

Presence in Portaferry Limited

Company Limited by Guarantee

Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report)

Year ended 30 April 2023

The trustees, who are also the directors for the purposes of company law, present their report and the unaudited financial statements of the charity for the year ended 30 April 2023.

Reference and administrative details

Registered charity name Presence in Portaferry Limited

Charity registration number 107108

Company registration number NI624120

Principal office and registered office 46 Shore Road
Portaferry
Co Down
BT22 1JZ

The trustees

Mr DM Anderson
Dr EM Edmondson
Mr JD Edmondson
Mr G Lennon
Canon G Withers

Company secretary Mr DM Anderson

Independent examiner Imelda Rogan on behalf of Rogan Accountancy Ltd
Sketrick House
Jubilee Road
Newtownards
Co Down
BT23 4YH

Structure, governance and management

PresenCE is the collective term for a group of Christians in Portaferry, coming from all four of the established churches in the town. The organisation is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 15th April 2014.

The organisation was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed by these articles. In the event of the company being wound up, members are required to contribute an amount not exceeding £1.

Presence in Portaferry Limited is in compliance with legal and other statutory obligations. The company was formally granted charitable status by the NI Charity Commission on 17th September 2018 and its charity reference number is 107108.

Trustee meetings and decisions comply with the Articles of Association.

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Objectives and activities

In setting the objectives for the charity and planning activities for the year, the Trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit to their beneficiaries.

On 6th June 2022 the Trustees resolved to amend the objectives as follows:

The Company's objectives are to work on a faith-based, cross-community basis to support the people resident in, and/or visiting Portaferry, and its surrounding area, irrespective of age, sex, sexual orientation, race, disability, political, religious or other opinion by

1. supporting the work of YFC in its Place2b cross-community faith based work for the benefit of young people;
2. leading, supporting and carrying out developmental faith-based and social activities and projects, and co-operating with other organisations, for the benefit of all adults;
3. facilitating, in conjunction with the other local community organisations, new arrivals, immigrants and refugees from elsewhere who wish to reside in the area by providing a welcome, and assisting with language, accommodation, shelter, integration and other matters of pressing need.

These amendments were subsequently approved by CCNI and the Registrar of Companies.

Strategic report

The following sections for achievements and performance and financial review form the strategic report of the charity.

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Achievements and performance

During the year ended 30 April 2023, PresenCE continued to work towards post pandemic normality, although during this time there were still restrictions on activities to comply with Covid regulations. Nevertheless, we were able to continue with and expand upon our activities. Our main projects during the year were as follows:

Place2B

Youth for Christ, YfC, has continued its youth work with Place2B, but unfortunately YfC has struggled to recruit staff to lead the sessions in Portaferry. There has been some resumption since the Covid restrictions were lifted but meetings are now only held bimonthly while recruitment is underway. PresenCE provided financial support again in the year in question. This is likely to increase to more usual levels in the coming year. One of our Trustees has liaison responsibilities with YfC.

Portaferry Gala

Gala 2022 saw a return to normal operation. The committee must be congratulated on the excellent job they did and, in particular, with the street theme event. PresenCE has always hosted a range of activities during Gala Week. In 2022, PresenCE supported Gala with: Open Hour - four stories presented every day in person or on Zoom; Sing Praise in St Cooney's Oratory; and spontaneously gifting 200 free ice cream or coffee vouchers.

Book Clubs

After the very successful Beta & Gamma clubs, PresenCE has continued to offer two or three clubs throughout the year. We completed Delta - a whirlwind read of the New Testament books. September brought "Daring to Hope." 2023 began with a search of "Wisdom for the Whole of Life" studies in Proverbs. The clubs take place on Zoom but as the Covid restrictions have been lifted we have been able to have some in-person events in the 8-week cycle. These have been held in The Narrows and have been greatly enjoyed.

Barholm Ukraine Appeal

Perhaps the most significant project tackled by PresenCE in 2022/23 was the Barholm Family Initiative. This was a response to the crisis in Ukraine and the possibility of welcoming Ukrainian refugees to Portaferry.

Barholm is a building comprising 12 guest bedrooms (8 with ensuite shower rooms) over three floors with a conference room, conservatory, dining room and commercial kitchen on the ground floor. In addition, its location at the Strangford ferry could make it a hub for refugees on both sides of the Lough.

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive who has responsibility for housing refugees were very keen to partner and we also had the support of North Down YMCA who were prepared to manage the accommodation. Additionally, there was strong commitment from all the local Churches and significant volunteer effort to make the building ready for what could be a genuine family experience for those traumatised by war.

However, despite the best efforts of all parties it was not possible to conclude a timely agreement with the owner and so the project terminated. The link with North Down YMCA allowed us to reallocate resource to set up a bursary scheme, which they administer. It supports Ukrainian refugees with their

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costs as they integrate into society here. The cash donations plus the sale of items that had been donated to Barholm meant that we provided over £8,820. This was agreed with the participants and donors.

PresenCE wishes to thank all the volunteers for the work they have done, the material, goods and furniture they have donated. The participants were invited to a service of celebration on Saturday 24th September at 10:30am. This was an opportunity to celebrate the level of community engagement and interest that the family project created, reassure all that their efforts were not wasted, and to confirm the transfer of funds to YMCA.

New Year Open Hour

We once again had an open hour at the start of the new year on Saturday 31st December. Speakers from each of the Churches in the village spoke of God's faithfulness during 2022 despite some very difficult circumstances and thus their hope for the future.

Welcom-In

The significant rise in energy prices, despite government support, coupled with the overall increase in the cost of living has meant that some people are struggling to keep warm. To help alleviate this, a number of organisations have sought to set up warm spaces where people can come to be warm. PresenCE, in conjunction with Portaferry Methodist Church, has supported the development of Welcom-In. The church is open on Tuesday mornings and Thursday afternoons as a space for anyone to come. There are newspapers, and other activities available plus warm beverages.

Reminiscence Project

The Reminiscence Project completed its second phase with publication of "Christmas Past". 40 participants shared their memories of Christmas as young people and their stories have been published. A trip to Belfast City Hall and the Christmas Market completed the "term". Another theme was "Make Do and Mend" with a larger group of participants. This project has encouraged interaction and discussion among many seniors who were isolated during Covid. Their memories and lessons about life have much to teach us even today. It continues to address the need felt by some of the more senior citizens in our community. The modus operandi is of 6-8 seniors meeting for refreshments while a facilitator skilfully collects their recollections of life in the 1940's, 50's and 60's. These memories are recorded in booklets for local distribution. This project is run with the support of Portaferry Community Collective and Portaferry Methodist Church.

Financial review

The Statement of Financial Activities set out on page 8 shows income for the year of £13,557, of which £8,820 was ringfenced to be used for the Ukraine Appeal Project. Total expenditure was £12,422 including a donation of £8,820 to YMCA towards their Ukraine support activities. We generated a small surplus this year of £1,135 and at the year end our unrestricted reserves totalled £5,899.

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Plans for future periods

PresenCE is committed to its work in Portaferry and recognises the need for a "mixed economy" of events, both online and physical. We are grateful for engagement from all the Churches and other community groups in the town and look forward to new volunteers coming forward to support the Trustees.

We are also mindful of the social impact of isolation, poverty and the impact for those struggling with effective management of their limited resources. It is too easy to write off those affected by loneliness, ill health, drugs and violence and we need to seek new and innovative ways to partner with organisations that can support all, as they seek to transform their lives.

The trustees' annual report and the strategic report were approved on 15 November 2023 and signed on behalf of the board of trustees by:

Mr DM Anderson
Trustee

Mr JD Edmondson
Trustee