

The Speedwell Trust Limited

Trustees' Report

The trustees, who are directors for the purposes of company law, present the annual report together with the financial statements of the charitable company for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Objectives and activities

Objects and aims

The Speedwell Trust is a registered charity and company Limited by Guarantee. It is our ambition to create a better world for children and young people by using a nature-based approach to remove barriers through our programmes and by equipping children and young people and their families with the skills needed to overcome adversity, be resilient and be able to deal with the challenges life can bring and respond as caretakers of themselves, each other and the world around them.

We have three key areas of focus which are:

- Shared Education – helping break down barriers and create a more inclusive society and to equip children and young people with the skills and knowledge to bring about positive and lasting change.
- Eco-Education – educating children and young people about the natural world and equipping them with the skills and understanding in how they can play a role in safeguarding the world around them.
- Wellbeing – using the forest, we take a nature-based approach to deliver woodland wellbeing programmes to help children and young people understand how to look after their physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Public benefit

The benefits that flow directly from the purpose are: (ia) the advancement of human rights, reconciliation and the promotion of religious and racial harmony and equality and diversity through the delivery of programmes that encourage positive behaviour, tolerance and mutual respect towards one another leading to a better shared future for all in society (ib) the advancement of education and environmental protection via the development of young people as contributors to the economy and the environment through education for sustainable development leading to employment, reduction in poverty, unemployment and an overall better quality of life (ii) the advancement of citizenship and community development as a result of our long standing relationship with schools, who are the gateway to the wider community developing links with parents, families, extended families, teachers, friends, local groups, volunteers etc (iii) strengthening and supporting similar groups to further advance respect These benefits can be evidenced by records kept in the numbers of children participating in workshops and programmes on a daily basis, evaluations completed by teachers on programme content and relevance, comments on our webpage, internal assessment of programme content, external surveys, photo and video evidence, annual reporting to funders and supporters and also external audits. The possibility of harm, for example physical injury incurred in the 'outdoor environment' is outweighed by the benefit of exercise, fresh air and learning 'outside the classroom' by the policies and procedures in place to address such risks e.g. child protection policies, health and safety policies, forest programme risk assessments, group safety at water margins policy etc. The charities beneficiaries are children, young people, parents and wider community in Northern Ireland and border counties i.e. Monaghan & Donegal. Specific projects may address particular council areas such as the Mid Ulster district and those aforementioned in the application. No private benefit is obtained by the Trustees as a result of the purposes.

The trustees confirm that they have taken cognisance of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit as defined in the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008.

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Activities and Projects Report

During the reporting period we worked with almost 5500 children through the delivery of 141 programmes in Parkanaur and in schools.

Shared Education

The majority of our shared education work this year was delivered through facilitation of programmes with local schools. A total of 17% of our entire programme delivery, for the year, was in relation to Shared Education. The reason for the reduction from the previous year was due to cuts in School Shared Education Budgets.

A third of our Shared Education workshops were funded through the Department of Foreign Affairs 'Reconciliation Fund'. This involved working with pairs of schools who came together on the Speedwell site at Parkanaur and in their own schools, to work through a range of programmes designed to support greater community cohesion, relationship building and understanding.

Woodland Wellbeing

Funding from the Wesleyan Foundation enabled us to offer the Woodland Wellbeing programme to 20 Schools delivering to approximately 600 local children. A total of 13% of all programmes delivered in the reporting period were for Woodland Wellbeing. The focus of this programme is to utilise the benefits of nature and being outdoors to support better physical and mental health and wellbeing for children.

The response to this programme has been phenomenal. The Woodland Wellbeing programme has been beneficial on so many levels. It allowed young children to spend time outdoors to connect with nature, to learn about the benefits of nature on their physical and mental health and wellbeing to spend time connecting with and playing with their peer groups where they were able to learn new skills, develop a better understanding of the world around them and most importantly to feel safe and have fun again.

Seasonal Programmes

In the Summer we welcomed 160 children to the Summer Scheme. In total we held 4 weeks of Summer Scheme. This programme had a strong eco and wellbeing theme. It was packed full of immersive activities and outdoor adventures. From nature walks to pond dipping, our engaging program encouraged children to discover the wonders of the natural world.

Through interactive workshops and games, children learnt about water, wildlife conservation, minibeasts and sustainable living. The overarching aim of the summer scheme was to provide a supportive and inclusive environment where children could make new friends and create lasting summer memories.

