

# BALLYCARRY AND DISTRICT COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

## Report of the Officers and Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2023

### **Structure, Governance and Management**

#### **Governing document**

Ballycarry & District Community Association is constituted as a charity registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland. The group operates under a constitution which is reviewed annually. This constitution is amended or added to as required and deemed appropriate, in line with procedures outlined in the document.

#### **Organisational structure**

The trustees of the Association are ultimately responsible for the control and management of the charity and its assets. They are assisted by other Association officers elected annually at the AGM of the group. All those involved give of their time freely and receive no remuneration or other financial benefits.

The Association elects officers each year and these officers oversee the day to day running of the group, and the community centre, which opened in 2001. The office positions are Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer. In addition the senior management team also has had three Community Centre Trustees, who are appointed by the group. These Trustees are Mrs. Sylvia Martin, Past Treasurer, Dr. David Hume MBE, Past Chairman, and Rev. Dr. John W. Nelson, currently chairman. During the financial year the Association faced personnel difficulties in terms of filling offices vacated by the loss of two key officers who resigned owing to other commitments. The group is moving forward with the hope of having these positions filled as soon as possible.

To assist the running of the group the Officers have established sub-committees to deal with specific areas such as centre management and any special projects. These then report back to the monthly meetings of the group or to the officers in the interim. Day to day management is delegated as required.

#### **Recruitment and appointment of group membership and Trustees**

The Trustees were appointed by the Community Association and can be added to as required with the agreement of the Trustees and at that suggestion also of the Association. Trustees are sought from individuals who show an interest in and commitment to the work of the group. The Trustees are currently; Mrs. Sylvia Martin, Past Treasurer, Dr. David Hume MBE, Past Chairman, and Rev. Dr. John W. Nelson, currently chairman.

The Association membership is open to application within the community and also includes representatives from other groups, societies and organisations within the district as affiliated bodies. The members select their officers at the annual general meeting of the group in June.

In the year 2022-2023 the Association has admitted into membership three new members on application, bringing our membership to 19 by the end of the financial year. There are currently three affiliated groups.

### **Activities and achievements**

#### **How our activities deliver public benefit**

The Association carries out a wide range of activities in pursuit of its charitable aims. The Trustees and the group believe that these, which are summarised below, provide benefit to the members of the Association and to the wider community in the village and district.

#### **The Advancement of citizenship or community development**

The group has been active since 1990 in hoping to develop the local community and provide facilities, programmes and activities for the purpose. It seeks to develop community capacity and individual skills and potential through its activities.

#### **Community centre provision**

The Association owns and manages the community centre and provides low-cost facilities for groups to meet, stage activities and have events. In the past year we have provided our facilities for birthday parties for families from the area, organisations such as the historical society, provision of weekly facilities for a line dancing group and a separate dance class.

In addition we also hold our own meetings and social events in the centre.

#### **Special events**

The Association successfully obtained grant funding in 2015 for an amphitheatre at the Fairhill adjacent to the community centre, and this continues to be used for special events including the Christmas Nativity and concerts. We also hosted a reception following our annual Remembrance Service at the War Memorial in November which was well supported by many different organisations and by individuals.

#### **Community development**

The group encourages support for others less fortunate and seeks to ensure a wide variety of events are held at low cost (or free) for the community. The annual Christmas Nativity is a good example of how the community comes together to reflect on the Christmas story and also to donate to charity; since 2015 the chosen charity has been the Northern Ireland Children's Hospice, which was chosen because of the loss of a local child through cancer.

The group operates a bursary scheme for young people from the community who are engaged in voluntary service of some kind through the General Sir James Steele Memorial Bursary award and in 2016 and 2018 supported a daytrip by pupils of the local primary school. We look forward to this aspect of our work continuing to develop. Owing to the Covid Pandemic the activity of this and other aspects of our community engagement were severely restricted and we are now thankfully resuming more community engagement.

