

CHARITY REGISTRATION NUMBER: NIC108524

# **Connect Fermanagh**

**Trustees' Report & Financial Accounts for the year ended  
31<sup>st</sup> March 2024**

## **Connect Fermanagh**

<b>Contents</b>	<b>pg. 2</b>
<b>Administrative details of the Charity including Trustees</b>	<b>pg. 3</b>
<b>Annual Report of the Trustees</b>	<b>pgs. 4-6</b>
<b>Trustees' responsibilities statement</b>	<b>pg. 7</b>
<b>Summary of Financial Activities</b>	<b>pgs. 8</b>
<b>Balance Sheet</b>	<b>pg. 9</b>
<b>Independent Examiners Report</b>	<b>pg. 10</b>
<b>Notes to Financial Statements</b>	<b>pg. 11</b>

## Connect Fermanagh

### Trustee's Annual Report (Incorporating the Chair's Report)

#### Structure, governance and management.

The Charity was established April 2020 and is governed by its Constitution, adopted on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2021, managed by the Trustees. Day to day operations are carried out by 1 part-time staff member with the support of Volunteers and the Trustees themselves.

#### Reference and administrative details

Registered charity name	Connect Fermanagh
Charity registration number	NIC108524
Office and registered address	Fermanagh House, Broadmeadow Place, Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh, BT74 5PX

#### Trustees

Hazel Gardiner  
Helen Gilmour  
Sonya Johnston (Secretary)  
Lauri McCusker (Chair)  
Sue McDermott  
Pauline McManus  
Paula Monaghan  
Caroline Storey (Treasurer)

#### Objectives and activities

Connect Fermanagh believes in, advocates for and supports the health and wellbeing of people across Fermanagh, enabling individuals to feel connected, confident and valued.

#### Aim

To enhance people's lives, supporting those most vulnerable and marginalised in our community to achieve positive emotional wellbeing and feel connected to and secure in their communities.

#### Purposes

- Reduce service-users' feelings of loneliness and isolation
- Help service users feel connected
- Provide information on local and regional services and supports
- Signpost and support individuals to access services and supports
- Provide a platform to have the voices of service users heard by decision-makers locally and regionally.

#### Statement on Risk Assessment

There have been no risks identified, the trustees are content that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future.

## **Trustees' Annual Report (incorporating the Chairs Report) Achievements and performance**

The Trustees present their annual report together with the financial statements of the Charity for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.

In presenting this report, the Trustees have had regard to the charity Commissions guidance on public benefit, the report details how our activities have enabled us to fulfil our public benefit purposes as required under section 70 of the Charities Act (NI) 2008.

### **What we do:**

In order to improve the health and well-being of people in the Fermanagh area, Connect Fermanagh continues to recruit Volunteers to provide regular, friendly phone-calls to anyone aged 18+ from 9am - 2pm 7 days per week. We accept referrals from any individual or organisation. We call people on a weekly basis to prevent loneliness and isolation, build confidence, and help individuals feel connected and valued.

We provide friendly conversation, we provide information over the telephone and information to Volunteers and service users via a monthly newsletter on local activities, services and supports.

We provide signposting to organisations offering support on specific issues and we provide advocacy and emotional support to those who require it. Where individuals have specific needs, information and signposting to specialist services and support organisations is provided. Volunteers, under the direction and guidance of the Project Coordinator ensure individuals have an awareness of support services available to assist them with a wide range of needs.

We organise and facilitate up to 4 events each year, bringing volunteers and service users together to enjoy a range of activities to build friendships and connections in a safe, warm and welcoming environment. Service users will feel valued and have their voices heard, records of needs and gaps in services will be maintained and used to raise issues with local and regional decision-makers to advocate for improved or new services.

### **Why we do it:**

We want our service users to feel connected, we want to alleviate feelings of loneliness, isolation and anxiety. We want individuals to know about activities and services they can access, and we want their voices heard in decisions that may affect them.

We want our Service Users to be better informed of opportunities in the local area, about changes to services and supports they may be entitled to do. We want them to live in safe and stable homes and to have a trusted person that will listen to them and refer them on, for specialist support when needed.

We want our service users to enjoy life, to build connections, to make friendships and have fun, we want them to feel valued and listened to.

The direct benefits flowing from our purposes include: improved health and well-being, reduction in social exclusion and levels of stress and anxiety, feelings of loneliness and isolation.

### **What have we done, our outputs:**

Connect Fermanagh has, during this 4th year of operation, seen a continued demand for its service and has continued to meet that demand as well as plan and deliver several social events and activities.