We also offered Halloween and Winter Wonderland programmes in the reporting period.

National Lottery Platinum Jubilee Fund - Nature Nurture

During the reporting period and in collaboration with Castlecaulfield Horticultural Society and AJ Education we delivered the second year of the Nature Nurture project funded through the National Lottery Platinum Jubilee Fund to 165 children. The project focused on bringing children together to help develop their understanding, skills, and passion for nature and cultivating and growing plants, and learning how this can add value to their own quality of lives, whilst also contributing to a better environment.

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An additional aim of the project was to develop a community "Jubilee Garden" at the Speedwell Trust premises, and to train 6-10 volunteers in horticulture skills, with the aim of having a long-term group of people willing to support the ongoing development and maintenance of the garden and to educate others in the community and potentially as future members of the Horticultural Society. The Jubilee Garden is now complete and what was once an unused space has been transformed into a garden that is a fun, attractive space which can be enjoyed by children (of all abilities) and their families; It is now a garden that tells its own story - plants have been specially selected to attract a rich range of pollinators, a bird feeding station has been erected close to our bird hide where children can observe and identify the visiting species. Our pond has been made safer and abounds with new water plants that have created a massive increase in the biodiversity living in and around the pond. The renovation of the garden was undertaken by Alyn Jones of AJ Education who had a history, expertise and in-depth knowledge of developing bio-diverse and accessible gardens. We recruited 8 volunteers (parents and children) who supported Alyn with the garden transformation. Throughout the journey the volunteers have been able to work with and learn from Alyn to develop their gardening and horticulture skills. Alyn and his colleague Andy (a fellow environmental educator) supported, coached and developed the gardening volunteers ensuring that they are now able to care for and maintain the gardens while greatly developing their gardening knowledge. A rich foundation has been left for our volunteers to develop their skills in the maintenance of the garden. The feedback from the children and their families has been overwhelmingly positive.

Child Feedback:

Before the project 25% of the children thought they had a good knowledge of Nature and the Environment. This had risen to 75% post project.

At the beginning of the project the children were asked if they understood the importance of protecting our ecosystems. Pre project 43% of the children understood the importance of protecting our ecosystems. This had risen to 82% post project.

They were also asked 'how much did they know about planting and growing'. The results were 41% said they knew lots about planting and growing pre-project. Post project this figure had risen to 90%. 85% of children said that they would definitely recommend this project to other children.

Parental feedback:

'I was honestly blown away by this programme and would highly recommend it. My kids loved it and it's exactly the kind of thing we need more of for our kids :)'

'Aoibhe had a fantastic time at Parkanaur with the Speedwell team! She learned lots about animals and their homes in the forest and lots of practical activities with planting and growing. A very generous bundle of gardening tools were provided and will be put to good use at home. She is very excited to get out into the garden. :) Couldn't recommend it enough!'

'My kids really enjoyed this workshop. They learnt a lot of practical knowledge about nature and growing vegetables and can't wait to use their gardening tools and growing pack at home with mum and dad! It's also great to get them outdoors, making new friends away from TV and video games! Thank you, Speedwell Team, for all the hard work! :)'

Northern Ireland Environment Agency - Water Quality Improvement Fund

The Speedwell Trust, in partnership with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) through the Water Quality Improvement Fund, successfully implemented and delivered the River Torrent Project. This initiative, designed to enhance environmental awareness and community engagement, brought together local schools, community groups, and volunteers in an effort to improve the health and vitality of the River Torrent and its surrounding ecosystem.

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During the reporting period The Speedwell Trust designed, developed and delivered 40 education days (approximately 30% of our programmes delivered during the reporting period) to 10 local schools in close proximity to the River Torrent. Children, teachers and staff took part in workshops aimed at emphasizing the significance of maintaining and enhancing water quality, alongside practical actions they can undertake to support conservation efforts.

Additionally, education days were held at the Speedwell Centre in Parkanaur Forest Park where participants delved into topics such as survey works, invasive species identification, water quality monitoring techniques, pollution control measures, and indicator species training.

The River Torrent Project has been instrumental in fostering a sense of environmental responsibility and community involvement. By engaging local schools, community groups, and volunteers, we have not only raised awareness about the importance of preserving our natural resources but have also taken tangible steps towards improving the health of the River Torrent and its ecosystem.

