

C.H.A.R.T.E.R. FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Communities Having a Response Towards Economic Regeneration

(A company limited by guarantee)

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Trustees' report (including Directors' Report) for the year ended 31 March 2024

The trustees, who are also directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law, have pleasure in presenting their Trustees' Report and the audited Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2024. The trustees have adopted the provisions of 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 (Charities SORP 2019 (FRS 102)), in preparing the trustees' report and financial statements of the charitable company which are also prepared to meet the requirements for a directors' report and accounts for company and charity law purposes. The Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) shows the gross income from all sources.

Chairperson's report

I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the Staff and Management for their determination, dedication and commitment to our organization. As a voluntary board we are aware of the current difficulties around the community voluntary sector with regards to long term sustainability of projects year on year. With that said I would like to thank our funders who constantly support our staff and the development of our organisation by providing us with the financial support for community programmes, and in turn allow us to support our community groups and local residents.

Many concerns have been raised regarding hardships facing many of our pensioners in our communities in relation to the latest cuts/changes to the fuel grants and pension payments. Cost of living is a constant worry for many in our local communities. Charter NI staff continue to be in the forefront of delivering support in inner East Belfast and Outer East Belfast, ensuring that those living in high areas of deprivation are the forefront of our programmes and activities.

This year has seen issues arise within communities regarding the cost of living crisis and our Staff worked closely with Belfast City Council and Hanwood Trust for food vouchers for those families who came forward for support in the Ormiston Council area. Staff also distributed to those families who needed support at Christmas through the Cash for Kids Project. I would like to commend the staff who took part in these initiatives and for the many hours that they put in to ensure that the communities they work in daily, were fully supported.

I take this opportunity to thank everyone that makes a difference at Charter NI each day, and look forward to next year, when it is hoped that new opportunities will arise from the SEUPB Peace Plus programmes. Until then we will continue to support the Management Committee, staff and the volunteers that support their communities daily.

The board continue to recognise there is a need to develop greater community leadership and a need for capacity building to happen at a grass roots level, and we are delighted that our staff have now taken up extra training and education programmes to enhance their own knowledge and skills. This has resulted in two staff joining the Community Development degree in Ulster University. Staff development is very important for our organisation moving forward in the future and is something that, as chairman of Charter NI, I totally support.



Albert Hewitt
C.H.A.R.T.E.R. for Northern Ireland
Chairperson

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Trustees' report (including Directors' Report) for the year ended 31 March 2024

Objectives and Activities

Purposes and Objectives

C.H.A.R.T.E.R. for Northern Ireland (hereinafter Charter NI) Mission Statement is: *To enable, equip and empower communities to benefit from social and economic regeneration.*

Our Mission Statement recognises that when local community representatives and groups want to develop their communities they need to be enabled to do so by building their own capacity. Our choice of words reflects a commitment to helping people through providing support that allows them to articulate their own needs and shape their future at local, regional and international level. The support which Charter NI has provided and continues to provide is supported by local people with a thirst to improve themselves and their communities in which they live.

It is this with this support that we have the confidence in the strategic direction of Charter NI and which sets us apart from other initiatives. Our support mechanisms consist of not just financial support, but support that is driven by a community development ethos of supporting local people to build their capacity to regenerate their own areas, through education & training initiatives.

The people in our communities are people of ability and aspiration, who need a blend of support to enable them to lift themselves from low-level Noble categories into thriving, economically active, healthy and developing communities which work at a local level with statutory agencies.

Charter NI's vision as laid out in our Strategic Plan 2023-2026 is to play a leading part in the community regeneration of East Belfast & North Down, to see it develop into a safe, settled, prosperous place, that is stable and resilient, at ease with itself and its neighbours, culturally confident, tolerant and welcoming to others. The vision will be delivered in the following six strategic areas:

- Community and Cultural Confidence;
- Arts;
- Regeneration and Relationships;
- Training;
- Education, Employment and Engagement; and
- Resources and Restructuring.

