

Trustee annual report 2023- Maghera Cross Community Link-
Charity number 101215

The purposes of the charity remains 'to provide facilities for recreation and leisure, to improve the image of the community, closer community co-operation and to provide children's activities. The group also provides a foodbank to assist the neediest families and individuals within the local Maghera area'.

The following were elected as trustees for the group on 28th November 2023:

- Ruth Watterson (Chairperson)
- Jon James Boyd
- Claire Sweeney (Treasurer)
- Paula Convery (Secretary)
- Kirsty McFall
- Jane Mullan
- Ross Nicholl
- Brian Davey

Personal Youth Development Programme:

Cohort 3-

March 2023 concluded Cohort 3's time on Maghera PYDP, with 21 participants engaging in the programme. Of these participants:

- 11 participants gaining full time employment
- 1 participant starting his own soy wax candle business, as well as part time employment,
- 3 participants progressing to further education,
- 4 participants didn't find employment,
- 1 participant disengaged from the programme
- 1 participant sadly passed away.

Between April 2021 and March 2023, all young people made significant progress. Many of the young people joined the programme with little or no qualifications after leaving school early/ struggling to cope with the formal school setting. They have enjoyed the relaxed, informal setting Maghera PYDP provided, as well as having the extra support in place to help them with their written work. The young people gained many new skills and personal qualities, including increased confidence levels, teamwork, leadership and community relations.

In addition to non-accredited training programmes, the participants had the opportunity to complete 14 qualifications- Level 3 Emergency First Aid at Work, Level 2 Food Safety in Catering, Manual Handling, Fire Warden, OCN Level 2 Good Relations, OCN Level 2 Personal Development, OCN Level 2 Employability Skills, OCN Level 2 Citizenship, Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award, Essential skills Maths, OCN Level 3 Business Development Skills, OCN Level 2 Information Communication Technology, OCN Level 2 Social Media and OCN Level 3 Working with Children with Special Needs.

Cohort 4-

Maghera PYDP began recruiting for cohort 4 in April 2023, with the programme running to December 2024. To date, 24 participants have been recruited within the programme:

- 16 are male, 7 are female and 1 identifies as non-binary
- 8 of Protestant faith, 10 of Catholic faith and 6 are other/ no religious beliefs
- 3 of the participants, who joined the programme in August are Syrian refugees. 2 of these individual's have now received their UK resident status, in which we assisted them with this progress.

The group have completed many qualification, including; Manual Handling Awareness, Level 2 Food Safety, Level 3 Emergency First Aid at Work, OCN Level 2 Good Relations, Mental Health First Aid, Fire Safety Awareness, OCN Level 1 Managing risk and OCN Level 2 Personal Development.

The group have also engaged in non-accredited training and workshops, including: Mental health workshops, driving theory support, cookery, caring for the centre's allotments, physical activity, one to one mentoring, teambuilding activities/ trips, good relations trips, hosting a charity coffee morning and volunteering

5 participants have now left the programme, all on a positive note, with 3 gaining full time employment, 1 gaining an apprenticeship and 1 going into further education.

Education Authority funded programme:

Maghera Cross Community Link worked in partnership with Fairhill Youth Club, for the Maghera area local area based funding, between April 2022 and March 2023.

Maghera Cross Community Link worked with 2 groups of young people, aged 8-13 years and 14-16 years, with 57 young people engaging in targeting youth work.

Both groups attended the centre twice each week to take part in a range of activities, including; baking, art, football, games, team building workshops, caring for the centre's allotments, positive mental health, study group, as well as a wide range of excursions, which included Emerald Park, Jet Centre, Streamvale Open Farm, Windsor Park and the cinema. The senior group also had the opportunity to complete 4 qualifications- Level 3 Emergency First Aid, Level 2 Food Safety, OCN Level 1 Youth Leadership and OCN Level 2 Customer Service. In addition to this, the funding provided the opportunity for the Link to run several out of school programmes, including summer schemes and a Halloween scheme:

- o 4th - 8th July- 79 young people engaged
- o 8th - 12th August- 52 young people engaged
- o 15th - 19th August- 78 young people engaged
- o 31st October-4th November- 44 young people engaged

All targets were met within the programme, with no issues were raised after final reports were submitted. A financial verification was completed by the Education Authority in October 2023, with no issues raised.

BSG Family Trust:

Maghera Cross Community Link is currently in receipt of funding from the BSG Family Trust, up to March 2024, which funds 2 X 25 hour staff members, who are responsible for the running of Maghera Foodbank, as well as working within the pre-school respite services.

The funding has allowed us to continue to work with the junior and senior group who had previously attended our Education Authority programme, where these young people continue to partake in weekly activities to increase confidence, improve emotional well being, as well as community relations.

Through the funding four 6 week blocks of adult cookery classes were run, with one of these being an Air-fryer course. The cookery programmes have been a great opportunity for local adults to come together to socialise, as well as learn a range of cooking techniques. The classes have also focused on cooking on a budget, to compliment our foodbank services.

The organisation has recently been awarded further funding from the BSG Family Trust, commencing in April 2024, which will fund 3 X 25 hour staff member positions, as well as all previously funded activities, with the additional of our newly formed friendship group.

Through this funding the organisation will be able to continue to run our friendship group. Staff have seen first-hand the impact rising household bills are having on local individuals, and therefore the importance of providing a warm, safe space to socialise in.

The group is open to all, but is particularly beneficial for those who live in a hard to heat home, are isolated or worried about energy bills. Activities on offer within the programme include cookery demonstrations, arts and crafts, educational talks (fire safety, medical etc), gardening and excursions.

The organisation received initial funding from NIHE for the friendship group, but as this is due to end, the support from BSG Family Trust will allow this to continue.

BBC Children in Need:

The organisation received funding up to September 2023 for tutor and material costs for our children and young people's classes (baking, art, dance and boxercise), as well as contributing to our summer schemes. 383 children and young people have benefited from this funding. The children attending the centre come from a variety of backgrounds, with a diverse range of children taking part in activities. All of the children in which we work with are disadvantaged in at least one way, with the most common being poverty related.

The organisation successfully applied for BBC Children in Need's large grant, commencing in November 2023. The funding will fund a 25 hour per week youth worker, to manage all children and young people's classes, as well as assist within the running of the classes. The fund will also cover tutor and material costs for our classes, including; baking, art, dance, boxercise and study groups, as well a 3 weeks of summer scheme activities each year, which will be open to those aged 4 years.

Foodbank

Between October 2022 and October 2023, the centre has provided 910 food parcels to local families and individuals facing financial hardship. Demand has continued to increase as we face a cost of living crisis, with an increased number of working families needing support.

In addition to food parcels, the organisation has provided 141 households with fuel support, including coal, turf and firewood.

The organisation recognised the increased financial pressure on families during school holidays, especially those who receive free school meals, therefore we provide packed lunches during holidays, to ensure the children have a nutritious lunch each day.

The trustees reviewed all organisation policy's and procedures.

The group continues to operate under the terms of its constitution.

The charity remains in a healthy financial position and is appreciative of all funding received.

Signed: R. Watterson
Ruth Watterson (Chairperson)

Date: 3/12/23