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Nature Rangers - D'Oyley Carte, Souter Trust and 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust.

Having secured funding from a number of sources, we were able to offer the Nature Rangers programme to local children, via their schools for free. A total of 16% of all programmes delivered in the reporting period were for Nature Rangers. We know from experience and listening to young children that "climate anxiety" is a concern for them. They describe feeling powerless to know what to do, to positively impact the environment. The focus of this programme is to equip children with the skills, knowledge and experience to deliver positive impact on the environment at school which they can then replicate at home and in their community. As Nature Rangers, these children can feel empowered to act and to share their learning in and out of school and be the future champions and custodians of the environment.

The response to this programme has been phenomenal and has benefitted from funding from the D'Oyley Carte Trust, Souter Trust and the 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust. Linking to our priority areas of the "self-environment" and the "external environment" the Nature Rangers project aims to help children develop skills and experiences which will support them throughout their lives, but also contribute to positive climate action.

Thank you

We are immensely grateful to all our funders, partners, participating schools, parents and children and volunteers. We are also grateful to the staff who worked diligently to deliver our projects and services.

Funders in this period include:

- National Lottery Community Fund - Platinum Jubilee Fund
- National Lottery Community Fund - Living Spaces and Places
- Dept for Communities - Start Here fund
- Department of Foreign Affairs
- Northern Ireland Environment Agency - Water Quality Improvement Fund
- Dormant Accounts
- The 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust
- The D'Oyley Carte Trust
- The Souter Trust
- The Wesleyan Foundation

During the year we appointed:

Maryam Adam - Programmes Assistant (joined October 2023)

Eoin Treanor - Income Generation Manager & Communications/Engagement Lead (joined October 2023)

They joined existing staff:

Stephen Crabbe - Trust Manager

Jodie Jackson - Programmes Coordinator

During the year we bade farewell to:

Fiona Brown - Chief Executive (left June 2023)

Padraig Quinn - Programmes Assistant (left August 2023)

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Structure, governance and management

Policy on reserves

The charity's policy is to retain a level of unrestricted reserves, which matches the needs of the Trust both at the current time and in the foreseeable future, and which is sufficient to cover any shortfalls in funding. At 31 March 24 the charity's unrestricted funds were £60,193, which were all designated funds. There are no free reserves at 31 March 2024.

Financial instruments

Objectives and policies

The charity's activities expose it to a number of financial risks including credit risk, cash flow risk and liquidity risk. The use of financial derivatives is governed by the charity's policies approved by the board of trustees, which provide written principles on the use of financial derivatives to manage these risks. The charity does not use derivative financial instruments for speculative purposes.

Cash flow risk

The charity's activities expose it primarily to the financial risks of changes in foreign currency exchange rates and interest rates. The charity uses foreign exchange forward contracts and interest rate swap contracts to hedge these exposures.

Interest bearing assets and liabilities are held at fixed rate to ensure certainty of cash flows.

Credit risk

The charity's principal financial assets are bank balances and cash, trade and other receivables, and investments. The charity's credit risk is primarily attributable to its trade receivables. The amounts presented in the balance sheet are net of allowances for doubtful receivables. An allowance for impairment is made where there is an identified loss event which, based on previous experience, is evidence of a reduction in the recoverability of the cash flows.

The credit risk on liquid funds and derivative financial instruments is limited because the counterparties are banks with high credit-ratings assigned by international credit-rating agencies.

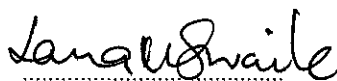
The charity has no significant concentration of credit risk, with exposure spread over a large number of counterparties and customers.

Liquidity risk

In order to maintain liquidity to ensure that sufficient funds are available for ongoing operations and future developments, the charity uses a mixture of long-term and short-term debt finance.

Further details regarding liquidity risk can be found in the Statement of accounting policies in the financial statements.

The annual report was approved by the trustees of the charity on 28/6/24 and signed on its behalf by:



Laura Swaile (Chairperson)
Trustee

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Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

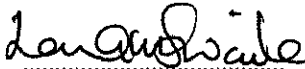
The trustees (who are also the directors of The Speedwell Trust Limited for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with the United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) and applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under company law the trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charitable company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by the trustees of the charity on 28/6/24 and signed on its behalf by:



Laura Swaile (Chairperson)
Trustee