

Annual Report for the year ended March 31st 2024

The trustees of Fermanagh Writers are pleased to submit their report and accounts for the period April 1st, 2023 to March 31st, 2024.

Achievements and performance:

Meeting programme:

The group's weekly meeting programme is a core activity which contributes greatly to the success of the group. In the year to March 31st 2024 the group met weekly, except during the period between Christmas Day and New Year's Day, to share and peer critique our members' writings. Several potential new members attended meetings this year and two of them joined the group. Attendance at meetings varied between five and twelve people, averaging six people at each meeting.

Corncrake magazine:

Our biannual online magazine, edited by Jenny Brien, produced the first issue of the year during spring 2023. The issue featured poetry, prose and images related to the theme *Small Beginnings*. The issue received positive feedback and comments from readers. The theme of the second issue is *Touching Grass: Real Life in a Virtual World*. It was prepared during winter 2024 and will be published in April 2024.

Writing and storytelling workshops:

During October and November, the group hosted five hours of poetry workshops led by CAP poetry tutor, Teresa Kane. The workshops provided instruction to our members and other writers living in Fermanagh. Participants produced work that was eligible for submission to Community Arts Partnership's Manifest anthology. Members also attended a poetry workshop, tutored by Teresa Kane, linked to the Boxopera exhibition held in Ballinamallard in October. Five group members participated in workshops run by Myriad in relation to Belfast Mela, and two took part in an Oral Storytelling course run by Liz Weir.

Contests and exhibitions:

In November the group ably organised the Fermanagh heat of the all-Ireland poetry slam in Enniskillen at short notice, and also provided writings and produced *Library: The Exhibition*, an exhibition of members' writings on the topic of libraries in Enniskillen Library, which will run from April until the end of August.

Book Launches:

In April the group hosted a book launch for founding member, Anthony Viney's debut novel, *The Road to Damascus*. Approximately thirty people, including group members and members of the public, attended the launch. The group enjoyed a chance to celebrate the success of one of their longstanding members and to meet other writers and members of the public from the area who attended the event.

Websites:

The group maintains the Corncrake magazine and Fermanagh Writers websites on one site after they were amalgamated last year to produce a streamlined, easy to access website. One page within the site is dedicated to the group. The websites, as

well as their Facebook page, provide the group with a visible presence on social media and a means for members of the public to contact the group.

Financial Review

Financial Performance:

The year ended with a general unrestricted fund balance of £799 and no restricted funds.

Income: Income for the year totalled £460.

Expenditure: Expenditure for the year totalled £32.

The group receives most of its income from membership fees and book sales.

The group was hampered in their activities again this year by difficulty accessing their funds. In July 2022 Nationwide Building Society, the financial institution where the group's funds were held, closed all their Treasurers Trust accounts and returned the group's monies to them in cheque form. The application process for a new bank account at Bank of Ireland was lengthy. The account opened in June 2023. So, for a quarter of this year the group did not have a bank account and could not access their funds so they could not engage in any activities that incurred costs. As a result, the group met in a venue that did not charge for room hire, and did not undertake spending for any purposes. Despite these difficulties, the group continued to offer its regular meeting programme to members and any other writer who wished to attend as well as hosting workshops that did not incur any cost for the group.

Reference and Administrative Details

Charity Name: Fermanagh Writers, which was previously known as Fermanagh Creative Writing Group.

Charity Number: Registered Charity in Northern Ireland, No .106060.

Principal Address: 59 Raw Road, Derrycullion, Brookeborough, County Fermanagh, BT94 4GH.

Charity Trustees as of April 22nd 2024:

Ms Jennifer Brien	Chair
Mr Ken Ramsey	Vice Chair
Mrs Dianne Trimble	Secretary
John Monaghan	Group member

Other Charity Trustees in the year to March 31st 2024

Mr John James Resigned as a trustee and a member of the group in May 2023

Mr Thomas McGovern Resigned as a trustee and a member of the executive committee in April 2024.

Structure, Governance, and Management Governing Document and Constitution

The group is an unincorporated association and is governed by a constitution adopted March 2009 and last amended June 2017; this is available from the group by email request to fermanaghwriters@aol.co.uk. The group is run entirely by its members who pay an annual membership subscription. As of March 31 2024 the group had a membership of 10.

Trustee Selection and Management

The group is managed by an Executive Committee which consists of the appointed trustees and other elected members of the group. The officers who are also trustees are noted in the list of current trustees above.

The Executive Committee meets typically quarterly; in the year to March 31st 2024 a total of three meetings were held.

At each meeting the Treasurer presents the latest accounts and the trustees discuss other business that has arose since the last meeting.

The Annual Report and Statement of Accounts are approved by the trustees and then presented to the members at the Annual General Meeting.

Objectives and Activities:

Charitable Objects

The object of the group is to provide opportunities for creative writers in the Fermanagh area to have the resources and a sociable support network of writers meeting weekly in order to improve their writing skills and publish their work.

Public Benefit Statement

The trustees of Fermanagh Writers confirm that they have complied with their duty under section 17 (5) of the Charities Act 2011 to have regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and that the public benefit requirement has informed the activities of the group in the year to March 31st 2024. In evaluating public benefit, the trustees note that membership of the group is open to all who share an interest in creative writing in the Fermanagh area. Whilst we would encourage those with interest to join our group, we also strive to make our services available to non-members in the Fermanagh area. Our meeting programme and the workshops we organise are open to all.

Summary of Main Activities

The core activities of the group are:

Delivery of a weekly meeting programme to share and peer critique our members' writings.

Production of the biannual online magazine Corncrake.

Organising professionally tutored workshops on a diverse range of topics of interest to writers, including writing techniques for prose and poetry.

Approved and adopted by a meeting of the Executive Committee on April 23rd, 2024 and signed on their behalf.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mrs D Trimble". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

Dianne Trimble,
Secretary