



Annual Report 2021



Contents

From our Chairman	3
Vision, Values and Mission	4
From our Chief Executive	5
2021 highlights and achievements	6
UK projects	14
Christian literature and ministry	15
Trading & Recycling Volunteering and Appreciation	16
Results	17
Finances	19



From our Chairman



Have you ever wondered why things have worked out for you in a particular and unexpected way?

That has been our experience at Blythswood over the past three years. We closed our 2020 accounts amazed at how Blythswood had been able to continue to fund programmes and projects at home and abroad. We know that we serve the Lord God Almighty who promises to resource His work, but none of us should presume that He will choose to work through us and according to our own schemes and plans.

As we entered on 2021, the year under review in this report, we were aware that we would face further lockdown and other restrictions and we could not presume on an uninterrupted flow of generosity from our supporters and financial support from the state. However the Lord clearly intended that Blythswood would be resourced to maintain and develop its work through 2021 and be prepared for what lay ahead in 2022.

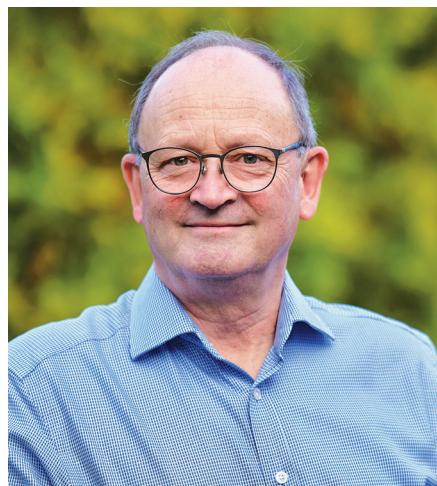
We had not of course foreseen the conflict in Ukraine and the part which Blythswood would be called to play in the current year both in

the raising of financial support and in the channelling of that support to our trusted partners in Ukraine and neighbouring countries whom the Lord had already located at points of greatest need. A wonderful lesson to us of how the sovereign Lord goes ahead of us both to preserve us and to prepare us to serve Him in the way He intended.

On behalf of the trustees I wish to thank our CEO James Campbell and all who work for Blythswood in many different ways for their enthusiasm and commitment, as well as the many friends who are supporting the work prayerfully and financially behind the scenes.

There have been recent changes in the composition of our trustee group. Our thanks go to Stephen Worgan who retired from the Board in 2021 to focus on other charitable work and we extend to him our thanks for his service to Blythswood. In March of this year we welcomed Richard McCallum from Kirkcaldy as a new trustee. And more recently our colleague Iain Gillies retired after 17 years of service as a trustee. We owe Iain a debt of gratitude for his wisdom, his financial expertise and his steady hand over these many years.

As always we acknowledge the Lord's gracious hand – guiding and providing – and pray that He will uphold us all in the days ahead.



David K Laing
Chairman of Trustees

The Trustees present their report and the group's financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2021. The group comprises Blythswood Care, its subsidiaries Blythswood Ireland Limited, Blythswood Trading Limited, and its predecessor charity Blythswood Care 1993.

Vision, Values and Mission

Our Vision

To see lives transformed through Christian care.

Our Values

- We aim to serve the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of others with integrity and compassion, at home and abroad.
- We strive for excellence in all that we do, giving opportunity to people with different levels of ability and treating each individual with respect, regardless of background or belief.
- We value our people, both staff and volunteers, and believe that they deserve an equitable and motivating working environment which expresses care for people.
- We are committed to care responsibly for God's creation and to aim for sustainability in the projects we initiate and develop.

Our Mission

To see lives transformed through the impact of **educational** opportunity, **community** action and **gospel** teaching.

- **Education** projects offer opportunities for children and young people (and particularly the disadvantaged) to realise their potential.
- **Community** action provides people of all ages with sustainable and transformational life-changing opportunities, especially in areas of deprivation.
- Christian ministry and literature distribution enables effective sharing of the life-changing **gospel** message of Jesus Christ, bringing hope and purpose to those we serve.

How do we respond to unexpected change?

Just as we thought that things were returning to some form of normality, 2021 started with a four-month lockdown. COVID-19 reinvented itself into new variants, but a vaccine started to roll out and some hope returned.

