



**OMAGH FORUM**  
FOR RURAL ASSOCIATIONS

# Annual Report 2022– 2023

## 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual General Meeting



**19<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

**Hosted by Mountfield Community Association**

**Mountfield Community Centre**

---

---



The staff team: L-R Claudine Devenney, Admin Officer, Tiernach Mahon, Rural Development Officer, Aidan Bunting and Mary T Conway, Network Managers.



Directors and staff visit Derry/Londonderry

---

# **Omagh Forum for Rural Associations Trustees Annual Report**

**Period ended 31 March 2023**

---

The trustees, who are also the directors for the purposes of company law, present their report of the charity for the Period ended 31 March 2023.

**Registered charity name** Omagh Forum for Rural Associations

**Charity registration number** 100098

**Company registration number** NI042973

**Principal office and registered office**  
Omagh Community House  
2 Drumragh Avenue  
Omagh  
Co Tyrone  
BT78 1DP

## **The trustees**

Ann Doherty  
Dympna McCann  
George Kerr  
Monica Coyle  
Briege Kelly  
Cathal McEnhill  
Gerry McCaffrey  
Ann McSorley  
Audrey Adams  
Conor Keys  
Louise Leonard  
Kenny Fisher

**Independent examiner** Nial Colhoun

---

## Chairperson's report

I started my report to last year's AGM by referencing the difficulties we had faced during the Covid-19 Pandemic and looked forward to returning to some sort of normality. Little did we realise that we were about face into another crisis period – this time a cost-of-living crisis as many costs spiralled out of control. We are still feeling the effects of these, and many people and families are struggling to maintain even a basic living standard.

This has had a knock-on effect on the work we do, as more people turn to the community and voluntary sector for help and, with much less funding available, our resources are stretched even further.

The ongoing issues around the renewal of the DAERA contract has put our staff under undue pressure – however they continued to deliver a high-quality service to community groups across the district, continually exceeding targets in many areas.

The good news story was the successful application to the National Lottery People and Communities Programme that will fund a new Healthy Living Network for the Omagh area over the next four years. We look forward to developing and delivering that much-needed service in the Omagh district and believe it will achieve its objective in reducing the pressure on the health service and deliver better outcomes for the people in our area.

I want to take this opportunity to thank our dedicated and hardworking staff, Network Managers Mary T Conway and Aidan Bunting, Rural Development Officer Tiernach Mahon, and Administrator Claudine Devenney. Aidan retired in April after 16 years dedicated service to Omagh Forum and we wish him a long and healthy retirement. I would also like to thank my fellow board members who give their time freely and to the volunteers who sit on our South West Rural Community Development Service steering committee to ensure the voice of our Fermanagh members is well articulated. And finally thank you to our funders, detailed further in the report, who support the delivery of our work.

I would encourage any rural community in our area to get in contact with us to see how we can offer support. For more information on our work please visit our website [www.omaghforum.org](http://www.omaghforum.org) or follow us on Facebook or twitter @ofrarsn.



**Gerry McCaffrey**

---

## **Structure, governance and management**

### **i) Governing document**

Omagh Forum for Rural Associations is a Company Limited by guarantee, incorporated on 16th April 2002, and registered as a charity with the Charity Commission for N Ireland on 30th May 2014. The governing document of the charity is a Memorandum & Articles of Association which sets out the objects and powers of the charitable company.

### **ii) Recruitment and appointment of management committee**

The directors of the company are also trustees for the purposes of charity law. Under the requirements of the Memorandum and Articles of Association the management committee is elected for a year and must have between five and fifteen directors. We seek to have geographical representation across the rural Fermanagh and Omagh district.

### **iii) Trustees' induction and training**

An induction pack is available for new directors, and they are taken through this prior to them joining the management committee. Many new directors will already be aware of the work of the organisation through the regular mail outs to member groups' and one to one support to groups.

### **iv) Risk management**

The management committee take risk management seriously and have in place a series of policies and procedures about how the organisation should be managed. Internal control risks are minimised by the implementation of procedures for authorisation of all transactions and projects. Procedures are in place to ensure compliance with health and safety of staff, volunteers and visitors.

### **v) Organisational structure**

Omagh Forum has a management committee of twelve trustees, eleven of whom are Directors of the company, and one is an advisor with no voting rights. The committee meet monthly with the exception of August and are responsible for the strategic direction and policy of the charity.

