

TRUSTEE ANNUAL REPORT



The trustees present their report and financial statements for the period 1 July 2022 - 30 June 2023

REGISTERED ADDRESS:

26a Downshire Place , Banbridge, Co. Down BT32 3DF

TRUSTEES SERVING DURING REPORTING PERIOD:

Barbara Anne Gamble (resigned 1 August 2023)

David James Gamble (resigned 1 August 2023)

Andrew Hackett (resigned 1 July 2023)

Cheryl Elizabeth Hackett (resigned 9 October 2023)

Louise McKinstry (resigned 31 March 2023)

CURRENT TRUSTEES:

Mike Bambrick (appointed 1 July 2023)

Lena Bambrick (appointed 1 August 2023)

Jane Carr (appointed 1 September 2023)

Hilary Leathem (appointed 10 October 2023)

OBJECTS & ACTIVITIES

The charity's objects ('Objects') are specifically restricted to the following:

To promote the well-being of the inhabitants of Northern Ireland and its environs and in particular the Banbridge area, without distinction of age, sex, race, political, religious or other opinion by all or any of the following means in so far as is exclusively charitable.

- The advancement of the Christian religion for the benefit of the public within the Banbridge and surrounding areas.
- The prevention and relief of poverty within the Banbridge area.
- The use of physical fitness, health and wellbeing for the greater good of the local community within the Banbridge area.
- The preservation and protection of health and life within the Banbridge area.
- The advancement of community development within the Banbridge area.
- The advancement of education within the Banbridge area.
- The relief of those in need by reason of youth, age, ill health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage by ensuring all our services and outworking of our purposes are as accessible to every section of the local community as is physically possible regardless of social standing or personal circumstance.
- The relief of unemployment for public benefit.
- And generally improve the conditions of life for the said inhabitants by associating with the statutory authorities, voluntary organisations and inhabitants in a common effort to meet our objectives in accordance with the benefit to the greater Banbridge community.

For the avoidance of doubt, the system of law governing the articles of association of the charity is the law of Northern Ireland.

ACHIEVEMENTS, PERFORMANCE & PUBLIC BENEFIT

During the reporting period J29 Project provided the following for those within the greater Banbridge area who had specific needs:

• **ETHNIC MINORITY FAMILY SUPPORT**

We welcomed a new staff member, Katherine McComb into the position of Ethnic Minority Family Support Worker. Katherine has responsibility for heading up the outreach to foreign nationals and those who are new to Northern Ireland. This has been a great blessing to the ministry and Katherine has clearly been God's person for the task and we have asked her to share a little on the role:

I have been working as the Ethnic Minority Family Support Worker for J29 since the start of August 2022. A key part

of this role is 'Invited' a conversational English class. Women attend this group from countries including Ukraine, Syria, Russia, Bulgaria, Spain, India, Pakistan and Lithuania. Over the years I have seen how we can invite refugees to our country, provide the essentials, yet stop short of inviting them into our lives, homes and community. 'Invited' is an attempt in some small way to provide a welcome beyond the basics and for the Church to take up its mantle to share the Gospel. We have been privileged at J29 to have 16 ethnic minority families brought across our path who receive ongoing support. The needs are varied and extend well beyond language assistance. Food and heating support, advocacy with regards to accessing medical care, suitable housing, educational support and loneliness are a handful of the issues which I seek to assist families with. Cross-Cultural ministry can be challenging with different languages, faiths and cultural traditions yet it is also immensely exciting, fun filled and vibrant. I've recently considered how Jesus not only brought hope into situations but also joy. Dancing, creating crafts, enjoying new foods and much laughter are part and parcel of this role. When I am sat amongst women from across the world, speaking various languages I am reminded of Revelation 7 which speaks of 'a great multitude ... from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne'. I have been privileged to see a glimpse of what this might look like, and I'm excited.

A group of 30 people who have settled in Banbridge since fleeing war-torn countries took part in a three-day residential supported by Clanmil Housing. The participants, who included mainly Syrian families and one family from India, spent three days in Murlough House, a retreat centre near Dundrum village. The participants have been attending regular classes to improve their English and learn skills to help them integrate into the local community. This was the first time they were able to get together away from the classroom setting and enjoy activities such as canoeing and crafts, as well as having informal discussions about faith and culture.

It was really enlightening to hear from the group how their Muslim faith has many different strands, just as with our faith. It was also useful for us to hear about their experiences with war and conflict, and how they are moving on while dealing with the past. There are a lot of parallels with their experiences and those of people here in Northern Ireland. While we had a lot of discussions, we also had time to have fun, relax and enjoy the peace and tranquillity of Murlough, away from the humdrum of everyday life. The families really appreciated



the chance to spend time together and one of those who took part described the residential as “beautiful and very special,” while another said it was something “they would never forget.”

• **TOGETHER ON TUESDAY COMMUNITY LUNCH**

One of the biggest successes of 2022 was the launch of the Together on Tuesday community lunch programme. This is something we have wanted to see up and running for a long time now and it has been wonderful to finally see it come to fruition. The premise is a very simple one where we open from 1.30-3pm on a Tuesday and invite the local community in for a hot lunch and a couple of hours companionship. It has been such a blessing to see people of all ages and a multitude of backgrounds coming through the doors to share a meal. Loneliness and isolation are so evident in society today and the Tuesday lunch programme has made a real difference to the lives of so many local people. We have had folk travel from Newry, Portadown and Belfast to attend and it has opened up numerous new contacts for us. Cafe Marmalade generously provided us with the soup for the first six lunches and we have been richly blessed by the kindness shown by the local community in sustaining the programme. We have had folk living with dementia attend the afternoon and to hear their story of just how much the lunch means to them is a humbling experience. For some of those attending this is the only meal they share with other people during the week. As a result of the lunch we have had the opportunity to pray with many of the folk and we’ve seen several ladies transition from here into the Refined ladies bible study. We see an average of 30 attending weekly with an overall total of 71 adults.

