

# Carrick Hill Resident's Association

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Carrick Hill Resident's Association Annual Report 2022/2023

Our centre has now found itself back to running at full capacity now we are at the other side of COVID. However, we are still suffering some of the effects of it on our activities mainly our Tuesday Senior Citizen's Dance. Their numbers have dropped immensely, but with the power of social media and local newspapers we hope to get them more football through their doors.

Our centre has had all major interior and exterior works carried out which were required throughout the year i.e. guttering, lighting replaced, and all paint works completed, we have rails installed on certain areas of the building to stop youths gaining access to the roof where they usually cause damage to the slates and lead.

Many community development activities took place throughout the year the 1<sup>st</sup> being our sunflower campaign for the younger children of the area. CHRA provided each child with pot, soil and seeds to plant their sunflower in along with instructions of how to maintain it. We also had season pottery sessions for the youth of the area with the next session due to take place around Christmas time.

Operating the centre has seen many challenges for our committee and staff this year such as losing so many of our volunteers due to them having to work extra hours due to the cost of living crisis, resulting in them not being able to dedicate as much of their time to us as they usually would. However, with a great committee and group of staff we were all able to pull together and make it work for the community.

Recently we have just completed the re-imaging project which took place in Regent Street and Stanhope Street. This project took part in two different phases, the aim of this was to clean up and derelict wall and make it more pleasing on the eye for those walking through the area, rather than saying

political graffiti and vandalism. This project consisted of the young of the area working alongside CHRA to choose images of old Carrick Hill to tell a story of the walls, these images were then blew up on to dia-bond boards and placed on the walls, with led lighting around them.

Phase two consisted of a wall mural with local artist Dan Denvenny. Giving the youth and young of the area a sense of ownership in this project meant the chances of vandalizing it would be next to none, and this has been the case so far. The second phase of this project was again funded by the Cohesion Department of the NIHF.

Our summer scheme was in full swing this year we were lucky to receive funding from Belfast City Council which funded our junior summer scheme and our senior summer programme. The only difficulty we experienced with booking activities for our junior summer scheme was Streamvale Farm were still not taking group booking.

After Schools sessions are running at full capacity 3 days a week in centre, Patrick Downey continues to deliver his out of schools programme at our Tuesday and Thursday morning. Our Friday Night Disco is a huge hit every week with at least 50 kids attending on a weekly basis.

The gym is running 5 days and nights per week, ladies stretch and tone every Monday evening. Pilates runs in 6 weeks blocks on Wednesday evenings funding dependent. Junior boys boxing takes places on Monday evenings, along with the senior youth night. Arts and Crafts which is well attended takes place on Tuesday evenings.

Sign language classes and Patrick's Wild Cats also takes place on Thursday evenings in 6-week blocks funding dependent. CHRA host a monthly breakfast and luncheon club on Tuesday and Friday mornings for our elderly residents. For those residents who are unable to make it to the centre our staff or committee members are on hand to deliver a meal to these residents.

Recently CHRA have formed a partnership with Paul McCusker from The Peoples Kitchen, where food supplies are delivered every Tuesday morning to our centre where tables are then setup and all supplies displayed on them and made available to residents to who are finding it hard in these times of financial hardship. For those residents who are unable to make it to the centre to collect supplies staff and committee members make packs up and delivery them to residents. Our Internet Café is open during all

operating hours of the centre, we see an increase in numbers of this service during the evenings as our older youths would come in and use it as a drop in, where they can play games, listen to music and watch YouTube.

Throughout the year we had successful Halloween Ball which included entertainment from 1<sup>st</sup> for Aldo and also a magic show. At the ball we also provided popcorn, slush puppy and candy floss machines. This event was packed and it was so nice to see the community all back together after such a rough 3 years with COVID. Our Christmas event was higher numbers again, Santa and his elves were in our centre with a present for each child and a photo opportunity, along with hot chocolate, toasted marshmallows, and Christmas cookie making.

Welcoming in the new year Carrick Hill welcomed a grant from Enkalon Foundation which enabled to use to purchase much needed after school's equipment, as the equipment we had was well past its sell by date. The new equipment has seen the numbers of children using our after schools service increase.

Throughout the year we have had a vacant post of a part time financial administrator within our organization, it has been advertised on numerous occasions, however the post has still yet to be filled. Funding for this post and the Project Co-Ordinator has only been guaranteed to the end of June 2023 due to the political situation in Stormont with no Executive being formed.

Housing continues to be the most challenging for our housing worker, three sites that were already earmarked for the benefit of our community. Two sites for traditional family homes and the third site for a hotel, supermarket and nursery which would have served both communities at this interface. But Belfast City Council and DfC scrapped the plans and have now put the sites out to five housing associations.

Another site known Mandeville Development has a current proposal in for a 10-story high block, housing over 800 students. Our community have delayed this proposal by having it rejected at the planning committee at Belfast City Council, the development is now going through the planning appeals process, and again CHRA will make representation at this.

CHRA are still pressing DfC for vesting on two more sites which we hope to see movement on soon. A vacant piece of land has been handed over by NIHE, it is our intention for a man shed to be built on this piece of land. Talks regarding this are in the early stages.