

BDCA ANNUAL TRUSTEE'S REPORT FOR 2023-2024

(ALSO INCORPORATING THE IVY LEAF CLUB, MEN'S SHED AND COMMUNITY GARDEN)

2023

APRIL.. THE CONTAINER ARRIVED THIS MONTH FOR COMMUNITY GARDEN

MAY... WE CELEBRATED KING CHARLES' CORONATION. AROUND 40 PEOPLE FROM THE OVER 55'S AGE GROUP CAME ALONG FOR TEA, SANDWICHES AND CAKE HELD IN BUSHMILLS COMMUNITY CENTRE. WE WERE ABLE TO HAVE THIS EVENT WITH THE HELP OF CCGBC GRANT OF £300.

THE END OF THE MONTH SAW THE COMPLETION OF THE POLY TUNNEL IN THE COMMUNITY GARDEN. A NOTICE BOARD, A FIRST AID BOX AND FIRE EXTINGUISHER WERE BOUGHT FOR THE HUB.

JUNE... BLINDS WERE BOUGHT AND PUT UP IN THE HUB AND SIX WATER BUTTS CONNECTED AT THE BACK OF THE HUB. TWO VOLUNTEER DAYS WERE HELD WITH A TOTAL OF 14 PEOPLE HELPING OUT.

THERE WAS LOTS DONE THAT DAY PLUS HARRY FITTED AN OUTSIDE TAP FOR US.

THERE WAS A SPELL OF HOT WEATHER AND THE GARDEN COMMITTEE HAD TO DO A ROTA FOR WATERING THE PLANTS IN THE POLY TUNNEL. A BIG THANK YOU TO EVERYONE ON THE TEAM.

UNFORTUNATELY, WE HAD A FLOOD IN THE HUB... BUT IT WAS SOON FIXED.

JULY... A TRIP TO LIMAVADY TO SEE THE ORANGE HERITAGE MUSEUM, WAS VERY INTERESTING. WE HAD LUNCH AT THE MARKET YARD, (DELICIOUS!) AND SOME SHOPPING AND A QUICK VISIT TO THE ROE VALLEY ARTS CENTRE.

WE WERE SUCCESSFUL IN GETTING A £7045 GRANT FROM THE NATIONAL LOTTERY WHICH HELPED TO PAY FOR HIRE OF THE COMMUNITY CENTRE, REFRESHMENTS, EXERCISE TUTOR, CRAFTS AND CLASSES FOR THE IVY LEAF LADIES.

THE MEN'S SHED MEET ONCE A MONTH IN THE HUB FOR A CHAT AND A CUPPA.

AUGUST... A GROUP FROM THE COMMUNITY GARDEN PAID A VISIT TO TULLYGARLEY COMMUNITY GARDEN TO ATTEND A WILD ISLES WORKSHOP. WE LEARNT ABOUT WOODLAND, WILDLIFE, FLOWERS AND FAUNA AND SOIL.

THE HEALTH MINISTER, ROBIN SWANN, MLA, AND LOCAL COUNCILLOR SANDRA HUNTER, PAID A VISIT TO THE COMMUNITY GARDEN. MR SWANN WAS VERY IMPRESSED AND SAID HE WOULD BE BACK AGAIN.

A WHISKEY BARREL WORKSHOP WAS ADVERTISED BY THE DESIGNERIE IN BUSHMILLS, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE COUNCIL, FOR GROUPS TO DESIGN AND PAINT A BARREL FOR THE SALMON AND WHISKEY FESTIVAL. SIX MEMBERS FROM BDCA TOOK PART. THEY ALL HAD FUN WORKING TOGETHER TO PRODUCE SOME STUNNING ART WORK AND OUR TWO BARRELS ARE ON DISPLAY IN THE COMMUNITY GARDEN.

SEPTEMBER...

THE COMMUNITY GARDEN RECEIVED IT'S SECOND VISIT FROM ROBIN SWANN AND SANDRA HUNTER. THEY WERE BOTH PLEASANTLY SURPRISED BY HOW MUCH WORK HAD BEEN DONE & SAID THAT WE WERE DOING A GREAT JOB.

OCTOBER ...

THE SALMON AND WHISKEY FESTIVAL WAS HELD IN THE TOWN OVER 3 DAYS AT THE START OF THE MONTH. THE BUSHMILLS BUSINESS TRUST AND THE COUNCIL HAD ASKED THE COMMUNITY GARDEN TO TAKE PART IN THIS YEAR'S EVENT. WE HAD AN OPEN DAY ON THE SUNDAY FOR VISITORS AND LOCALS TO COME ALONG AND SEE WHAT WE WERE ALL ABOUT. WE ACCOMMODATED 2 WORKSHOPS IN OUR MARQUEE FOR FLORAL ART AND WOOD TURNING FOR THE DESIGNERIE, WHICH GENERATED SOME INCOME FOR US. A MEMBER FROM BDCA, DONATED LOTS OF CLAY FLOWER POTS, FOR THE LADIES OF THE IVY LEAF CLUB TO PAINT AND DECORATE, SO WE COULD SELL THEM AT THE FESTIVAL OVER THE WEEKEND, AS WELL.