The programmes that Charter NI's operational staff deliver, and will tender for in the future, all fit into one or more of these six strategic aims.

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Trustees' report (including Directors' Report) for the year ended 31 March 2024

Achievements and Performance

1. Tullycarnet Community Regeneration Project

Start date: 1st April 2016

End date: 31st March 2026

Funded by: Department for Communities

Partnership: Charter NI – Lead

Aims:

- To work with 13-25 year-olds in Tullycarnet area.
- Provide access to programmes on suicide awareness, drug / alcohol awareness and health.
- Signpost to Charter NI Training programmes and provide access to volunteering.
- Support community groups in the area.
- Establish information sharing in the community via a quarterly newsletter and social media.
- Maintain relationships with local schools and other service providers.

Objectives and Targets:

Building a confident community and encouraging local groups and individuals to participate in capacity building activities.
Encouraging and facilitating young people to participate in community relations projects.

- During this period over 40 young people participated in community relations projects.
- Over 1,000 people participated in community bonding projects.
- During this period an average of 44 young people a week engaged in youth focused activities.

Improving connections between Tullycarnet, wider East Belfast and beyond.

Providing opportunities for Tullycarnet to develop links and partnerships with other communities

- Many people volunteered for community development activities.

Building a confident community.

Supporting and encouraging young people and local groups to participate in community development activities and capacity building programmes.

Sharing information about opportunities and events through the community website and social media.

Contributing towards a wide range of community services and initiatives for and with children, adults and senior citizens.

Improving educational outcomes for children and young people in the Neighbourhood Renewal Area.

- During the year we provided strategic direction, financial management and governance support to 9 community/voluntary sector groups.
- In partnership with Dundonald High School we set up a GCSE support group with external trainers providing tailored support programmes for 40 young people from the Greater Tullycarnet Area.

Supporting access to educational and development opportunities for all sections of the local community.

- 84 young people benefitted directly from the project, through participation within the Charter Youth Group/TP youth project and other initiatives.

Trustees' report (including Directors' Report) for the year ended 31 March 2024

1. Tullycarnet Community Regeneration Project - continued

- Many young people have benefitted through participation in programmes run by the Tullycarnet Football Team, Tullycarnet Boxing Club and The Tullycarnet Dancers.

Charter NI continues to collaborate with the Education Authority Youth Service and other youth providers on the provision of outreach youth services and other programmes.

We are particularly looking forward to 2025 as new youth workers have commenced work in the area. We have already started planning for new support programmes.

2. Diamond Project

Start date: 1st April 2016

End date: 31st March 2024

Funded by: Belfast City Council

Partnership: Charter NI Lead

Outputs:

Resident forum (18 residents)

- A large number of residents from the local area informed about projects, events and also training, employment and volunteering opportunities. This will boost community confidence and build self-esteem of local residents to engage in community development opportunities in their immediate area. Also, the forum will be attending various meetings and training opportunities across east Belfast and city wide. 100+ meetings in total.

Community news and information

- A community news sheet will provide information to the community on a quarterly basis. Information provided will be relevant phone numbers, community events and training opportunities. Five information leaflets to be given out to every household in the Diamond area (500+homes).

Inter-agency resident led meetings (4 meetings per annum)

- Four interagency meetings with relevant stakeholders on a quarterly basis. These meetings will involve housing providers, police, youth and community workers, local churches and information groups. The meetings will be based on information sharing and better joined up approaches to tackling specific issues in the local area. Four well attended inter agency meetings addressing specific issues in the local area.

Cross-community women's and younger people's group (20 women / weekly sessions)

- The residents meet with Short Strand women's group every Tuesday night. During these sessions they have completed a number of training workshops around women's rights, capacity building, community development processes and Good Relations projects, including arts & crafts.

Summer community festival & bonfire beacon

- 200 people attending community family fun day.

Halloween festival

Remembrance event

- 4-day long reflection and remembrance event for 150 people.

Christmas children's party

- Santa's grotto event for 150 young people and their families.

