

SHOPMOBILITY MID ULSTER

DIRECTORS' REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

The directors present the accounts for Shopmobility Mid Ulster for the year ended 31 March 2024. This is a company limited by guarantee with no share capital. In April 2016, Shopmobility Mid Ulster took over the assets and liabilities of the unincorporated entity which prior to this date had provided the service now provided by Shopmobility Mid Ulster.

Background

In 2010 a Shopmobility Management Committee was formed to establish a Shopmobility Scheme in Cookstown Town Centre. A number of meetings were held which included key town centre stakeholders and input from a range of Shopmobility experts.

The Burnavon Arts & Cultural Centre, Burn Road, Cookstown was selected as the location to base the scheme. It's a public building which is accessible in a prime town centre location in close proximity to key amenities and services.

In May 2010, funding from the Department for Regional Development (Now Department for Infrastructure) was agreed and the scheme commenced activities in May 2010. Due to increases in demand from members in the Dungannon area, discussions with Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council (Now Mid Ulster District Council) took place and a new scheme was launched in Dungannon in October 2013, and located in Ranfurly House Arts & Visitor Centre. In January 2015 the organisation held an Extraordinary General Meeting and renamed the organisation Shopmobility Mid Ulster with 2 brands; Shopmobility Cookstown and Shopmobility Dungannon.

In 2019, the company received funding over a five year period from The National Lottery Community Fund for a new Gobility programme. This will broaden the existing service to a wider area and a greater number of users of mobility scooters and wheelchairs, and continue to address the social isolation and exclusion issues which the company deals with.

In 2024 Shopmobility Mid Ulster re established a Shopmobility service in the town of Magherafelt. There has been growing demand for the service in that area, and the previous service ceased following the sad passing of its long-term coordinator. The addition of Magherafelt now ensures there is Shopmobility service across the entire Mid Ulster District Council area.

Structure, governance and management

The company is limited by guarantee. The company is governed by its Articles of Association which were established in April 2016. These established its current objects and powers. The company is also registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland.

Shopmobility Mid Ulster has a cross-community focus and is managed by a voluntary committee which is elected annually.

The appointment of committee is in accordance with the company's Articles of Association, whereby each member will be entitled to nominate one person only in writing not less than seven days before the date of the Annual General Meeting.

Committee

The committee who served during the year were:

Mr William Mayne MBE	
Mrs Ursula Marshall	
Mrs Brigid Scullion	
Cllr Mark Glasgow	(Resigned 25 July 2023)
Cllr Christine McFlynn	
Mr John McGorry	
Cllr John McNamee	
Cllr Jospeh O'Neill	(Resigned 25 July 2023)
Cllr Anne Forde BEM	
Mr Daniel Kerr	(Appointed 25 July 2023)
Mrs Nuala McLernon	(Appointed 25 July 2023)

SHOPMOBILITY MID ULSTER

DIRECTORS' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Objectives and activities

The objects of the Charity shall be to relieve the needs of people with disabilities and mobility difficulties in the greater Cookstown & Dungannon areas (the "area of benefit") by providing or assisting in the provision of equipment and other facilities and services with the aim of facilitating independence in daily living activities and improving the quality of their lives and in particular:

- (a) to alleviate the disadvantages of permanent and temporary disability;
- (b) to provide services which facilitate and advance the independence of such disabled persons in daily living activities outside the home environment;
- (c) to enhance the confidence, well-being and enjoyment of life of disabled persons through integration in social activities;
- (d) to relieve the needs of people with disabilities by liaising with other societies, associations or bodies having common or sharing similar interests or objects.

Achievements and performance

Shopmobility Mid Ulster continues to experience unprecedented growth in demand for services across Mid Ulster. Demand for equipment, advice and support was at an all-time high since the organisation was established over 14 years ago. This demand continues to come from various strands of the health service with referrals from minor injury units, Occupational Therapists, Emergency Departments, GPs and others.

As demand for services rises year on year, additional equipment is required to meet the need. During the past year Shopmobility Mid Ulster purchased 3 additional mobility scooters and 8 additional wheelchairs. This equipment is used to meet rising demand and help to ensure the fleet is maintained to a high standard.

The rising demand from users who wish to get out and about more has been growing since the end of the pandemic. The past year was the first full year without restrictions and it was evident with rising demand, the importance that equipment would help to older and disabled people to gain back some of the independence and freedom lost during Covid 19. The demand for equipment rose by almost 25% year on year with bookings totalling 16,000 across the year. The demand is staggering and growing and although all our users have health related conditions, approx. 35-40% of our referrals come directly from Healthcare professionals, Minor Injury Units, Emergency Departments, Occupational Therapists, Physio Departments, and G.Ps.

Long-term borrowing and bridging gaps in Health requirements have led to the continued growth from long-term borrowing of wheelchairs and scooters. Over the past year closer collaboration with Health Care Professionals has brought about an increase in referrals from local hospitals, Occupation Therapists and Social Workers, as the project continues to bridge the gap in waiting times for equipment. Broken limbs, amputations and cancer patients have all been referred by medical professionals on a regular basis to borrow Shopmobility equipment whilst waiting on NHS equipment.

There has been a growing demand for additional support services, signposting and referrals since the end of the pandemic. Many new users who have little or no support structures in place, are reliant on getting information on disability and older people help and support. This has continued to grow over the past number of years.

2024 also saw the introduction of a new service area, with the addition of a new scheme in Magherafelt. Located within the Meadowlane Shopping Centre, it will provide a service to the local town and surrounding towns and villages.

Financial review

The main funder continued to be the Department for Infrastructure. Shopmobility are required to generate match funding to cover expenditure not funded by DfI which they have been able to do successfully.

SHOPMOBILITY MID ULSTER

DIRECTORS' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

The committee will continue to conduct annual reviews of the appropriate level of unrestricted reserves. The purpose of this reserve is to provide stability for the charity to ensure that it is able to honour existing contractual obligations, to cover unforeseen events beyond the organisation's control and to enable it to continue its operations in the unlikely event of a significant fluctuation in expenditure or income.

The committee aim to build reserves to at least 3 months of annual expenditure. This may be achieved by increased fund raising, increasing earned income or reducing expenditure.

The present level of Unrestricted Reserves available to the charity is £12,788 which is deemed satisfactory.

Auditor

The auditor, David Lyttle + Co Ltd, is deemed to be reappointed under section 487(2) of the Companies Act 2006.

Statement of disclosure to auditor

So far as the Directors aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the charity's auditor are unaware. Additionally, the Directors have taken all the necessary steps that they ought to have taken as Directors in order to make themselves aware of all relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's auditor are aware of that information.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies entitled to the small companies exemption.

On behalf of the board



Mr William Mayne MBE

Director

20 August 2024