The year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 we supported 70 individuals. In this year we recruited, inducted, Access NI checked and supported four new volunteers to join our Team. We have provided weekly telephone calls to service users 365 days a year, chatting to individuals about a range of topics they are interested in, cheering people up, reassuring them, providing information and signposting, helping people feel connected and cared for.

We delivered a range of information to service users over the telephone, we also posted out and delivered a number of resources with information on a range of issues and services from home safety to physical and mental well-being. Resources included 'Age-Well' calendars, Happy at Home brochures, Positive Ageing magazines, Home Safety and Energy Efficiency information leaflets.

We planned and hosted three very successful social events, transport, refreshments, activities and entertainment providing service users and volunteers with opportunities to meet, socialise, reminisce, build friendships and connections and have fun in a safe and welcoming environment.

We have promoted our service to encourage both new referrals and new volunteers at multiple events, we hosted an information stand at The Big Community Paddle, at the welcome village for the new Kings' Royal visit to Enniskillen, we attended the Southwest College student fair, the Devenish Partnership Forums 'Age Aware' tea dance and numerous events in Community centres throughout Fermanagh. We have hosted stands in various large shops across Fermanagh including our local Tesco and Dunne's Stores shops.

We have spoken to various groups to promote volunteering opportunities. These included student groups, men's groups, Fermanagh and Omagh District council staff, pensioner groups, Enniskillen BID and volunteers/service users from other voluntary organisations.

We have attended various events and consultations to ensure the voices of our service users are heard and contribute to decision-making, including the Queens University/Age NI consultation on the role of the environment on healthy ageing, Every Story Matters, the covid 19 inquiry, we attended monthly meetings of the Fermanagh Family Support Group, ensuring continued awareness of the Connect Fermanagh Service and referral process.

We continue to be members of several agencies and groups who we work with to represent the interests of and advocate for our service users and volunteers, these groups include the South West age partnership, Family support Hub Fermanagh, The Centre for Ageing Better, Fermanagh and Omagh Intergenerational Forum, and Age Friendly NI we value working with others throughout the Fermanagh area ensuring a joined up, multi-agency approach to developing and delivering services.

#### **What difference have we made, our impact:**

Our friendly phone-calls and social activities have increased a sense of belonging and boosted happiness for people who would otherwise be socially isolated and feeling lonely, for many that we call this is the only contact they have in a week from someone who isn't paid to be there for them. Our calls reduce feelings of loneliness and improve people emotional well-being.

Our calls help individuals feel more connected, we improve people's resilience to be able to cope with life-challenges. Reducing stress and anxiety by having someone to talk to, having someone provide information and signposting to services and supports has had a positive impact on both the physical and mental health of those we call.

Providing opportunities for people to build social networks and having access to social events for people who have mobility issues, living in rural and isolated locations significantly improves and enriches the quality of life of those we call. People we call are more resilient, more confident, feel less isolated and are living happier lives as a result of the work of our dedicated Volunteers.

## **Financial Review**

Connect Fermanagh is in a strong financial position, with a healthy, diverse range of income including private donations, charitable foundations, support from the Halifax Fund, Tesco's Token scheme, The National Lottery Awards for All. The financial support from Charitable Trusts and funders continues to be appreciated as without it, many of Connect Fermanagh's activities would be impossible or significantly reduced.

## **Financial Management Systems**

Connect Fermanagh has in place sound financial management procedures which we are confident are robust and appropriate in terms of good governance.

The results for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 are set out in pages 8 and 9 of the Financial Statements

The Trustees consider that the unrestricted funds of the Charity are sufficient and adequate to fulfil their obligations.

## **Reserves Policy**

The income of the Charity is considered adequate, and the risks associated with any significant reduction in income is regarded as unlikely. The Trustees are satisfied with the current level of reserves at the present time.

## Trustee's responsibilities statement

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the Financial Statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice). The charity trustees are required to prepare financial statements for each year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable trust and the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- observe the methods and principles in the applicable Charities SORP;
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.


The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity. 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.

### Auditor

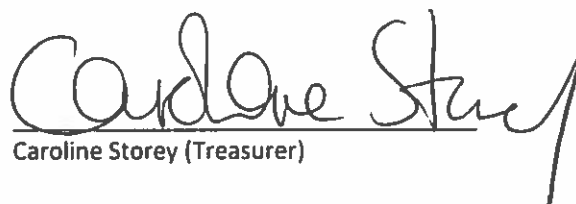
Each of the persons who are a Trustee at the date of approval of this report confirms that:

- So far as they are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the charity's auditor is unaware; and
- They have taken all steps that they ought to have taken as a Trustee to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's auditor is aware of that information.

The Trustee's annual report was approved on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2024 and signed on behalf of the board of Trustees by:



Lauri McCusker (Chair)



Caroline Storey (Treasurer)

