



Friends of Signature Swimming Trustees' Annual Report 2023

Charity contact information



Friends of Signature Swimming

Northern Ireland Charity Number: NIC108188

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Facebook : Friends of Signature Swim **Charity Trustees**

1. Richard Timms Sept 2020 – Feb 2023
2. Ashley RitchieSept 2020 – Present
3. Joan TohillSept 2020 – Jan 2023
4. Brenda SempleSept 2020 – June 2023
5. Paula MorganSept 2020 – Present
6. Sindy StewartSept 2020 – Present
7. Richard NixonOct 2021 – Jan 2023
8. Diane AddidleMarch 2022 – Apr 2023
9. Lyndsey GastonMarch 2022 - Present
10. Catrina DoughertySept 2023 – Present
11. Fiona WalkerFeb 2024 – Present
12. Tara HughesFeb 2024 - Present

Objectives and activities

Friends of Signature Swimming is a dedicated nonprofit organisation established in 2020 with a mission to enhance the lives of individuals living with disabilities in our community, improve their safety in the water and give them the opportunity to enjoy the benefits and fun of the pool. Over the years, we have worked tirelessly to make a positive and lasting impact on the lives of our clients. Our commitment to inclusivity, empowerment, and community engagement drives every aspect of our work.

Friends of Signature Swimming was conceived when Sindy Stewart, owner of Signature Swimming, recognised that although several of the local swimming pools had been adapted to provide access for people with a disability, there were no instructors with the correct qualifications to provide lessons or facilitate a safe space for them to learn this important lifesaving skill. So, Sindy, along with staff members and parents formed a committee with the aim of providing these services within the local community, based mainly at Coleraine Grammar School. This has been instrumental in improving the quality of life for people living with disabilities in our community.

Our staff play a pivotal role in Friends of Signature Swimming by dedicating their time to lesson planning and delivery. Assessing the needs of each pool user and adjusting the session to suit their individual needs. The committee looks after community engagement, fundraising activities such as local fashion shows and sponsored walks, advertising the services available and encouraging local business investment as well as raising funds from the public. Given the current cost of living crisis every effort is made to keep the cost as low as possible for all participants.

We deliver specialised training sessions, therapeutic interventions and support services to participants and engage in ongoing training and professional development to stay up to date with the latest advancements in disability support. We also collaborate with local and national organisations such as Foster Carers NI, RNIB, RNID, Autism NI and The Sandelford Centre.

Looking ahead, we aim to expand our reach and impact by involving more staff and volunteers, enhancing program offerings, and collaborating with other community organisations. Our commitment to improving the lives of individuals with disabilities remains unwavering.

Thanks to the dedication and involvement of our team, Friends of Signature Swimming has made a significant impact on the lives of dozens of individuals living with disabilities in our community. Our program has seen remarkable success stories of improved mobility and overall wellbeing among participants. A recent study by Swim England stated that swimming was associated with the prevention of more than 78,500 cases of ill health in 2022 reducing GP visits and psychotherapy usage. This demonstrated the importance of keeping this vital service in our community and accessible to all.

WHAT WE NEED TO IMPROVE:

Our facilities are old and antiquated and not up to current disabled access recommendations and have no disabled changing so we are only able to provide these lessons if the person is not physically challenged. We have plans to upgrade our facilities, see attached plans and costings (as per 2020 prices so will be subject to slight increases) so we can offer the lessons to a fuller range of disabilities. Whilst the pool is situated within a school building its sole income is obtained from our pool rental and we have full permission from the school for any modifications. A confirmation letter from the schools Board of Governors is available on request. As you see from the plans, our aim is to add wheelchair access to the pool by constructing a pathway through an unused grass area and by adding a small porch to facilitate wheelchair entry. We also hope to add two disabled changing areas, one to the existing female facilities and the other can be access by all therefore creating a gender diverse/disabled changing.

FUNDRAISING STRATEGY:

Currently we set targets, develop, and agree our fundraising calendar within our committee. This helps us to track and assess our process throughout the year. Our Fundraising Strategy is simple, robust, and dynamic. We create a plan to achieve our goal of £80k over a 5-year period. We need to be creative year on year to ensure our plan doesn't become stale.