Day to day responsibility for the provision of services rests with the Network Managers who operate on a job share basis to fill the one role, with a Rural Development Officer and an administrator supporting this work. The Network Managers have responsibility for ensuring that the charity delivers the services specified and that key targets are met particularly in relation to the operational

---

plan for services being delivered for the main funder, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).

### **Objectives and activities**

The company's objective and principal activity is to provide development support to rural community groups in the Fermanagh and Omagh district. They do this by:

a) improving the efficiency of the administration of charities in the rural Fermanagh and Omagh District Council area in direct pursuance of their objects, in particular by the provision of advice, management and technical support, training facilities and services to charitable organisations within rural Fermanagh and Omagh.

b) promoting the benefit of people living in socially and economically disadvantaged areas of rural Fermanagh and Omagh by developing their capacity and skills in such a way that they are better able to identify, and help meet, their needs and to participate more fully in society; and

c) advance any other exclusively charitable purpose as the trustees may decide in accordance with the law of charity in Northern Ireland.

We have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing our aims and objectives and in planning our future activities.

---

## Annual Report 2022-2023

Omagh Forum continued to deliver the South West Rural Community Development Service, this year being the fifth year of working with community and voluntary organisations in the rural areas of Fermanagh and Omagh. This is the core work of Omagh Forum, funded by DAERA – the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, through the TRPSI Programme (Tackling Rural Poverty and Isolation). We also manage the RMCG, Rural Micro Capital Grants Programme, as well as MMC, Marginalised Minority Communities in Rural Border Areas. Having this core work enables us to deliver other smaller scales programmes such as Hunters Hill and Slieve Divena Wind Farm Community Benefit Funds and to develop new initiatives, which we did this year with Omagh Healthy Living Network.

This year saw a hybrid approach to staff working from home and the office and a return to face to face meetings with the option for zoom also. In most cases Board meetings took place as both zoom and room

### South West Rural Community Development Service

Omagh Forum staff continue to help groups with various capacity building needs under the themes of Community Planning; Isolated Rural People; Sustainability for Rural Villages and MMC - Marginalised Minority Communities in Rural Border Areas.

This takes the form mainly of one to one meetings with groups in their premises or our office in Omagh or the Hub in Fermanagh House. We also talk by phone or over zoom. The most common supports are:

**Governance issues** such as the role of officers on a committee; changes to governing documents; changes to organisational structure such as changing from an Unincorporated Association to a Co Ltd by Guarantee; succession planning for Officers.

**Charity Commission** – helping groups to submit an Expression of Intent; Registering with Charity Commission; Annual Reporting; Reporting a Serious Incident

**Funding** – over the year we provided ten funding ebulletins packed with information on grants and other useful support; we can't complete an

---

application form for a group, but we have helped many to talk through an application; identify a funder and review applications.

**Information provision** – we issue ebulletins approx. once a fortnight to 1000+ recipients who are group members or organisations working in the community and voluntary sector. We also regularly post on social media.

**Poverty** – this year we saw the challenges groups faced with cost-of-living increases and reductions in funding meaning groups had to dip into reserves and some even decided to wind up their organisations.

**FODC Community Plan** - We encourage groups to link into the Fermanagh and Omagh Community Plan and staff are represented on the Fermanagh and Omagh CVS Forum

**Group activity** – We help groups consider how they might diversify their activities and meet the needs of the community they serve.

Omagh Forum staff met the new Director of Rural Affairs from DAERA in Greenmount Agricultural College on 28<sup>th</sup> Feb 2023 with the other Rural Support Networks. Teresa O’Neill was new to the work of the RSN’s and to community development and was impressed with what we do.

### **Rural Micro Capital Grants Programme**

The closing date for claims for the 2022 scheme was 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 and we received a total of 123 claims on time. All but two were paid by 31<sup>st</sup> May which was very good. Staff met with DAERA personnel in May to give feedback on the process and make suggestions for improvement for next year.

This year’s scheme opened on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2022 and the deadline for receipt of applications was extended until 14<sup>th</sup> October due to IT issues. A total of 193 applications were received with Total Project Costs amounting to £320,783 and the Letter of Offer value was £240,880. This is a 50% increase on last year and shows the need for ongoing support. Letter of Offer workshops took place the week beginning mid-December. The scheme highlights where weaknesses exist in terms of governance and allows us the opportunity to help groups with issues such as constitutions; accounts; deeds and so on.

