



Good Morning Carrickfergus

Chairperson's Report 1st April 2023 - 31st March 2024

It is a privilege to present the 15th annual report for Good Morning Carrickfergus, which serves the geographical areas of Whitehead, Carrickfergus and Greenisland.

I am pleased to report again that we did not miss one day of phone service delivery during the year.

I appreciate that each year I tend to say many of the same things, but I feel it is important to report on what are key issues pertaining to the ongoing service delivery.

Staffing and Volunteers

Elaine Rajkumar, our Co-ordinator continued to manage the service in a consistent and thoughtful manner and we very much appreciate her reliability and dedication to the service, clients, and volunteers. During the year we said goodbye to one volunteer but thankfully gained 3 new volunteers which was so helpful and released some of Elaine's and my time. These new volunteers have, like all our others, been faithful and reliable....and like our other volunteers.... are retired! GMC will always give new retirees a reason to get up in the morning!

Again, we would like to publicly thank each volunteer and to boast that we have a team of volunteers who excel in their dedication, loyalty, and compassion for the clients we serve. I know I say these words year on year but how better can I express the facts as they are!

We had 2 specific events for our volunteers during the year, including our first at Quarterhouse Café where we enjoyed the café to ourselves and, as usual, we enjoyed lovely food! Additionally, our volunteers were free to join with our clients when we had events for them. It is incumbent on us as an

organisation to care for our volunteers and to ensure they are getting the support they need and deserve. We always try to be cognisant of their health and wellbeing and will encourage them to look after themselves and take time out if they are facing personal issues. Time out is much better, for them and us, than losing them from the service.

I must also express my appreciation to our Board of Trustees:

Robert Barfoot, Honorary Treasurer; Alan McManus, Honorary Secretary; Julie Patterson, Safeguarding Officer, and Philip McAlister; Founder of the Service. Thank-you each one.

Funders

We are incredibly grateful for the support of the Mid and East Antrim Agewell Partnership (MEAAP) for their ongoing support in sourcing funding for us from the Community Planning Partnership led by the Council. This funding has enabled us to carry out our service and functions without the added burden of continually having to source core funding, especially for salary costs.

During the year, we also received funding from:

- The Big Lottery
- Department for Communities (Henry Gill Fund)

The Lottery funding enabled us to provide a substantial Christmas pack for clients, a Christmas dinner at a hotel, a new computer and printer as well as funding for our ladies' lunches and men's breakfasts. This funding will continue into the next financial year. The Henry Gill monies covered most of our phone costs for the year. We have been truly blessed but we are aware that it is important to use our finances with wisdom.

Clients

Sadly, we experienced the passing of 4 of our clients this year. We are always saddened when we hear of a client's death but realise that this is part of providing a service to elderly folk.

Probably the highlight of our social calendar this year has been the Christmas dinner (in January!) at the Curran Court Hotel in Larne when we

had to privilege of treating 82 clients and volunteers to what was a delicious meal. The transport was provided by United Bus Company. We also enjoyed time with clients at our monthly ladies' lunches and bi-monthly men's breakfasts. An issue we are now facing with regard to transport is the number of clients using rollators and the transportation of same. That solution is for another day!

A Pat on the Back!

We can't finish this year without congratulating Elaine and the team on being awarded Winner of the "Supporting older people Award" by the Mid and East Antrim Agewell Partnership. Six staff and volunteers attended an awards ceremony in the Tullyglass Hotel on 1st March and were rightfully pleased with the acknowledgement of their work,

Partnerships

We continue to make every effort to maintain our strong partnerships with other agencies such as the Mid & East Antrim Agewell Partnership, PSNI, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council and the Northern Health & Social Care Trust, among others.

We continue, as always, to appreciate the practical and prayerful support of our host.... Carrickfergus Church of the Nazarene.

In conclusion, and continuing my love of quotes about volunteering, I have selected this one for this year!

"Everybody can be great, because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and your verb agree to serve. You don't have to know the second theory of thermodynamics in physics to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love." -Martin Luther King, Jr.

Respectfully Submitted

Joan Stephenson

Joan Stephenson: Chairperson, Good Morning Carrickfergus