GRANT AWARDED FROM Irish Society:

A not-for-profit charity situated in the heart of Coleraine, Friends of Signature Swimming, aims to give 3–16 year-olds a rewarding experience as they learn how to swim and become comfortable and confident in the water. While they do not have their own facilities, they use the pool at Coleraine Grammar School. And rather than have FOSS volunteers transport equipment and materials needed for their swim programmes, they sought funding towards the purchase of a storage container to keep 'poolside' at CGS – to ensure their equipment is safe, secure, and accessible for all to use. The Irish Society Committee approved a grant of £745 to meet the full cost of the storage unit quoted in the application.

Tesco:

Tesco community grants £1000 awarded for steps into the pool, which was

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tirelessly to make a positive and lasting impact on the lives of our clients. Our commitment to inclusivity, empowerment, and community engagement drives every aspect of our work.

FOSS deliver specialised training sessions, therapeutic interventions and support services to Children with additional needs. We collaborate with local and national organisations such as Foster Carers NI, RNIB, RNID, Autism NI and The Sandelford Centre.

The project required is to construct an extended covering to the outside area where parents view swimming lessons from. This is to protect them from the weather elements as the pool area is too small to accommodate parents inside, and maintain health and safety standards.

Structure, governance and management

Charity Constitution 2024

Constitution

Friends of Signature Swimming

This constitution was formally changed and adopted by the members of the association in

an annual general meeting on 20 February 2024.

SIGNED: TH Hughes (Chairperson) fwalker (Secretary)

1. NAME

The name of the association is:
Friends of Signature Swimming (FOSS).
(Hereinafter called "the association").

2. ADMINISTRATION

Subject to the matters set out below the association and its property shall be administered and managed in accordance with this constitution by the members of the Management committee, constituted by clause 5 of this constitution ("the committee").

3. OBJECTS

3.1 The group is established to promote the benefit of children, young people and adults with a learning and/or physical disabilities in the area of Causeway and the North West of Northern Ireland and the surrounding environs of Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council area, Mid Ulster District council and Mid Antrim District Council ('area of benefit') without distinction of gender, sexuality, nationality, ethnic origin, political or religious opinion, by the provision of facilities in the interests of social welfare, recreation, education or other leisure time occupation of improving their conditions of life.

3.2 POWERS

In furtherance of the above objects, but not further or otherwise, the association may:

- a) Advance training, education and personal development for learning and/or physical disabled children, young people and adults by ways of programmes and activities both recreational, social and educational.
- b) Through our project we will be contributing to health and well-being, promoting inclusion and acceptance, developing skills, encouraging interaction with others and creating a sense of ownership and community.
- c) Promote and develop the individual's social skills, whilst learning about Water Safety and Swimming techniques.
- d) Offer learning in the area of job possibilities in the Aquatic industry and work with local community groups and employers to offer work placements.
- e) Provide practical assistance designed to enable the beneficiaries to avail of resources and tuition who would not otherwise be able to get access to such resources.
- f) Raise monies to help Adapt Coleraine Grammar School for Disabled access and users.
- g) Work in Partnership with Signature Swimming and have them as an associate in provision of any/all services and use the experience of their staff and management to implement project, programmes and activities for the development of the beneficiaries. Share the Signature Swimming premises and contribute to the cost of the same. Liaise with STA NI & Signature Swimming to organise courses and classes for introduction to the Aquatic Industry.
- h) obtain collect and receive money by way of grants, donations, bequests, legacies, collections, local fundraising or other lawful method PROVIDED that the association shall not undertake any substantial permanent trading activities and shall conform to any relevant requirements of the law;
- i) purchase take on lease or in exchange, hire or otherwise acquire any real or personal property and any rights and privileges necessary for the promotion of the above objects and construct, maintain and alter any buildings or erections which the association may think necessary for the promotion of its objects;
- j) make any regulations for any property which may be so acquired;
- k) subject to any consents as may be required by law, sell, let, mortgage, dispose of or turn to account all or any of the property or assets of the association with a view to the furtherance of its objects;
- l) subject to such consents as may be required by law receive money on deposit or loan and borrow or raise money in such a manner as the association shall think fit and to charge all or any part of the property of the association with repayment of money so borrowed;

- m) recruit and train volunteers with relevant skills to carry out the objects of the association;
- n) employ and pay any person or persons NOT being a member of committee to supervise, organise and carry on the work of the association and make all reasonable and necessary provision for the payment of remuneration to employees;
- o) promote and organise co-operation in the achievement of the above objects and to that end to work in association with local authorities and voluntary organisations engaged in the furtherance of the above objects in the area of benefit; working in partnership with Signature Swimming.
- p) establish or support any charitable trusts, associations or institutions formed for all or any of the above objects;
- q) do all such other lawful things as may be necessary for the attainment of the above objects or any of them;

4. MEMBERSHIP

- 4.1 Membership of the association shall be open to the following, irrespective of ethnic identity, disability, age, gender, political party, nationality, sexual orientation, marital status, or religion:

Membership of the Board shall be open to any person over 18 that is a friend or supporter of Signature Swimming living or located in the Causeway Coast and/or the North West of Northern Ireland who is interested in helping the group to achieve its aims, willing to abide by the rules of the group and willing to lobby and carry out fundraising activities for the interests of the group.