---

## **MMC, Marginalised Minority Communities in Rural Border Areas**

Tiernach provided community development support to groups from Minority and PUL communities including a series of targeted One to One Governance workshops. These took place in

- Blacksessiagh Hall
- The Market House Hall, Maguiresbridge
- Mountjoy LOL
- Archdale Hall, Ballinamallard

All were very well attended.

Specific RMCG workshops took place in Omagh Orange Hall on 21<sup>st</sup> Sept and Enniskillen Orange Hall on 22<sup>nd</sup> Sept. This resulted in a significant increase in the number of RMCG applications from the MMC/PUL community, a total of 81 applications, 17 of which were first time applicants.

Other individual one to one sessions were held with groups in their own premises e.g. Dernashesk LOL, Tubrid Parish Group, Cloughfin LOL.

## **Hunters Hill and Slieve Divena Wind Farm Community Benefit Funds**

- Slieve Divena opened for applications on Monday 30 May 2022 and closed on Friday 17 June. The applications were assessed on Monday 4 July with 13 successful groups. Claims were to be submitted by 30<sup>th</sup> November.
- Hunters Hill closed on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> July and there were 14 successful groups. Claims were to be submitted by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023

## **Omagh Healthy Living Network**

Following extensive consultation last year about the health needs of local people in the Omagh area we made an application to The National Lottery Community Fund in Feb 2022 and met with others to help develop the concept while awaiting a reply. This included various staff from Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, the WHSCT and the Healthy Living Centre Alliance as well as a GP in the South West Federation. We received the great news of a successful application in December 2022. The inaugural meeting of the steering group

---

took place on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2023 with representation from FODC and WHSCT as well as Omagh Forum directors. Advertising for staff began late March with the Co-Ordinator being the first of four posts to be filled.

Transform your Trolley was delivered in Eskra Community Centre October – November 2022 – in association with SafeFood and the Healthy Living Centre Alliance. Participants gave very good feedback about the course.

Omagh Forum participated in the Smoking Cessation Programme over the month of March 2023 with stands in various outlets such as Supervalu, Omagh; Omagh Leisure Centre Health Promotion event and Healey Park, Omagh. We engaged with approximately 300 people and our target was 50.



We submitted a tender to the FODC Winter Wellness programme with the Oak Healthy Living Centre in Lisnaskea as a partner. The aim was to deliver a series of wellbeing programmes over the district, but we were unsuccessful in this.

A series of Well Being sessions was developed for those in Omagh Community House and included Aromatherapy massage and stress management.

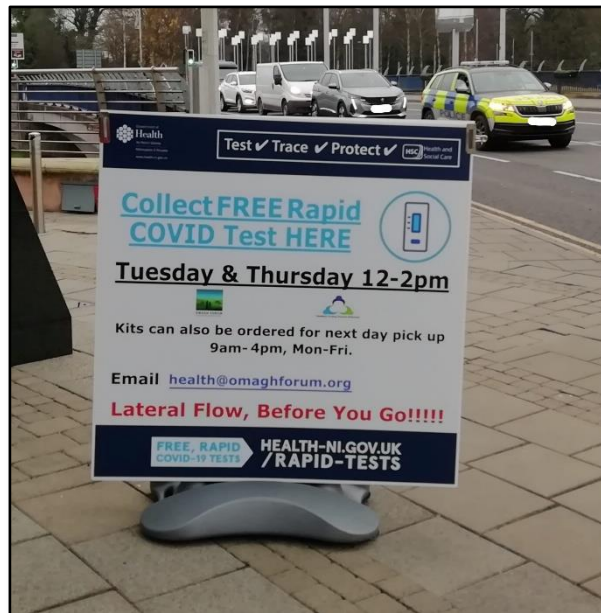
A stress management programme also took place in Cashel Community Centre in November 2022.

Staff were involved in the development of the Integrated Care System (ICS) and Area Integrated Partnership Boards (AIPB's).

## **COVID Test Kits**

---

We continued to supply COVID Lateral Flow Test kits in the foyer of Omagh Community House. A total of 4,710 packs (7 kits in each pack) were distributed until the end of April 2022. This service started on 14th Dec with Drop in on Tuesdays and Thursdays 12-2pm in the foyer, Omagh Community House and next day collection also available 9am – 4pm, Monday – Friday. We continued to supply vulnerable groups until Winter 2022. This was administered on behalf of the Department of Health.