The extension of the Government's furlough scheme allowed us to retain all of our staff, while outstanding support from our friends, associates and volunteers enabled us to keep all of our projects going.

Understandably, there was some anxiety when we began to open up our retail outlets, depots and offices, but we sensed a clear enthusiasm to return to work and redouble our efforts to help those in greater need around the country.

We learnt a lot. We realised how fortunate we were, and how we should appreciate the world around us. We sensed how the Lord has gone before us and has made provision in so many wonderful ways, as His people reached out to help us prayerfully, physically and financially.

The 2021 Shoe Box Appeal was successful again, ensuring that many families received a welcome gift at Christmas time, including challenging literature for children and teenagers. These booklets share a simple gospel message which brings real hope and encouragement to all who trust in Jesus.

This current year appeared to start more normally – and then Russia invaded Ukraine. It is all too close to home. We responded immediately to the desire of our partners in Bulgaria, Hungary, Moldova, Romania and within Ukraine itself to help refugees and internally displaced people fleeing the warzone.

During the year we simplified our Vision, Values and Mission statement to enable us to focus more clearly on what the Lord would have us do – **Transforming lives through Christian care**

Thank you for all you do to help us fulfil this vision.

"Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful." Hebrews 10:23



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James Campbell".

James Campbell
Chief Executive

2021 highlights and achievements

Lives transformed – the reality of transformed lives best demonstrates the impact made by Blythswood's projects

Story from Talita Kum - ROMANIA

Healthy diet gives strength and motivation to learn

When he gets to school at eight o'clock in the morning, Alessio receives the milk and biscuits which are available to every pupil in Romania. His first meal of the day is at Blythswood's after-school programme Talita Kum, where he sits down to a cooked meal at lunchtime. The first course is always soup, followed by meat with potatoes or cabbage, or pasta Bolognese, or rice with chilli con carne.

"The meals provided by Blythswood are more nutritionally-balanced than what most of the children would receive at home," says Carmen Popa. "And in the evening before they go home, they each are given a piece of cake or strudel, or pancakes."

Eight-year-old Alessio started his first year at school in September and is not doing particularly well, according to Carmen. "But we're confident that since he enjoys the

meals so much and attends the programme every day he will be motivated to learn," she says. "The healthy diet at Talita Kum helps the children concentrate on their homework and grow strong."



“The healthy diet at Talita Kum helps the children concentrate on their homework and grow strong.”

Story from our Foodbank - UK

Foodbank referral leads to ongoing benefit for young family

When she realised she couldn't feed her two children, Anna* phoned her local foodbank. It had been an incredibly difficult time for the young mum – the breakdown of a family relationship had resulted in her having to find new accommodation and now she was struggling to pay rent and bills and buy food on an extremely tight budget.

"As people are referred to foodbank by key agencies across the Highlands, we advised Anna to contact her local Citizens Advice Bureau," says Lorna Dempster, manager of Blythswood's Highland Foodbank. "Sure enough, a referral came through for Anna and her family.

"The bags of shopping which she received from us gave her hope in what seemed like a hopeless situation. Not only did she receive food and toiletries, which was one less thing to worry about, but by engaging with Citizens Advice and getting a review of her benefits, it was discovered that Anna was entitled to an extra £20 per week which she didn't know about.

"For some people, £20 is loose change but for Anna, this was the difference going forward between being able to buy her own food or not."

By putting them in touch with other agencies, Blythswood's foodbanks make sure that people receive the help they need.

*not her real name

The Foodbank follows the Trussell Trust policy, which is to help people in need at the immediate point of crisis...



Story from Cornerstone Trust - INDIA

Cornerstone a place of safety for children at risk of exploitation

**“Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone,
a cornerstone chosen and precious,
and whoever believes in him will
not be put to shame.”**

1 Peter 2:6 ESV

Maya is 14 years old. She is deaf and largely unable to speak. Her parents are in prison and unlikely to be freed any time soon.

