Objectives and Activities
Rasharkin Women’s Group was established in May 1998 to relieve isolation and poverty, to advance education and to promote social health and mutual support among women in the Rasharkin area. Our activities include educational and recreational courses and classes, an After Schools Club registered with the Northern Health and Social Services Trust for up to 16 children throughout the year. During holiday time we provide up to 32 places. To enhance the health and well-being of women and their families we run a community health initiative in partnership with our local pharmacist.

Achievements and Performance
A Weekly Luncheon Club is held every Wednesday in our local community centre, where senior citizens have access to a three course home cooked meal followed by physical activities, health awareness talks and finishing with a game of bingo. The Luncheon Club is open on average 40 weeks every year and has been running since 2002. Approximately 35-42 people attend each week. Without volunteers helping every week we would be unable to run the Luncheon Club and as a recognition of our immense appreciation to all our volunteers we held a Volunteer Awards Ceremony for around 15 volunteers towards the end of March 2018. Each volunteer was presented with a certificate which acknowledged the hard work which volunteers do on a daily/weekly basis. It was extremely heart-warming to follow the awards ceremony with a thank you lunch.

16 children attend the After Schools Club where they are looked after from 2pm to 6pm each day. The children participate in fun activities e.g. learning about other cultures and the language they speak, important festivals and the food they eat. They also learn about the changing seasons and collect leaves, play in the snow and have games in the local park during summer. During holiday time the Time Out Club is open from 8am to 6 pm. There are 2 sessions daily having up to 16 children at each session.

In addition we have been running a very interesting book club for members who meet on a monthly basis to discuss the book read over the previous month. The book club has become a social event sharing a meal prior to discussing a book which most members would never choose for themselves. Additional benefits to participants of a book club include; decreasing stress levels, gaining new friends, new perspectives on reading and discussing, reducing isolation and building social networks.

Financial Review
From a financial point of view it is becoming more and more difficult to access funding to run the After Schools Club and in particular the Luncheon Club. Grants towards children and older peoples’ projects are virtually non-existent at this time. We again received funding from AIVC, HSCB, and CFNI which we are, as always, very thankful for as it enables us to proactively work to increase our volunteer capacity. We also received a donation from Rasharkin Community Association which enabled us to pay heat, light and office expenses as well as securing donations/fees

Overall income for year ended 31 March 2018 amounted to £32688.52 and payments totalled £32352.08