### **Dementia Bus**

We helped organise the Dementia Bus to come to Omagh Library on 20<sup>th</sup> September which had full attendance.

### **Members Meeting**

Took place on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2022 via zoom. Topics included Carbon Literacy, Peace Plus and Mental Health

### **Omagh Place Shaping**

FODC and FOCP employed consultants to look at what Omagh Town Centre might look like in the future; we participated in meetings which began in April 2023.

### **Other networking**

Omagh Forum took the July Board of Directors meeting to Cashel, Co Fermanagh. Thanks to Louise Leonard and Pauline Carson for hosting us. We also visited the busy Belleek Men's Shed where we spoke to group members and saw some of the handiwork they were carrying out. We also travelled

---

South of the border to Kiltyclogher to visit the Heritage Centre. A very informative good practice visit.



Omagh Forum's tour of Fermanagh in Summer 2022 ended in Belleek with a visit to the Belleek Men's Shed and a chance to try out the cot on dry land.



Staff and Directors of Omagh Forum met with members of Kiltyclogher Heritage Centre, Co Leitrim to hear about their great work in the Seán MacDiarmada Exhibition, the Kiltyclogher Community & Holiday Centre and the Village Sensory Garden.

A good practice visit to Garvagh took place in March 2023 where members of the Seskinore Rural Community group were able to meet and view the excellent work carried out by Garvagh People's Forest. This visit was financed

---

by the Department of Foreign Affairs and was open to groups who previously took part in the Sharing Rural Spaces programme.

### **Charity Commission**

Staff help groups to register an Expression of Intent to register; we help them with the registration process and to complete their Annual Monitoring Return to Charity Commission Northern Ireland, as well as other contact that a group might have such as updating details with the CCNI or reporting a Serious Incident.

Our Network Manager, Mary T Conway, sits on the Charity Commission Stakeholder Engagement group which facilitates regular meetings between community, voluntary sector reps and the Deputy Chief Commissioner and Charity Commission Staff. Discussions are detailed and varied, and we have been able to bring many messages from local groups to the ear of the Commissioners.

Staff attended the Charity Commission event on the Charities Act and new questions on OLAR (online registration) and AMR (annual monitoring return) 27th April 2022.

### **Awards for All**

We were successful with an application to Awards for All in Feb 2021. We spent the last of the funding this financial year with a Managing Sleep workshop in Loughmacrory in June 2022

---

## Financial Information

2022/23 was a successful year for Omagh Forum for Rural Associations as we managed to have a surplus.

### Principal Funding Sources

The main source of funds is from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), which equates to 76% of the overall income for the year. The charity has always sought and secured funding from other sources to assist with ongoing expenditure by way of local authority grant, management of two community wind farm grant schemes and other income from hot desking, donations and sponsorship to name but a few.

### Reserves Policy and Going Concern

The trustees have examined the charity's requirements for reserves in light of the main risk to the organisation, namely the availability of funding from third parties, and agreed that the unrestricted funds not committed should be between 3 to 6 months of the charity's annual expenditure. The reserves are needed to bridge the gap between the receiving and spending of income and to cover unplanned emergency spending.

Insert pie chart please

#### Income 2022 -23

DARD RCDSS £142,282

Wind Farm community awards £40,701

Other health programmes £2,000

Total Income £184,983

#### EXPENDITURE

Charitable activities £160,887

Support costs £1,944

Total expenditure £162,831

---

---

## **Acknowledgements & Thanks**

We wish to express our thanks to our Funders during the period April 2022 – March 2023.

### **Core funding:**

- The Rural Community Development Support Service is funded by the Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs (DAERA) - Tackling Rural Poverty & Social Isolation Programme (TRPSI).

### **With project funding coming through**

- ESB International
- Greencoat
- Department of Foreign Affairs (in a previous year)

### **Last but not least**

Thank you to our hosts tonight – Mountfield Community Association.

---

Inside back page

Swirly tree –instead of Health and Well Being add Omagh Healthy Living Network

---

BACK cover page same as 2018-2019 if you have it but take off Council logo  
(purple and white)

Add this logo – same size as DAERA one

