

# **The Ardbone Community Festival 2023 Trustee Annual Report**

## **Introduction**

The Ardbone Community Festival has continued to thrive in 2022/2023, serving as a central pillar for community engagement, celebration, and support in the Ardoyne area. Over the course of this year, the connection for many individuals and families in one of Northern Ireland's most disadvantaged areas, as identified by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).

This report provides an overview of the achievements, challenges, and key activities of the Ardbone Community Festival, along with a reflection on our first year as a registered charity. It highlights the successful funding efforts, the dedication of volunteers, and the positive impact on the community through a wide array of events, debates, trips, and creative activities.

## **Charity Status and Governance**

2022 marked a significant milestone for the Festival as we achieved official charity status. This has enabled us to operate with greater transparency and accountability, while also opening doors to additional funding opportunities and long-term sustainability. We are pleased to report that our first year as a charity has been both successful and rewarding, thanks to the tireless work of our volunteer team and the continued support from the community.

## **Funding and Financial Support**

A cornerstone of the Festival's success has been the strong financial backing received from various funding bodies and organisations. Throughout the year, we submitted successful applications to several key funders, which have played a crucial role in supporting the Festival's diverse activities. These include: Belfast City Council, Department for Foreign Affairs, Big Lottery Fund, The Flax Trust, Local Credit Unions and Fundraising Events.

These financial contributions have been instrumental in enabling us to provide accessible and affordable events to the local community, ensuring that no one is excluded due to financial limitations.

## **Challenges and Looking Ahead**

While the 2023 Festival year has been a resounding success, we are mindful of the ongoing challenges faced by the community. Ardoyne remains one of the most deprived areas in Northern Ireland, and the need for affordable, accessible, and inclusive community services is greater than ever. As we move forward, we remain committed to addressing these needs and ensuring that the Festival continues to serve as a source of joy, inspiration, and opportunity for all.

In the coming year, we aim to:

- Expand our funding base to ensure long-term sustainability.
- Enhance the diversity of events and activities on offer.
- Strengthen partnerships with other local organisations to maximise the Festival's impact.
- Continue to support and develop our dedicated volunteer team.

### **Volunteer Contribution**

The Festival has been driven by the dedication and passion of our volunteer team, consisting of seven individuals who have worked tirelessly throughout the year to bring our vision to life. These volunteers have played a critical role in organising and facilitating events, managing logistics, and engaging with community members. Their commitment and hard work have been indispensable.

### **Conclusion**

The Ardbone Community Festival continues to be a vital force within the Ardoyne and Bone community. Our first year as a registered charity has been an exciting and fulfilling chapter, and we look forward to building on this success in the years to come.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have contributed to the success of the Festival. Your ongoing support is invaluable and deeply appreciated.

Signed,  
The Trustees of The Ardbone Community Festival  
January 2025