A CROSSCOMMUNITY WILLOW SESSION WHICH WAS ORGANISED BY THE DESIGNERIE WAS HELD OVER 3 DAYS WITH EACH COMMUNITY VISITING THE OTHER TO SEE WHAT EACH GROUP HAD DONE AND ENDED WITH EVERYONE HAVING A LOVELY LUNCH IN CUSHENDUN.

WE APPLIED TO THE BHF FOR A DEFIBULATOR BUT WE WERE UNSUCCESSFUL. THE CLOSEST DEFIB IS IN THE CENTRA.

NOVEMBER... HAVING APPLIED FOR, AND RECEIVING A COUNCIL CHRISTMAS GRANT OF £2500, THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS GOT BUSY WITH OTHER COMMUNITY GROUPS FROM BUSHMILLS TO ORGANISE THE

CHRISTMAS LIGHT SWITCH-ON. THEY ALL MET UP EVERY WEEK BECAUSE OF THE TIGHT TIMELINE AND WITH HELP AND GUIDANCE FROM COUNCILLOR SHARON MCKILLOP, THEY GOT EVERY THING SORTED. IT WAS A MASSIVE UNDERTAKING BUT THE GROUP SUCCEEDED IN THE END. A MASSIVE WELL DONE TO EVERYONE INVOLVED.

10 MEMBERS ATTENDED WELL-BEING IN WINTER EVENT HELD IN THE MARINE HOTEL IN BALLYCASTLE. LOTS OF INFORMATION FOLLOWED BY A LUNCH AND MUSIC. THE EVENT WAS HOSTED BY C.O.A.S.T. (CAUSEWAY OLDER ACTIVE STRATEGIC TEAM - BASED IN LIMAVADY)

A BUS LOAD SET OFF FROM BUSHMILLS TO BELFAST CHRISTMAS MARKETS. IT STAYED DRY FOR US AND EVERYONE ENJOYED THE DAY OUT.

DECEMBER... BUSHMILLS DOES CHRISTMAS LIGHT SWITCH-ON TOOK PLACE ON 8TH AND WAS A GREAT SUCCESS DESPITE THE WEATHER. A QUOTE FROM ONE BUSINESS OWNER..." IT'S BEEN THE BEST EVENT IN THE TOWN IN A LONG TIME"

BDCA DONATED £200 TOWARDS MEAT VOUCHERS ALONG WITH ANOTHER ANONYMOUS DONATION OF £200, (TOTALING £400) FORTY ELDERLY, LOCAL PEOPLE, WHO LIVE ON THEIR OWN, EACH RECEIVED A £10 VOUCHER.

WE HAD OUR ANNUAL CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON AT BUSHFOOT GOLF CLUB WITH 36 PEOPLE ATTENDING.

2024

JANUARY...

A GREAT START TO THE YEAR FOR THE COMMUNITY GARDEN WITH FUNDING FROM THE CLOONTY WIND FARM OF JUST OVER £9K. OUR FIRST PURCHASE WAS A FINER GRADE OF STONES FOR THE PATHS AND PARKING AREA, MAKING IT A LOT EASIER TO WALK ON.

TWO LADIES FROM THE IVY LEAF CLUB ATTENDED AGE CHAMPION TRAINING, HOSTED BY C.O.A.S.T, IN THE LODGE HOTEL, WITH A VISIT TO NEWTOWNABBEY AND LISBURN SENIORS FORUM FOR A BEST PRACTISE CLASS.

5 MEMBERS WERE INVITED ALONG TO SEE HOW THE PROGRESS WAS GOING IN THE OLD COURTHOUSE.

FEBRUARY.

3 MEMBERS WENT TO A "SOCIAL SPARKS" WORKSHOP HELD AT THE ENTERPRISE CAUSEWAY OFFICES IN COLERAINE.

15 MEMBERS OF BDCA ATTENDED A CHARITY COMMISSION GOVERNANCE TRAINING SESSION AT THE LODGE HOTEL. THIS WAS REALLY INFORMATIVE AND WELL PRESENTED AND EVERYONE LEFT WITH A GREATER KNOWLEDGE OF THE INS AND OUTS OF RUNNING A CHARITY.

THREE MEMBERS HAVE JOINED THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES.... LETTIE MCMULLAN, NIAL MEHAFFEY AND LORRAINE PURCELL.

MARCH.

14 LADIES FROM THE IVY LEAF CLUB WERE INVITED ALONG TO A CERAMICS WORKSHOP IN FLOWERFIELDS IN PORTSTEWART, MAKING A VASE WITH OUR TUTOR FIONA SHANNON.

THE MEN'S SHED IS GOING STRONG AND IT NOW HAS 11 MEMBERS.

THE COMMUNITY GARDEN HAS 8 REGULAR VOLUNTEERS.

LOCAL FARMERS HAVE HELPED WITH GOING FOR STONES, SAND, COMPOST, PLOUGHING, HARROWING, ETC, AND MEMBERS OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY HAVE HELPED AND DONATED MUCH NEEDED EQUIPMENT, MANURE, PLANTS, ETC.

END OF REPORT