Two things stand between Maya and the risk of cruel exploitation in the red light district of Mumbai in which she is growing up. One is a kind neighbour, herself a sex worker, and known to Maya and her little sister as aunty. The other is Cornerstone,

a Christian ministry supported by Blythswood Care to bring the gospel to women and children in this sector of India's biggest city.

“Maya and her sister Anamika have found a place of solace at our Cornerstone centre,” says Asmita Vadavana. “Their parents were arrested a year ago and charged with the murder of a brothel keeper following a dispute over money. Due to the pandemic their case was delayed.

“The girls spend most of the day with us, studying, playing and helping out their teacher.

“Maya and her sister Anamika have found a place of solace at our Cornerstone centre,”



Thanks to your kind support, they have their meals with our staff so as not to be a burden to their aunty who has also been struggling financially because of the pandemic.

“Maya does not attend mainstream school but Anamika has been following lessons online at Cornerstone and will rejoin her class when the schools open again. Meanwhile we are paying close attention to the well-being of these girls and are helping Maya with basic speech therapy.”

Story from Elpis Foundations' work in - UKRAINE

Children first: **Gospel mission helps unrooted families in Ukraine**

An evangelical church in Ukraine, started by one of Blythswood's Romanian partner organisations, has been a source of support and hope for a child displaced by military conflict in the east of the country.

Christina, now 12, attended children's camps with other young people from displaced families and is now an eager participant in activities run by Philadelphia Church, Ternopil.

"Christina prays and helps to tell Bible stories at Sunday school," says Sorina Pop who works for Elpis Foundation. "She brings along her younger brother and her friends.

"The spiritual metamorphosis of these children is visible and noticed by their parents who come to share their faith, too. The church is a light for these uprooted families, most of them with young children who need emotional support and hope for a better future."



“Christina prays and helps to tell Bible stories at Sunday school,”

Eastern Europe

Aid Relief

In all, 378 tonnes of aid were delivered through 40 different organisations around the world. Some medicines were purchased to satisfy individual requests, and some food was purchased within recipient countries. All other aid was donated by individuals, by other charities or organisations such as hospitals or by manufacturers. Our ongoing membership of Global Hand has also widened our support network.

This aid included 82,592 Christmas shoeboxes, all of which were sent out before the end of the year. Since it began in 1993, the Shoebox Appeal has delivered 2,565,641 boxes.

Societatea de Caritate Blythswood (SCB) in Romania were not able to make up shoeboxes for distribution in 2021 as there were very severe restrictions due to Covid-19.

The Basis project (distribution of food packages to families in need) continued with precautionary measures, and we are trying to reduce personal contact as much as possible for safety reasons, many of the beneficiaries being elderly people or people with health problems. The Basis project is still helping 30 families in a 50-kilometre radius from Cluj city.



**1,128 aid loads sent since 1990
valued at £42,010,000**



In all, 378 tonnes of aid were delivered through 40 different organisations around the world.

UK projects

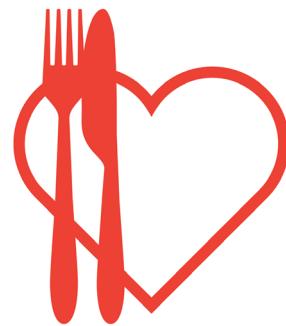
Crisis Intervention

The Highland Foodbank has continued to help people in crisis, distributing 19 tonnes of food from donations of food gifted in 2021 by providing a three-day food supply to 4,838 people, preventing them from going hungry during personal financial crises.

People utilise foodbanks for a variety of reasons, the most common being benefit delays, low income and benefit changes. Apart from the Foodbank in Inverness, rural foodbanks have been supported in Alness, Dingwall, Tain and Nairn throughout 2021.

Edinburgh Southeast Foodbank also distributed food to 2,876 clients.

People utilise foodbanks for a variety of reasons, the most common being benefit delays, low income and benefit changes.



**Over 77,000
people fed
through our
foodbanks
since starting
in 2005**

Christian literature and ministry

Sarah and Abraham: The Wonderful Promise retells one of the foundational Old Testament stories in a way which is accessible to younger readers. This was our children's book for the 2021 Shoe Box Appeal. Specially produced in Albanian, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Romanian, Serbian and Ukrainian it found its way into homes from Ukraine to the Adriatic Sea. Our booklet for teenagers was Take Me Up, an abbreviated account of the conversion story of the African evangelist, Stephen Lungu. Boxes for adults included a Words of Life calendar in the relevant language. Altogether the Shoe Box Appeal continues to be our best vehicle for the distribution of gospel literature, with 106,900 items being produced for this purpose and associated grants.

