

Report of the Trustees

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

Structure, Governance & Management

Governing Document

The organisation is a company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 18th of May 2010. The company was established under a Memorandum of Association and is governed under its Articles of Association.

Recruitment and Appointment of Management Committee

The directors of the company are part of the wider management committee. Not all members of the management committee are directors of the company. Under the requirements of the Memorandum and Articles of Association the office bearers of the Management Committee are elected to serve for a period of one year, after which they must be re-elected at the next Annual General Meeting.

Risk Management

The Management Committee has conducted a review of the major risks to which the charity is exposed. A risk register has been established and is updated at least annually. Where appropriate, systems or procedures have been established to mitigate the risks the charity faces. Significant external risks to funding have led to the development of a strategic plan which will allow for the diversification of funding and activities. Internal control risks are minimised by the implementation of procedures for authorisation of all transactions and projects. These procedures are periodically reviewed to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the charity.

Organisational Structure

NI Alternatives Ltd has a Board of up to six members who meet quarterly and are responsible for the strategic direction and policy of the charity. At present the Board has six members from a variety of professional backgrounds relevant to the work of the charity. The Secretary also sits on the Board but has no voting rights.

A scheme of delegation is in place and day to day responsibility for the provision of the services rest with the Chief Executive, along with the Services, Operations and Finance and Administration Managers. The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that the charity delivers the services specified and that key performance indicators are met.

Related Parties

The company acts as an umbrella body for eight local-based restorative justice organisations, and these organisations are represented on the Board.

Report of the Trustees (continued)

Objectives and Activities

The company's objects and principal activities are to promote a non-violent restorative community response to justice issues. Bangor Alternatives will identify needs, often in partnership with local communities and other voluntary and statutory bodies, relating to safety and conflict within communities, and will attempt to heal relationships in a restorative way. At the same time, it hopes to raise community awareness on the issues affecting young people and adults who are deemed to be at risk.

The main objectives and activities of the company are:

- To organise within the community to devise non-violent alternatives to issues of community justice.
- To help and work with young people in order to resolve the problems affecting their lives.
- To direct young people away from destructive and dangerous practices towards healthy and constructive activities.
- To enable young people to personally reflect on the potentially damaging consequences of risky and criminal behaviour.
- To address areas of weakness and failure within the formal criminal justice system
- To heal relationships within the community and to promote better relationships between the community and statutory agencies.
- To work towards a sustainable model of delivery for as much of the company's services as possible.

Principal Funding Sources

The principal funding sources for the company are the Department for Communities (DFC), the Ireland Housing Executive, The Communities in Transition Programme, and the British Shared Prosperity Fund. As a result of increasing constraints on government expenditure, as well as expansion of its base, the charity has to seek funding from a much broader group of agencies. The involvement of the charity with a government-sanctioned 'Round Table' grouping of statutory agencies interested in issues of community justice is proving particularly useful in identifying possible opportunities for a much wider and strategically orientated range of funding for the future. There is a government-approved Protocol in place that promotes better working between the charity as a community-based restorative justice scheme and statutory organisations within the formal justice sector.

Services

Mediation, Advocacy and Community Support:

The MACS programme offers mediation, support, Advocacy and positive interventions to local tenants involved in neighbourhood or community disputes.

Report of the Trustees (continued)

Neighbourhood Renewal/Community Development:

Alternatives is strategically placed to address issues of community safety and renewing communities through the following strands of work:

- Intensive Youth and Family support with young people involved in anti-social behaviour.
- Prevention work with groups of young people involved in anti-social behaviour.
- Delivery of cultural awareness programmes.
- Sessions delivered in local schools
- Parent Support
- Victim Support
- Development and delivery of crime prevention sessions
- Conflict transformation work – bonfire; interface and removal of paramilitary murals.
- Development of volunteer programme within community
- Promotion and facilitation of mediation.

Start Programme:

Start Programme is an employability and personal development programme for young people aged 16 to 24 years old who need employment, training or education in partnership with Include Youth and funded by British Shared Prosperity Fund.

SAFE Programme:

SAFE is an initiative facilitated by Bangor Alternatives (lead partner) alongside Rathgill Community Association, as a key delivery and engagement partner. This programme is funded by the Executive Office as part of the Community Safety strand of the Communities in Transition Project.

The SAFE programme will involve bringing residents together to discuss community safety issues and identify community lead resolutions. This programme will include the establishment of a 'Community Engagement Forum' who will consist of residents from Kilcooley, Rathgill and neighbouring areas. The Forum will be involved with co-designing education/awareness raising events, information and learning visits and local relationship building. The aim of the project is to create safer communities for everyone.

STARS Programme:

Community Restorative Justice Ireland and Northern Ireland Alternatives are delivering the STARS – Striving To Achieving a Restorative Society programme. CRJI has taken the lead in this with NIA being a partner. NIA will work with 4 of the designated key areas - Shankill, East Belfast, Bangor and Carrickfergus/Larne, with CRJI working with the other 4.

CRJI and Alternatives provide an opportunity to establish a presence throughout the eight areas, training and nurturing a new cohort of community leaders to support the work provided through restorative justice practices.

Report of the Trustees (continued)

The focus of the programme is to identify key individuals across the designated areas (30 in each) who are interested in receiving restorative training and support to ultimately help embed restorative approaches in each community.

This will hopefully lead to the outcomes detailed below:

- Increased understanding of the difference between restorative justice and restorative practice;
- Increased understanding of the benefits of restorative methodologies and knowledge of how restorative practices have been used to improve outcomes for individuals, families and communities both in NI and more widely;
- Increased interest in using and adopting restorative approaches to service delivery in CIT areas; and
- Increased advocacy for the adoption of restorative approaches in each CIT area.

DARE Programme:

DARE is an initiative facilitated by Northern Ireland Alternatives and 'Bangor Yes' (Extern). This programme is funded by the Executive Office as part of the Children and Young People strand of the Communities in Transition Project.

The programme engages with Primary School aged children from the Rathgill and Kilcooley area around their personal and social development and supports the children and their families to improve educational attainment. This programme also engages with Post Primary School aged children from the CIT area. The programme aims to raise aspirations for participants and support them to achieve goals bespoke to each young person.

DARE Programme has implemented a Youth Key Stakeholders Forum, as well as facilitating several events and campaigns designed to help young people and parents access services and support.

Financial Review

This year Bangor Alternatives continued to work through our programmes including Neighbourhood Renewal, MACS, Communities in Transition, and the Start Programme.

Report of the Trustees (continued)

Directors' Responsibilities

Company law requires the directors to prepare financial statements for each financial period which give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the charitable company and of its financial position at the end of that period. In preparing these financial statements, the directors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed subject to any 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 company will continue in business.

The Directors have overall responsibility for ensuring that the charity has an appropriate system of controls, financial and otherwise. They are also responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. 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.

Statement of Disclosure of Information to Examiner

So far as each of the Directors in office at the date of approval of these financial statements are aware:

- There is no relevant information of which the examiner are unaware; and
- They have taken all the steps they ought to have taken as Directors in order to make themselves aware of any relevant information and to establish that the examiner are aware of that information.

Examiner

In accordance with Article 382 of the Companies Act 2006, a resolution proposing that HMCI Limited be appointed as independent examiner of the company will be put to the Annual General Meeting.

Registered office
2 Kilcooley Square
Bangor
Down
BT19 1SH

Signed by order of the trustees



Tom Winstone
Secretary

Date: 12/12/2024