- 4.2 The committee shall have the right for good and sufficient reason to terminate the membership of any member provided that the member concerned shall have the right to be heard by the association in a general meeting before a final decision is made.

5. MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

- 5.1 The committee shall meet not less than 4 times a year and shall consist of not less than 4 members of the association, elected at an annual general meeting.
- 5.2 The committee elected at an annual general meeting shall have the power to co-opt further members to fill any casual vacancy arising on the committee, or to add to the skills or experience of the committee who shall be Full members and who shall serve until the conclusion of the next following annual general meeting

PROVIDED that the number of co-opted members shall not exceed one-third of the total membership of the committee. Co-opted members shall have the right to vote.

5.3 The chairperson, secretary and treasurer, who shall be the honorary officers of the association shall be elected annually by and from the members of the committee at their first meeting following the annual general meeting.

5.4 Any member of the committee who fails to attend 3 _ consecutive committee meetings without reasonable excuse shall lose her/his place on the committee which may be filled by co-option in accordance with clause 5.2 above.

5.5 The trustees (if appointed for the purpose of holding property in their own names on behalf of the association) shall be notified of and shall be entitled to attend all meetings of the committee but without the power to vote.

6. FUNCTIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

6.1 The committee may make such regulations as they consider appropriate for the efficient conduct of the business of the committee and the association.

6.2 The committee may appoint such staff NOT being members of the committee as they consider necessary on such terms and conditions as they may determine.

6.3 The committee may appoint such sub-committees, advisory groups or working parties of their own members and other persons as they may from time to time decide necessary for the carrying out of their work, and may determine their terms of reference, duration and composition. All such sub- committees shall make regular reports on their work to the committee.

6.4 The proceedings of the committee shall not be invalidated by any failure to elect or any defect in the election, appointment, co-options or qualification of any member.

7. CHAIRING MEETINGS

All meetings of the association or of the committee or of any of its subcommittees shall be presided over by its chairperson failing whom its vice-chairperson, if one has been appointed. If neither the chairperson or vice-chairperson are present, those present may elect one of their number to take the chair. [The chairperson of any meeting shall have a second or casting vote.]

8. FINANCE

- 8.1 All monies raised by or on behalf of the association shall be applied to further the objects of the association and for no other purpose provided that nothing herein contained shall prevent the payment of legitimate out-of-pocket expenses to members of the association engaged upon the approved business of the association.
- 8.2 The treasurer shall keep proper accounts of the finances of the association.
- 8.3 The financial year of the association shall run from 1 January to 31 December.
- 8.4 The accounts shall be audited by an auditor or auditors appointed by the annual general meeting OR they may be examined by an accountant or any independent person (whichever shall be appointed at the annual general meeting).
- 8.5 An annual statement of accounts for the last financial year shall be submitted by the committee to the annual general meeting.
- 8.6 A bank account shall be opened in the name of the association with Ulster Bank or with such _____ other bank as the committee shall from time to time decide. The committee shall authorise in writing the honorary treasurer and 2 members of the committee to sign cheques on behalf of the association. All cheques must be signed by not less than 2 of the 3 authorised signatories.

9. TRUST PROPERTY

The association may appoint and may terminate the appointment of not less than 3 people to act as trustees for the purpose of holding any moneys or property belonging to the association. The title to all or any such real and/or personal property which may be required by or for the purposes of the association shall be vested in the trustees who shall hold such property in trust for the association. The trustees shall act at all times under the lawful instructions of the committee who shall, subject to the approval and consent of the association as determined by a general meeting, have power to fill vacancies among the trustees.

10. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

- 10.1 [The first annual general meeting of the association shall be held not later than the 30th June each year and in each year thereafter an annual general meeting of the association shall be held at such place and time (not being more than 18 months after the holding of the preceding annual general meeting) as the committee shall determine.
- 10.2 At such annual general meeting the business shall include the following:
- a) the election of members to serve on the committee;

- b) the appointment of an auditor or auditors or an accountant or any independent person to examine the annual accounts;
- c) the consideration of an bi-annual report of the work done by or under the auspices of the committee;
- d) the consideration of the annual accounts;
- e) the transaction of such other matters as may from time to time be considered necessary.

11 .SPECIAL GENERAL MEETINGS

The committee may at any time at its discretion and shall upon a requisition signed by not less than 4 members having the power to vote and giving reasons for the request, call a special general meeting of the association for the purpose of altering the constitution in accordance with clause 13 hereof or of considering any matter which may be referred to them by the committee or for any other purpose.

12.RULES OF PROCEDURE AT ALL MEETINGS

Voting

12.1 Subject to the provisions of clause 13 hereof all questions arising at any meeting shall be decided by a simple majority of those present and entitled to vote thereat. [In case of an equality of votes the chairperson shall have a second or casting vote.]

Minutes

12.2 Minute books shall be kept by the committee and all other subcommittees and the appropriate secretary shall enter therein a record of all proceedings and resolutions.

Quorum

12.3 The quorum at general meetings of the association shall be 3 and at meetings of the committee shall be 3_ or such other number as the committee may from time to time determine.

Standing Orders

12.4 The committee shall have power to adopt and issue standing orders and/or rules or policies for the association. Such standing orders, rules or policies shall come into operation immediately PROVIDED ALWAYS that they shall be subject to review by the association in general meeting and shall NOT be inconsistent with this constitution.

13.ALTERATIONS TO THE CONSTITUTION

13.1 Any alterations to this constitution shall receive the assent of not less than two-thirds of the members of the association present and voting at the annual general meeting

or a meeting specially called for the purpose PROVIDED that notice of any such alteration shall have been received by the honorary secretary in writing not less than 21 clear days before the meeting at which the alteration is to be brought forward.

13.2 At least 14 clear days notice in writing of the meeting setting forth the terms of the alteration to be proposed shall be sent by the honorary secretary to each member of the association PROVIDED FURTHER that no alteration shall be made which would cause the association to cease to be a charity at law.

14. DISSOLUTION

14.1 If the committee by a simple majority decide at any time that on the grounds of expense or otherwise it is necessary or advisable to dissolve the association they shall call a meeting of all members of the association who have the power to vote of which meeting not less than 21 days notice (stating the terms of the Resolution to be proposed thereat) shall be given.

14.2 If such decision shall be confirmed by a simple majority of those present and voting at such meeting the committee shall have power to dispose of any assets held by or in the name of the association.

14.3 Any assets remaining after the satisfaction of any proper debts and liabilities shall be given or transferred to a recognised charity or charities such as the Hospice or Cancer Research.

15. INDEMNITY

The association shall indemnify and keep indemnified every officer, member, volunteer and employee of the association from and against all claims, demands, actions and proceedings (and all costs and expenses in connection therewith or arising therefrom) made or brought against the association in connection with its activities, the actions of its officers, members, volunteers or employees, or in connection with its property and equipment but this indemnity shall NOT extend to liabilities arising from wilful and individual fraud, wrongdoing or wrongful omission on the part of the officer, member, volunteer or employee sought to be made liable. The treasurer shall effect a policy of insurance in respect of this indemnity.

Trustee recruitment and appointment

2023 was a tough year for the charity, we lost a lot of our Trustees as the charity stalled due to lack of progress. It has taken us a year to really recruit again. We did advertise within both the Swim School and the School where the pool is situated, but we struggled to get any recruitment.

Achievements and performance

The charity ran very little fundraisers during 2023 due to the lack of Trustees. As the accounts show, the funds raised were from contributions from parents for lessons with additional needs and then we trained 4 more staff for FOSS to increase our class availability.

Financial review

During 2023, the charity received an income of £9,442 by way of contributions from parents. No grants were obtained in this financial year and no fundraisers were held. We have plans for a fashion show to help raise funds in 2024 and will seek to find grant funding.

Expenses totalled £10,921 meaning there was a deficit of £1,479 in the year. The charity had enough cash reserves held in a current account to cover this. The main areas of expenditure were staff costs, rent and training costs. Specialist training must be undertaken to ensure the charity remains a swim excellence school for our participants.

Declaration

Signed on behalf of the charity trustees:



Print name

SINDY STEWART

Designation

Trustee

Date

20/2/24