

Politics in Action

Company Limited by Guarantee

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

Year ended 31 August 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 31 August 2023.

Reference and administrative details

Registered charity name	Politics in Action
Charity registration number	108559
Company registration number	NI656760
Principal office and registered office	83 University Street Belfast BT7 1HP

The trustees

	Mr D Scott	(Appointed 27 June 2023)
	Ms A Burke	
	Mr R Feeney	
	Dr D Gallagher	(Resigned 27 June 2023)
	Ms A Mallon	(Appointed 20 September 2022)
	Mr D McQuillan	
	Ms M McWilliams - Patron	
	Mr R Ross	
	Ms P Yarnell	(Resigned 30 October 2023)
Independent examiner	John Magee FCA 631 Lisburn Road Belfast BT9 7GT	

Structure, governance and management

Politics in Action, a company limited by guarantee and registered charity, is governed by a board of trustees. Their task, in conjunction with employed senior management, is to oversee the administration of the charity, safeguard its assets and resources to ensure that they are used solely in the furtherance of its charitable objectives, and to act in its best interests at all times. Board meetings take place periodically, with extraordinary meetings held when necessary, and an annual general meeting is held on an annual basis.

The day to day business of Politics in Action is managed by Executive Director, Mr Paul Smyth (appointed June 2022). The Executive Director's role is to ensure that the charity delivers against its agreed objectives. During this financial year there was a small administrative function provided on a freelance basis, and the organisation also contracted external facilitators to help deliver the programmes in schools.

Politics in Action

Company Limited by Guarantee

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

Year ended 31 August 2023

Objectives and activities

Politics in Action, a shared education initiative, was established in 2018 to provide a platform and a conduit to amplify the voices of young people through active collaboration with politicians, activists, and high-profile partners. Through learning, knowledge sharing, and nurturing the skills required to discuss important issues constructively, the charity supports young people to actively engage the aforementioned groups of people and with each other, to create a more equitable, inclusive political landscape, with six principles in mind - equity, kindness, reconciliation, partnership, diversity and fun.

The trustees confirm that they have had due regard for the guidance produced on public benefit by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland and are pleased to report that, during the period, Politics in Action has continued to provide public benefits through the programmes and services it offers.

Strategic report

The following sections for achievements and performance, financial review and plans for future periods form the strategic report of the charity. Our six values (agreed in the Strategic Plan) are equity, inclusion, fun, respect, partnership and young person centred.

Politics in Action

Company Limited by Guarantee

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

Year ended 31 August 2023

Achievements and performance

As intimated above, the mission of Politics in Action is to empower young people in Northern Ireland to make a difference on issues that are important to them, and to hold those in power to account by having their voices heard at the heart of government.

Politics in Action founder, Peter Weil, a Northern Ireland native and former BBC and Discovery Executive amongst other roles, established the charity back in 2018 and developed the organisation for four years before retiring from the Board and his role as Chief Executive (on a voluntary basis). As part of this, he formed an enthusiastic and influential team of trustees, who successfully attracted financial assistance from the Rank Foundation and the David Cross Young People's Fund. The first school partnership between St Dominic' Grammar School for Girls in Belfast and Friends' School Lisburn was established almost immediately, and the charity quickly established a network of schools across the province who would begin to collaborate on a number shared education programmes.

In Spring 2020, Politics in Action was forced to quickly adapt to the challenges of the unfolding Covid-19 pandemic. Working with both funders and school partners, the charity's work with young people in clusters of schools was able to continue virtually, in schools and at home. There followed a series of 'Town Hall' sessions with high-profile speakers such as Michele O'Neill MLA, Sir Jeffrey Donaldson MP, Lord Weir, Doug Beattie MLA, Naomi Long MLA, Colm Eastwood MP and Taoiseach Leo Varadkar.

Funding from the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs (Reconciliation Fund), the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland and the National Lottery Community Fund in 2020 and 2021 allowed Politics in Action to continue and develop its work in local cross community clusters, attracting participation from 25 schools. This also resulted in the creation of the Executive Director position (allowing Peter Weil to step down from his voluntary role in December 2021), now occupied by Mr Paul Smyth who has long been associated with the successful administration of charities in Northern Ireland. The role was first filled by Dr Patricia O'Lynn in October, who left in May 2022 and was subsequently elected to the Northern Ireland Assembly.

As above, Politics in Action became a recognised charity in February 2022. The charity established its first office in September 2022 in Mediation House on University Street, Belfast. At the July meeting of the Trustees, Paul set out a short-term strategy to consolidate (ensuring all the organisation's systems are fit for purpose and that the organisation is delivering on the outcomes agreed with funders), develop (including rebranding and building the reputation of the organisation) and grow Politics in Action (with a new Strategic Plan and by attracting new funders and supporters).

Politics in Action

Company Limited by Guarantee

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

Year ended 31 August 2023

Financial review

The Executive Director and his team are committed to the future of Politics in Action. The organisation is working to secure additional funds from existing funders, to attract new funders and to generate income and attract donors.

During the year ended 31st August 2023, net incoming resources of £160,790 were generated (2022:£63,024). The charity received funding from a wide range of public and private funding sources during the period, chiefly the National Lottery (Community Fund and The International Fund for Ireland, and also from The Ireland Fund. Total expenditure in the period, to include estimated year end administrative accruals, totalled £178,568 (2022:£81,498).

The charity remains in a strong cash and reserves position where total reserves available total £48,660 (2022: £66,437), with restricted fund reserves available of £21,506 (2022:£38,618), and unrestricted fund reserves available of £27,153 (2022:£27,219).

Plans for future periods

From September 2023 the National Lottery (Community Fund) continued to support Politics in Action's main body of programmes as part of a 3 year pledge until August 2024.

Politics in Action secured funding from the International Fund for Ireland's 'Communities in Partnership Programme in September 2022. Due to the success of that project linking Portadown College with Loreto Community College in Milford, Donegal - the fund have awarded a new grant of £157,635 to expand and continue the project to December 2024.

Politics in Action were excited to receive an award from the Ireland Funds' Heart of the Community scheme in September 2022. This grant established the 'Young Evaluators' project where the charity is training young people as evaluators to work alongside our external evaluators. The fund have given a second grant in June 2023 of £15,000 to support the core costs of the organisation.

On 18th April 2023, the charity was invited to take part in historic events at Queen's University to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement, which brought 250 young people to share their ideas for the future, and to meet key figures in the peace process.

In June 2023 the charity secured another grant from the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs' Reconciliation Fund, to support the salary of the Executive Director.

Politics in Action is finalising a new Strategic Plan which will set the direction for the charity and see it grow further having a greater geographical reach, reaching more young people - and in particular those facing tougher social realities, and working with partners to increase our reach and impact across these islands and beyond.

Politics in Action

Company Limited by Guarantee

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

Year ended 31 August 2023

The trustees' annual report and the strategic report were approved on 26 March 2024 and signed on behalf of the board of trustees by:



Ms A Burke
Trustee



Mr R Ross
Trustee