• **CHRISTMAS**

Christmas for us was a particularly busy period with the compassion project supporting over 40 local families with food, utility and over 150 children with toy parcels. We are most grateful to all who supported the Christmas project and we have been able to engage with new families as a result of the contact over the December period. We seen first hand the sheer weight of pressure some parents are under and we had several opportunities to pray with a number of weary parents.



• **COMPASSION**

As we journeyed into 2023 our compassion programme took a different direction. Going forward the food support will be available purely in emergency and/or crisis situations and will take the form of one food parcel. If after this parcel a family is still in critical need of food we will begin a time-bound process of engagement with the family with the overall aim of the person no longer needing to rely on the J29 Compassion Programme for food support. Support will include home visits from members of our staff team, contracted agreement to engage in the process, budget management and a clear and visible commitment to ending the need for food support. If this isn't something the family are interested in then we will direct them to the local food-bank. The weekly food programme

we were offering in the past due to the Covid-19 pandemic will no longer be running, it was only ever intended to be a short term response. As a ministry we have a wide range of programmes and the food support is only one element of that.

These changes to the food programme are the result of consultations with the families who have been receiving support and our assessment of the need on the ground. There is no doubt we are living in times where the cost of living has drastically increased for everyone and incomes have not matched this increase, however we are also very conscious of how we could be creating a dependency on the food instead of families being suitably encouraged to make good choices when it comes to money management. It is our experience that to simply hand food over without any in-depth follow-up can be detrimental to the recipients. We are also aware of a potential duplication of services given there is already a dedicated food-bank in Banbridge and we want to be the best stewards of the resource we receive. During the reporting period 20 families were supplied with support ranging from food, oil, coal, gas and electricity provision.

•BASEMENT

The Basement project for local young people continued to run during the reporting period with three youth work charities all operating from the floor below us. Many of these young people are involved or engaging in anti-social behaviour and the Basement project offers them a viable alternative from harmful activities.

• BIBLE STUDIES

In the reporting period two Bible studies were established. The ladies Bible study was launched under the name of Refined. The class is led every Thursday by Gilly McKenzie and has a core group of 30 ladies who meet for breakfast and then an hour-long study of the Bible. Ladies of all ages attend the event and it has proved a wonderful social vehicle for those attending. The men's Bible study began to meet on a Monday afternoon and has a group of 9 in attendance. Much like the ladies group, the men's study is a valuable social outlet for the men and attracts men from 21-78 years old.



• SUMMER 2022

Our Summer season was an incredibly busy one with a host of activities for local families in addition to the Summer residential. We held a dinosaur experience for young children in the IMC Cinema which was attended by 55 local families. We led a trip to Infinity adventure park in Banbridge for lots of bouncing and jumping. This event was attended by 31 local families. A trip to Belfast Zoo was also a resounding success for two bus loads of families and a total of 24 families were present. One of the highlights of the Summer was the family fun day in Ballyards Castle where we had bouncy castles, BBQ, face-painters, animal farm, reptiles, football, balloon modelling and live music. Over 40 local families attended this event. Summer is a real highlight in the life of the charity and the activities are eagerly awaited by many within the community.

• **BUBBLE CLUB**

Our parent and toddler group continued to grow during the reporting period with a session each Monday morning. The sessions involved soft-play, snacks, music and dancing for parents and carers within the local community. We have seen first-hand the difference it makes to parents and carers to have a safe and well-equipped space to bring toddlers to and also the benefit in connection to reduce isolation and loneliness. During the period we had an average of 45 people on a weekly basis. The Christmas parties were a wonderful success to such a degree we had two due to increased numbers.

• **MEN'S FOOTBALL**

We ran a 5-week men's football programme in the local leisure centre. This was a good success with an average of 6 men weekly with ages ranging from 14-57. The men enjoyed the sessions and came back to our centre for some lunch and a hours chat.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The results for the year are set out in the statement of financial activities on page 4 of the financial statements.

The charity recorded a net loss for the year ended 30 June 2023 of (£18,853).

The fund balance at 30 June 22 was £113,235.

This leaves total reserves of £94,382 of which £31,572 are restricted funds.

Grants received during the year 22/23 were :

- £5,000 from Halifax Community Grant (received as a prepayment in the previous financial year) for staff wages
- £10,000 from Clanmil Housing Association for summer programs -£7,382 from Benefact Trust for staff wages
- £2,000 from Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Council Community Dev Grant for rent, heat and light costs
- Income was also received through other Trusts and donations.

Due to the additional work of J29 Project staff hours and costs increased to £52,341.96 (2022: £37,834).

Reserves

It is the policy of the Board of Trustees to hold at least 3 months running costs in reserves.

PROPERTY & PREMISE

During the reporting period due care and attention was paid to the maintenance of the premises. All necessary health and safety certifications were updated including PAT testing, food hygiene and fire safety.

GOVERNING DOCUMENT & CONSTITUTION OF THE CHARITY

The Charity is governed by the Memorandum and Articles of Association dated 31st August 2018.

COMPLIANCE WITH PUBLIC BENEFIT

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

In setting our objectives and planning our activities for the year the trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit to ensure the activities have helped achieve the Charity's purposes and provide a benefit to the beneficiaries.

The Charity trustees have complied with the duty to have due regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission under section 4(b) of the Charities Act (public benefit statutory guidance.) Details of the main activities of the Charity to further the charitable purposes for the public benefit have been detailed in 'Achievements, Performance and Public Benefit' on page 2.

ENDS