Pensioners' Christmas Lunch

- 45 pensioners receiving a Christmas lunch and a visit from Santa.

Trustees' report (including Directors' Report) for the year ended 31 March 2024

2. Diamond Project - continued

The Community Regeneration Officer (CRO) has also been on the ground constantly and gained approximately £7,000 of cost-of-living support in partnership with EBCDA and BCC. This provided gas and electricity and door to door support for the vulnerable and those who were highly deprived. The CRO is still part of the East Belfast Coronavirus Community Support Group.

Objectives:

- Engage every street in the Diamond project area.
- Identify issues on a street by street basis.
- Recruit new volunteers.
- Create a safe space for local residents to discuss and address their issues and solve local problems.
- Provide programmes and activities for local people to help improve their health and well-being.
- Encourage young people to get involved in the local community and attend programmes and activities in the community hub.
- Develop opportunities for local residents to engage with and be part of the local community.

3. Pathways Programme

Start date: 1st April 2016

End date: 31st March 2025

Contracted with: Public Health Agency

Partnership: Charter NI Lead; Partners: Alternatives Restorative Justice & East Belfast Mission

Aim:

Charter NI was to provide and signpost services in a community setting where the client group feel at ease and confidentiality is secured. Charter NI operates in an environment created and managed by ex-prisoners and family members, so increasing the empathy with the client group, which in turn reduces the stigmatisation and sense of isolation. Through this approach Charter NI aims to improve information for the client and service provider and begin to collectively address the needs of this client group. Charter NI aims to assist through partnership working with the other groups and organisations involved in this project to help ex-prisoners and their families be independent and to live a better quality of life, improve health and emotional well-being for ex-prisoners and their families through counselling and alternative therapies.

Objectives:

- Provide counselling service to ex-prisoners and their families.
- Provide a range of alternative therapies to ex-prisoners and their families.
- Raise awareness and inform potential clients about the service.

Trustees' report (including Directors' Report) for the year ended 31 March 2024

3. Pathways Programme continued

Target Groups:

- Men;
- Women;
- Young People;
- Ex-prisoners;
- Senior citizens; and
- Unemployed

Charter NI are a key provider of services to ex-prisoners and they have formed a partnership along with the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, East Belfast Alternatives and East Belfast Mission.

The programme provided professional confidential community-based counselling sessions with a wraparound complimentary service which comprises alternative therapies helping clients to enjoy better health and a more vital life, encouraging the client to feel comfortable and the motivation to utilise counselling services. The project acted as a referral to the Belfast Health and Social Services Trust. The service will be delivered in a community setting therefore increasing accessibility to those ex-prisoners and their families who may feel stigmatised or have perceptions around accessing mainstream services or those provided by larger organisations. The programme was closely monitored to get a better understanding of the key issues for the client group, the service providers and the extent of the problem.

Outputs:

- Number of people counselled 52.
- Number of counselling sessions 422.
- Number of people having alternative therapies 20.
- Number of therapies 20.
- 4 information sessions given.

4. Cultural Confidence in Young People

Start Date: 1st April 2023

End date: 31st March 2024

Funded By: TEO Good Relations

Partnership: Charter NI – Lead Partner, with Short Strand Partnership

Young Peoples' Programme 12-16 year olds who would not normally engage outside of this programme as this was a cross community project between Short Strand and Inner East Belfast. This ensured that there was a fair engagement of 15 from CNR backgrounds and 15 from PUL backgrounds.