In the course of the year, 116 grants were made to 42 grantees in 14 countries. These included 42,600 old-style gospel tracts which continue to prove an effective means of communication in London and in other parts of the English-speaking world. They also included

keyring tags with a QR code which can lead via your mobile phone to an online Bible and Bible-study materials in multiple languages. The word of God never changes but there are always new ways to share it with people around the world.

Our biggest grant of gospel material was to India Bible Literature. Utilising unsold stock from the 10ofthose.com book selection in our charity shops, we sent two pallets with 7,686 new and second-hand Christian books via Belfast.

Following an almost total shutdown with the pandemic in the previous year, we were glad once again to provide the Seafarers' Centre in Invergordon with literature, mainly copies of the New Testament, in 14 languages. QR keyrings proved popular here, too, as crew members on the cruise ships are typically young adults familiar with technology.

In the last quarter we were able to sponsor a six-month literacy programme by Mission Possible Bulgaria. Our friends in Sofia realised that after two years of Covid



**400
pastors**
supported in
the last
20 years

lockdown children from the Roma community who should have been in grades one to three had been unable to participate in online classes and risked becoming an illiterate generation.

The programme ran from December 2021 to June 2022 and benefited 230 children in 12 groups at eight locations. For most, Bulgarian was not their mother tongue but having completed the programme they can read it. School teachers observed an improvement in behaviour as well as in reading skills. Five titles of our children's books from previous years' Shoe Box Appeals were used for instruction. The gospel and literacy go together today in a pattern that would have been recognisable to previous generations here in the north of Scotland.

In 2021 Blythswood supported the ministries of ten pastors and mission workers in Central and Eastern Europe and three pastors in Asia.

Trading & Recycling

In 2021 after the initial Covid-19 lockdown Blythswood Trading continued to develop our collection, processing, charity shop sales and end markets for the many items generously donated to us, e.g., clothes, shoes, furniture, bric-a-brac, media, toys and books.

Blythswood's end-to-end capability (retail, recycling and humanitarian aid coupled with our logistical expertise) makes the organisation highly effective in the stewardship of these donations. This creates many employment and volunteering opportunities for people with various skill levels and backgrounds, including those with learning difficulties.

Blythswood Trading's turnover for 2021 was £2,474M. Over 1,700 tonnes of donated goods were reused and recycled by Blythswood Trading Limited.

Blythswood is a member of Community Resources Network Scotland (CRNS) and The Charity Retail Association (CRA)

Volunteers

People of all ages find an opportunity to volunteer their time and skills in Blythswood Care. We have over 1,000 volunteers around Great Britain and Northern Ireland – checking shoeboxes, fundraising, participating in support groups, marking correspondence courses, giving talks, serving in charity shops, sorting donated goods, driving vehicles, and helping to run summer camps for children in Eastern Europe.

Over 30,000 hours were generously given by these volunteers in 2021 which have a value of more than £300,000 (based on the National Living Wage).



**Over 30,000
volunteer hours
given in 2021
valued at more than
£300,000 at the national
living wage**

Appreciation

The Trustees take this opportunity to express their gratitude publicly to our dedicated staff and volunteers and our many prayer and financial supporters for their commitment and passion to see the work of Blythswood Care continue and develop. Despite all the challenges and uncertainties around us, we praise God for going before us and providing the resources needed to maintain our work in His service.

"Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful." Hebrews 10:23

Trustees Report

Results

The financial statements show net incoming resources of £595,517 (2020 – net incoming resources of £1,180,426). Other operating income was received during the year in respect of COVID-19 support grants.

Donation income was £6,197,166 (2020 - £3,706,234) with £4,598,243 (2020 - £1,915,926) being donations in kind. Blythswood Trading Limited made a gift aid payment of £322,724 (2020 - £29,103) to the Charity.

