level.
3. Improving community relations.
4. Raising educational attainment.
5. Engaging young people.
6. Improving health and wellbeing.
7. Support and development of older people.
8. Provision of advice services.
9. Building the Social capital of local residents.

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We do this through a range of methods:

- Development of focus groups.
- Attending conferences.
- Funding applications.
- Engaging with the planning process.
- Health and Safety training.
- Advocating on behalf of local residents.
- Training volunteers with committee skills; decision making processes; financial procedures.
- Developing suitable constitutions.
- Committee training.
- Role of Chairperson, secretary, treasurer.
- Setting up a bank account.
- Health promotion activities.
- Financial processes.
- Roles and responsibilities.
- Decision making.
- Developing outcomes.
- Management of time.
- Child protection guidance.

Achievements and performance

The Lower Shankill Community Association has achieved a number of self-set targets in relation to assisting the community with its general development and aspirations for the future. The organisation is regularly monitored by a range of funders to ensure we are achieving specific targets as per funding agreements. These include Belfast City Council, capacity building program, the Department for Communities, Community Empowerment division, and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

Financial review

Lower Shankill Community Association have established an internal process to examine expenditure on a monthly basis and a risk assessment is carried out to ensure that budget forecasts are strictly adhered to. Expenditure and balances are provided to the committee on a monthly basis. In addition to the internal process, we submit progress reports to our funders on a quarterly basis. All our financial processes are fully documented and examined and checked through three stages before signing off on any expenditure.

Plans for future periods

A strategic plan to guide Lower Shankill Community Association throughout its existence for fifteen years has been developed on an inclusive basis, characterised as it is by some of the most challenging economic conditions seen for many years. For the Shankill community served by Lower Shankill Community Association, economic hardship has been a constant and unwelcome companion for many years and the multiple deprivation statistics provide a compelling argument, that the locality suffers more in social and economic terms than the vast majority of the rest of Northern Ireland. Against this backdrop

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there is a clear need for the range of activities to address local needs which are enabled by Lower Shankill Community Association. Some is through direct provision, and others, as a result of Lower Shankill Community Association's strategic role in partnership with other agencies. The Strategic Plan represents a mature acknowledgement that there is a priority this year on consolidating the good work which has been ongoing, rather than diluting the effectiveness of this work by digressing towards a wish list of additional initiatives.

The work of Lower Shankill Community Association is based on real local needs and this work is effective. The organisation has developed its capacity in recent years to enhance this effectiveness and it is imperative that the resources are found to continue the current programme. Continued difficulties still arise as a result of major roof damage caused by a malicious fire. AVIVA Insurance protracted delay in establishing payment of the damage costs has resulted in the continued use of temporary premises in the area. The Association is most appreciative of the support of Belfast City Council in providing the premises.

We will continue to consult with a range of statutory groups and organisations, Belfast City Council, the Department for Communities, NI Housing Executive and a number of established community organisations. We wished to ensure that the strategic development plan is in keeping with the developing the city ethos and to ensure we do not duplicate services delivered by other organisations. Lower Shankill Community Association conducted regular feedback methods to get an indication of the issues that people have concerns with and potential solutions to problems highlighted. As a hub of community activity, the views and concerns of the community are readily available and will continue to be acted upon. Adapting the service we provide to aim changing circumstances due to cost of living issues is very important for the Association to remain a vitally point of contact for all members of the community.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TRUSTEES

The charity's trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

The law applicable to charities in Northern Ireland requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). The trustees 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 charity and the income and expenditure of the charity for that period.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

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

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008. 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.

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The trustees' annual report was approved on 10th June 2024 and signed on behalf of the Affiliated Members:

Brian Watson
Trustee