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4. Cultural Confidence in Young People continued

- 30 Young people recruited 10 from PUL background and 10 from CNR background in partnership between Charter NI and Short Strand Doyle Youth Club.
- 2 delivery and planning sessions completed in both areas (Lord Street and Short Strand) to increase trust and confidence.
- 12 (3hr) workshops delivered as follows:
 - Culture & Diversity
 - Bullying & Cyber-bullying
 - Sectarianism & Racism
 - Stereotypes & Symbolism
 - History of the Crumlin Road Gaol
 - History of Dublin Graveyards , Croke Park, Peace walls in Londonderry, Stormont Estate
 - Paramilitaries and Communities – Short Strand Community Centre
 - Workshop on Civic Leadership and Responsibility at Short Strand Community Centre.
 - Planning and catch up with new member facilitator discussing trip to Dublin and participation in workshops, ice breaker activities included, cooking programme with Short Strand Partnerships, leadership skills workshop and meeting with TEO staff for feedback and evaluation
 - These workshops helped the young people who registered to expand their capacity and knowledge in a number of various ways, all workshops were delivered by qualified facilitators and provided a wide range of learning outcomes.
- 6 Educational Visits completed, as stated above.
- 10 Activities completed for team building and shared space facilitates.
The young people always enjoy team building activities and we use these as rewards as well for attendance and completing the workshops, these activities help to increase confidence and participation.
- 30 Young people completing the programme.
We ended this programme with a cultural celebration at the Crumlin Road Goal in which local politicians attended, the young people were presented with certificates and empowerment boxes.

5. Community Safety Programme, Tullycarnet

Start date: 1st August 2022

End date: 31st March 2024

Funded by: NIHE

Community Safety awareness programme for young people and NIHE residents from Tullycarnet Area, working on the following objectives:

- Building Community Confidence;
- Ensuring local solutions;
- Tackling anti-social behaviours;
- Tackling Crime;
- Tackling fear of Crime; and
- Working together for a safer community.

This programme is also supported by the Belfast City Council Anti-Social Behaviour team and the Community PSNI officers.

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5. Community Safety Programme, Tullycarnet

The following support was provided:

- Safer Bonfires in partnership with DFI, PSNI and NIHE staff;
- Social Supermarket support for tenants in November 2023 – February 2024;
- Developed support for Mens Mental Health on a weekly basis;
- Drug and Alcohol training and support;
- Anti social behaviour around peoples properties;
- Community Safety event in December 2023;
- Help with DFI support around Street Lighting in October 2023;
- Attending meetings with NIHE on a 10 year plan for the area, with Deloitte; and
- Meeting each quarter with the statutory agencies in the area for potential redevelopment and other issues that may arise.

6. Diamond Health Hub

Start date: 1st April 2019

End date: 31st March 2024

Funded by: TEO Urban Villages

Partnership: Charter NI – Lead

Aims:

- Improve relationships between and within communities
- Increase sense of community belong.
- Increase use of shared spaces.
- Provide confident and enterprising community.

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6. Diamond Health Hub continued

Project Outcomes:

- Health & well-being programmes delivered to improve well-being.
- Improved relationships with statutory partners through regular meetings.
- Improved sense of well-being for residents.
- Improved access to services and advice through local surgeries.
- Better support for ethnic minorities and integration within the local community
- Increased opportunities through volunteering opportunities.
- To develop a fully-functioning community hub that can be used by local residents, partners and the wider community to improve health and well-being and address issues at a local level.
- Groups involved in weekly activity at Diamond Health Hub: 353 sessions.
- 72 Participants involved in Health activities on a weekly basis.
- Develop participation and increase relationships with other Urban Village Areas.

7. East Belfast Cultural Confidence and Tolerance Summer Diversionary Programme

Start date: July 2023

End date: September 2023

Funded by: Belfast City Council

Our programme of activity included festivals for Inner and Outer East Belfast areas which aimed to enhance and compliment the cultural celebrations in the lead up to the Twelfth of July by positively promoting heritage, educating on broader cultural contexts, and showcasing locals' artistry in the development of new creative work. These events aimed to link Outer East Belfast into Inner East Belfast using diversionary activities focusing on Bands, Bonfires, Historical Talks, Safer Community partnerships and Community Celebrations that engaged with approximately 2,000 people.