Trustees

The trustees who served during the year were as follows:
J M Campbell (Chief Executive)
I Gillies
C Gordon
L Gray
D K Laing (Chairman)
P Lyall
M McCheyne (Resigned 07 July 2021)
J Ross (Appointed 25 February 2021)
S Worgan (Resigned 18 November 2021)
R McCallum (was appointed on 16 March 2022)

Appointment of New Trustees

The Trustees, together with the Chief Executive, seek to identify potential new trustees with the character, energy, shared vision, skills and experience to provide a positive contribution to Blythswood Care. Prospective Trustees are given significant exposure to Blythswood before a decision is made on their appointment.

The power to appoint new Trustees rests with the non-executive Trustees who are guarantors of the charitable company under the Articles of Association.

That power is exercised by special resolution.

Induction of New Trustees

A full induction programme is provided for new trustees covering areas that include:

- Our vision, mission and values.
- Explanations of all Blythswood's projects and services.
- Details of our objectives for our coming year and our Strategic Plan.
- The roles and responsibilities of trustees under charity law and our governance rules.

Organisational structure

Blythswood Care is a company limited by guarantee, which is registered as a Scottish Charity. The charity previously operated under a trust deed (and that entity continues to exist under the name Blythswood Care 1993).

Blythswood Care 1993 is an unincorporated charity that continues to hold legal title to some of the retail properties which are operated through Blythswood Trading Limited ("BTL") and acts as the prospective recipient of any legacies for the benefit of Blythswood Care.

BTL is a wholly owned subsidiary of Blythswood Care.

Blythswood Care is the sole member of Blythswood Ireland Ltd. ("BIL"), a company limited by guarantee and a charity registered in Northern Ireland, which works in partnership with Blythswood Care. As the sole member of BIL, Blythswood Care has consolidated the results of BIL since 01 January 2021.

Related Parties

The Trustees all gave of their time and expertise without any form of remuneration or other benefits in cash or kind. Expenses paid to trustees during the year 2021 amounted to £nil (2020: £nil).

During the year 2021, six trustees donated £3,250 to the charity's general funds. (2020: three trustees donated £2,970)

Future Plans

The demands upon the charity increase both in the UK and overseas. The Foodbanks continue to serve an increased customer base. Applications to the charity, as it becomes more widely known, from all around the world, present increasing challenges as to how the available resources can be allocated for maximum impact. The Trustees earnestly hope and pray they will be able to identify additional sources of income through generous donations and internal activities so they are able to increase Blythswood's charitable activities at home and abroad.

The Talita Kum Project in Jimbolia, South-East Romania, plans to extend throughout 2022 providing additional support for youngsters' further education and vocational training.

We also hope to support the Turbe after-school programme in Navi Mumbai as they develop their work further.

We continue to work through trusted partners and regularly evaluate projects with the aim of leading them towards self-sufficiency and self-sustainability.

By Tuesday 1 March we knew we had to respond to the growing emergency in Ukraine. The involvement of key partners in surrounding countries – Christians whom we have worked alongside for years – and the insistent generosity of our supporters here were compelling.

Already our friends in Chisinau, Cluj, Suceava, Satu Mare and Marghita were providing food, shelter and transport and other necessities out of their own limited resources. And in Kyiv itself our fellow-workers offered refuge and reassurance to people displaced from their homes further east.

By the end of April, we were helping 15 partner projects in five countries. By the end of June, we had helped over 30,000 people with food, shelter, hygiene, health, and transport.

In March, Blythswood's long-established partnership with the Scottish Emergency Rescue Association (SERA) delivered four fire engines and a truckload of equipment to Hungary's border with Ukraine, for the city of Kharkiv; and in July, to Poland's border with Ukraine, a further two fire engines, two trucks with cranes and a bus to transport people displaced from their homes.

Reserves Policy

The Trustees keep the level of reserves under regular review. Blythswood was founded on the basis of the Christian belief that a faithful God will supply all our needs. Therefore, the Trustees continue to maintain that it is not appropriate to retain significant surpluses. As a general policy, the Trustees intend to maintain sufficient reserves to cover the working capital and ongoing charitable activities of the charity.