Our major community development initiative had been our annual Ulster Scots family festival, the Broadisland Gathering, in September. The festival attracted considerable

numbers to the village from outside, including from overseas. In 2017 the 25<sup>th</sup> annual Gathering was held. Following this event it was decided to postpone the festival the following year owing to lack of volunteers and required skill sets for what had become a major undertaking. This sadly remains the current position, with hopes that some aspect of the festival might resume.

The Association has affiliated bodies attached to it within the local district and these include local churches and local social and fraternal organisations. The presence of these groups together in a single forum is very useful in terms of building relationships and also disseminating information.

The group has four facebook sites, one for our Ulster Scots heritage, a historical site and the others in respect of the wider community, allowing individuals to pass on information, highlight events, and communicate directly to the group through social media. This ranges from fundraising events to warnings of stray sheep and cattle on the roads around the area and appeals regarding lost pets. The sites are administered by two individuals who seek to ensure prompt posting.

The Association reviews progress of programmes at each monthly meeting and through sub-committees. This enables good governance to take place and issues to be addressed at an early opportunity in respect of any aspects of our work.

In 2019 the Association was successful in obtaining a Multi-Use Games Area at the Fairhill, which has been a significant facility for the community and is run by the local authority. This is in regular use by young people both as teams and on a more ad hoc basis.

### **Financial review**

The major expenditure of the Association is in relation to the maintenance and running costs of the community centre, cost of special projects - in a previous financial year this involved purchase of speed monitoring signs for the village - and other smaller projects and events throughout the year. The Covid pandemic prevented us staging any events and we are gradually returning to an activity schedule but have lost some groups and find events are not as well supported as they would have been.

Annual running costs for the community centre are supported by the local authority on a percentage of costs as the centre is the only community provision for the area. This has reduced somewhat and the group intends to seek to develop further events to help raise revenue in the year ahead.

The group also reviews potential projects regularly with a view to public benefit programmes.

### **Principal funding sources**

The main source of funding for the group is through grants for activities which have included the maintenance and running costs of the community centre in Ballycarry. Events at the centre also bring in revenue as does membership subscription. The hire of the community centre to the public is the other main revenue stream, although this had considerably

declined and is now slowly building up. The Association aims to hire the facilities at low cost to the local community. The income to the group enables it to hold community events and develop community projects which would not otherwise be possible.

### **Investment policy and objectives**

The Association has no investments.

### **Plans for future periods**

The group has successfully lobbied for a Multi-Use Games arena (MUGA) facility which has enabled young people to have a purpose-built sports area for outdoor use. This is being well utilised at this time.

The group suffered along with other voluntary bodies as a result of the pandemic and the longer-lasting impact of people's reluctance to attend events. It is our aim to build up our events activities and our resources in the years ahead to enable us to return to the healthy state which existed prior to the pandemic.

### **Statement of Trustees' responsibilities**

The trustees are responsible for preparing an annual report and financial statements in accordance with the regulations of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland.

The Trustees are responsible for preparing financial statements for each year which give a true and fair account of the charitable work of the Association and of the incoming resources and application of resources for that period. The Trustees are required to follow the laid-down procedures of the Charity Commission and also the Association's own financial procedures and good practice generally.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records, disclosing with reasonable accuracy the financial position of the Association and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the relevant charity legislation. They are responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and taking reasonable steps to for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

### **The Officers of the Association who served during the financial year were;**

Chair: Billy Thompson (resigned December 2022)

Vice chair: Rev John Nelson

Treasurer: Elaine Christian

Secretary: vacant, but main duties covered by Dr John Nelson.

From January 2023:

Acting Chair: Rev Dr. John Nelson

Acting vice chairs: Hazel Robertson & Jennie Morrison

Treasurer: Elaine Christian

Secretary: vacant but duties covered by Rev. Dr John Nelson, Elaine Christian and Pete Christian

Trustees for the purposes of charity law who served during the year and up to the date of this report are;

Dr. David Hume MBE  
Rev. Dr. John W. Nelson  
Mrs. Sylvia H. Martin

March 31, 2023