Other activities included workshops focusing on creativity, bands & policing. The programme that we delivered was aiming to guide and mentor young people to choose a more positive way to express their culture, taking on board their views on their culture attitudes, stereotyping and awareness of what positive culture and other cultures are. Events to compliment this also included site visits to those traditional bonfires across Belfast that are kept tidy and those that use beacons instead.

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8. Cultural Programmes - Beacon Management and Cultural Celebrations

Start Date: 1st June 2023

End Date: 31st August 2023

Contracted with: Belfast City Council and Building Communities Network

Cultural celebrations throughout Inner East Belfast and Tullycarnet area, during the summer months to help support young people in regards to celebrating with a beacon instead of traditional bonfires. These programmes also increased confidence and collaborative working with young people and statutory agencies over the summer months.

9. King's Coronation Small Grants Programme

Start Date: May 2023

End Date: 31st March 2024

Funded by: The National Lottery Awards for All

This funding was awarded to events and activities planned and delivered by the local East Belfast Community to celebrate the coronation of King Charles. Events and activities planned were a community fun day, arts and crafts, and an older peoples' tea dance. These events were attended by approx 350 people.

10. Core Funding Support

Start date: 1st April 2023

End date: 30th November 2023

Funded by: Halifax Foundation for NI

To develop future opportunities within the organisation and promote staff development in the finance and administration department.

11. Small Grants

There are many small funders within Charter NI projects which compliment the bigger projects stated above. Examples of these successful smaller projects are:

Lisburn Castlereagh City Council - Good Relations and Cultural Identity - cultural programmes, workshops, and community arts projects with Longstone Residents Association in the Ballybeen area.

NIHE Cohesion - Christmas programme and Knockagoney Get Fit project working to build healthy activities in the Knockagoney area as a starter programme.

Staff development

The charitable company's most important resource is its people, their knowledge and experience are crucial in meeting our charitable objectives. Retention of key staff is critical and we have invested increasingly in employment training and development.

Our Volunteers

It is vital that volunteering is recognised as a fundamental part of any community development framework and as a strategically important element of it. There is an inextricable link between volunteering as a multifaceted activity and community development as a process. Volunteering happens in many different forms and can be carried out on a continuum of informality to formality. Both are equally valuable and contribute in a myriad of ways to building communities where people can feel happy, safe and fulfilled. We in Charter NI will continue to facilitate this process with the grassroots communities that we work with.

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Environmental and health and safety

The charitable company recognises its responsibility to carry out its charitable operations whilst minimising environmental impacts. The trustees' continued aim is to comply with all applicable environmental legislation, prevent pollution and reduce waste wherever possible.

The company is committed to achieving the highest practicable standards in health and safety management and strives to make its office and all sites safe environments for employees and visitors alike.

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.

The company returned net outgoing resources for the year of £22,421 (2023: net incoming resources of £16,920) split restricted deficit £8,388/ unrestricted deficit £14,033, which reflected the completion of a number of projects during the year.

All monies received supported key objectives of the charitable company, funding charitable activity costs and support costs, as well as capital expenditure.

At 31 March 2024, total funds were £270,978 (2023: £293,399), a decrease of £22,421 from the previous year, with a decrease of £14,033 in unrestricted funds.

Unrestricted funds at 31 March 2024 were £82,506 (2023: £96,539), of which £43,287 were designated for specific uses (2023: £42,055) and £5,949 (2023: £6,105) would only be realisable through the disposal of fixed assets.

The organisation continues to work tirelessly to secure income from various sources to finance its ongoing activities with its key stakeholders. The main source of funding are grants received from various bodies as disclosed in note 3 in the financial statements.

Risk management

The charity's operations expose it to a variety of financial risks that include the effects of changes in liquidity risk and restricted funding cash flow risk. The charitable company has in place a risk management programme that seeks to reduce the adverse effects on the financial performance of the company by monitoring levels of cash and maintaining no debt.

Given the size of the charity, the trustees have delegated the responsibility of monitoring financial risk management to the management group with details of all accounts verified at board meetings. The policies set by the board of directors are implemented by the charity's senior management team.