Risk management

The Trustees are required to produce a statement of policy on risk identification and management, and this has been done to a good and established standard. To support this action, the Trustees follow a formal risk management process to assess business risks and implement risk management strategies. This involves identifying the types of risks the organisation faces, prioritising them in terms of potential impact and the likelihood of occurrence, and identifying means of mitigating the risks. This process is monitored by the Board quarterly and reviewed at least annually.

This work has identified that financial sustainability is the major financial risk for both the charity and its trading subsidiary. A key element in the management of financial risk is a regular review of available liquid funds to settle debts as they fall due, regular liaison with the bank, and active management of trade debtors and creditors balances to ensure sufficient working capital by both organisations. Attention has also been focused on non-financial risks arising from fire, health and safety at all the organisation's facilities. These risks are managed by ensuring the organisation has robust policies and procedures in place and regular awareness training for staff working in these operational areas. The Trustees also review the central accident book and 'near misses' quarterly.

Post Balance Sheet Events

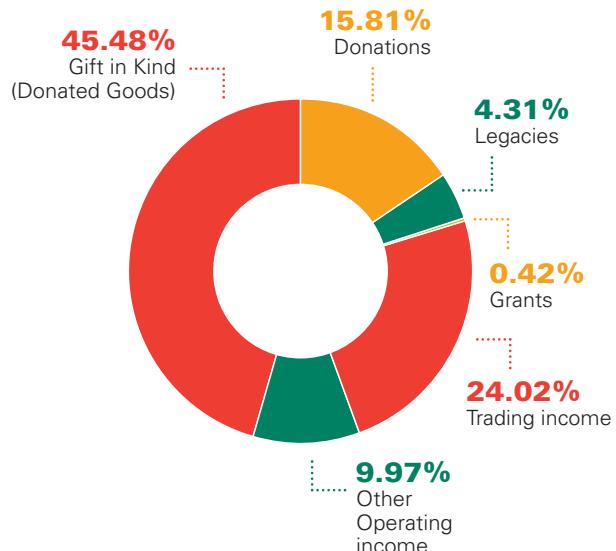
The directors consider that there has been no change to the operating activities of the group during 2022.

2021 Finances



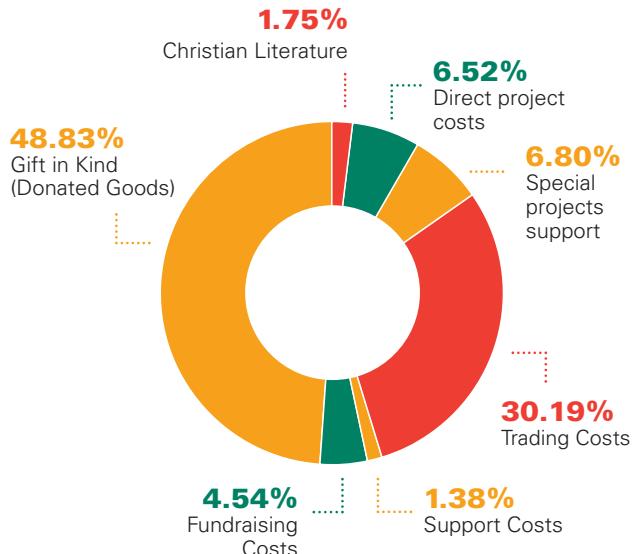
Income Resources

Income Resources		2021 £
Donations	15.81%	1,598,923
Legacies	4.31%	435,806
Grants	0.42%	42,030
Trading Income	24.02%	2,428,543
Other Operating income	9.97%	1,007,690
Investment Income	0.00%	235
Gift in Kind (Donated Goods)	45.48%	4,598,243
Total	100.00%	10,111,470



Resources Expended

Resources Expended		2021 £
Christian Literature	1.75%	166,431
Direct project costs	6.52%	620,265
Special projects support	6.80%	647,257
Trading Costs	30.19%	2,872,757
Support Costs	1.38%	130,907
Fundraising Costs	4.54%	431,707
Gift in Kind (Donated Goods)	48.83%	4,646,629
Total	100.00%	9,515,953



A copy of the full financial statements are available on request from Head Office



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