Going concern

After making appropriate enquiries, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. For this reason, they continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements. Further details regarding the adoption of the going concern basis can be found in the Accounting Policies.

Trustees' report (including Directors' Report) for the year ended 31 March 2024

Reserves policy

The charity's policy is to build and retain a level of reserves which matches the needs of the organisation both at the current time and in the foreseeable future. The trustees are striving to secure reserves in the future sufficient to meet statutory obligations, committed expenditure, core salaries and running costs for a period equivalent to 6 months annual expenditure. The trustees believe that the period of 6 months is necessary in order that there is continuity of service, and will work towards the implementation of this policy.

The company has developed a plan to establish and maintain this agreed level of reserves. The company will continue to monitor compliance with this policy on a regular basis and the Board will review the appropriateness of the policy annually.

Free reserves are those unrestricted reserves not designated for, nor invested in fixed assets, which are available for general use and which can be designated for future developments. At 31 March 2024 their level was £33,270 (2023: £48,379), which would cover almost 4 months core salaries and running costs, whilst the redundancy pay reserve plus 6 months core salaries and running costs would approximately equate to £70,000.

Public benefit

The trustees believe that the organisation provides a public benefit in a number of ways and most obviously through its efforts to promote community development and the advancement of reconciliation as well as conflict resolution. This is achieved by undertaking a range of projects to support reconciliation and promote community cohesion.

The trustees are fully aware of the guidelines from the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland to comply with the Charities Act, and believe they are operating entirely within those guidelines.

Plans for the future

Charter NI's origins and focus to date reflects the challenges facing the communities it represents. Many of these challenges are clearly evident and well documented and reflect deep seated structural problems including high levels of multiple deprivation, low levels of educational achievement, community divisions and safety issues, limited community confidence and engagement, drug and alcohol abuse, with a poor physical infrastructure and environment.

Combined, these issues have led the communities and the areas to be described or categorised as hard to reach and disconnected. Against this backdrop the political situation remains uncertain, with the only certainty being less money for public services and reduced budgets for those engaged in front line community services and greater competition for funding. While not underestimating the challenges, the local communities have much to offer in terms of community pride, a history of voluntary activity and self-help through church and voluntary groups, a rich cultural and industrial tradition and of local business development.

Charter NI's work has reflected the reality of the situation on the ground, while being aware of the potential within the local communities and pro-actively seeking out new opportunities. These will include seeking funding for core staff and sustainable programmes that can build the capacity of local volunteers and groups. Charter NI will continue to seek opportunities that will support the aims of our organization. It is vital that we continue to provide opportunities to enhance the capacity of the communities we serve.

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Trustees' report (including Directors' Report) for the year ended 31 March 2024

Reference and Administrative Details

Registered and Principal Office

First Floor
275a Newtownards Road
Belfast
BT4 1AF

Company Registration number

NI054626 (Northern Ireland)

HMRC Charity Registration number

NI00816

Charity Commission for Northern Ireland Registration number

NIC105834

Directors/Trustees and Senior Management

The trustees who served the charity during the year and up to the date of approval were as follows:

Brendan Mackin
Jim Birch
Rev William Shaw
Denis Rowan
Craig Brown
Albert Hewitt (Chairperson)
Peter Bunting

Company secretary

Craig Brown

Senior Management Personnel

Operations Manager – Caroline Birch
General Manager/Head of Finance – Charlene Sheridan

Bankers

First Trust Bank
11 – 15 Donegall Square North
Belfast
BT1 5GB

Independent auditor

CG Taggart Accountancy Services
17 Cypress Crescent
Donaghadee
Co Down
BT21 0QG

Trustees' report (including Directors' Report) for the year ended 31 March 2024

Structure, Governance and Management

Governing document

The charitable company is controlled by its governing document, its Articles of Association, and constitutes a limited company, limited by guarantee, as defined by the Companies Act 2006.

Governance of the charity

During the period under review the directors met at least 7 times, usually at bi-monthly intervals. Trustees/directors are appointed by nominations, made in writing by any existing director. At the General Meeting nominated directors are appointed by election. The trustees have overall responsibility for the organisation and for directing the activity, ensuring it is well run and delivering the outcomes for which it has been set up.

The day-to-day management and operation of activities is carried out by staff led by the senior management group comprising Operations Manager Caroline Birch and General Manager/Head of Finance Charlene Sheridan, supported by Company Secretary Craig Brown, and reporting to the board at each meeting.

Related parties

None of the trustees receive remuneration or other benefit from their work with the charitable company.

All Directors and Senior staff complete a conflict of interest register annually in respect of potential transactions between Charter NI and its connected parties.

Pay policy for senior staff

The pay of senior staff is reviewed annually. In view of the nature of the charitable company, the trustees benchmark against pay levels in other community organisations working within the sector.

Risk management

The principles of good governance are embedded within all aspects of Charter NI's operations with management and staff being keenly aware of the Board's responsibility of ensuring that the organisation protects itself from financial exposure and reputational damage. A close working relationship is maintained between the Board and management to ensure that operationally staff are aware of the standards required of them by the Board and that the Board are always in a position to provide guidance and support to management in the discharge of their duties. This two-way relationship is a key feature of Charter NI's governance arrangements and is a key strength of the charitable company.

A conscientious approach to ensuring that contractual project requirements are achieved has been maintained at all times both in the accounting period being reported on and since Charter NI's establishment. All financial commitments are maintained at all times, there are very tight financial controls on expenditure and project staff have been trained and have become experienced in budgetary controls. In both these areas ie project delivery and financial controls management, all staff have established close working relationships with funding organisations to ensure all mandatory standards are consistently achieved. Board representatives also actively engage with funding bodies.

The Board, management and staff are fully aware that the nature of the work in which Charter NI is involved can bring with it a high level of scrutiny to ensure that all activities are fully compliant with funding requirements and, therefore, beyond reproach. The Board of Charter NI is, therefore, greatly reassured of the charitable company's compliance with the highest of standards of governance on the basis that all monitoring and evaluation of project delivery demonstrates achievement of all funders' objectives and that funders' audits and vouching of financial expenditure and the statutory audit confirm compliance with both probity and regularity in the use of monies received.

During the accounting period, and since, Charter NI has maintained close working relationships with funding bodies. Charter NI has taken part in verification visits from The Executive Office, SEUPB, International Committee of the Red Cross and Urban Villages. These checks have resulted in a positive track record of the highest professional standards achieved.

Currently Charter NI, and all other organisations in the community and voluntary sector, look forward to the new financial year with considerable uncertainty around government budgets.

Charter NI will continue to look to our successful project track record and proven financial probity as the best means of continuing to achieve the positive impact and benefit to our communities which we have achieved in recent years. The trustees continue to assess the major risks to which the charitable company is exposed, those related to the reputation, operations and finances of the charitable company, and are satisfied that the systems are in place to mitigate any exposure to the major risks.

Trustees' report (including Directors' Report) for the year ended 31 March 2024

Trustees' responsibilities statement

The trustees (who are also the directors of Charter NI for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law 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). Under company 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 charitable company and the income and expenditure of the charitable company 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 (FRS102);
- make judgements and accounting 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 charitable company will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charitable company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable 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 charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the company's website.

Statement of disclosure of information to auditors

The trustees at the time when the Trustees' report is approved have confirmed that:

- so far as they are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditor is unaware; and
- they have taken all the steps that ought to have been taken as a director in order to be aware of any information needed by the charitable company's auditor in connection with preparing their report and to establish that the charitable company's auditor is aware of that information.

Independent auditor

The auditor, Grace Taggart of CG Taggart Accountancy Services has indicated her willingness to continue in office and a resolution that she be re-appointed will be proposed at the annual general meeting.

Approved by the board and signed on its behalf:



Albert Hewitt - Chairperson



Craig Brown - Trustee