

Aim and Purposes

The Open Door Centre (ODC) exists to provide facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation and other leisure occupations. We also work towards advancement in education for the Community of Carrickfergus and surrounding areas. We support Sunnylands community specifically and the whole of Carrickfergus generally.

Objectives and Activities

ODC promotes the benefit of the inhabitants of Carrickfergus and the surrounding area in particular (defined by the Borough of Carrickfergus) and the County of Antrim in general without distinction of gender, sexual orientation, race or of political, religious or other opinions, by associating together the said inhabitants and the local authorities, voluntary and other organisations in a common effort to advance education and to provide facilities in the interest of social welfare for recreation and leisure-time occupation with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants.

To promote such other charitable purposes under the law of Northern Ireland as may from time to time be determined.

Our activities include but are not limited to:

The Open Door Centre operates an Outreach Centre in Sunnylands residential area in Carrickfergus. We are available and accessible for all sections of the community. We are a place for people to volunteer and play an important role in their community by helping others. We hold weekly activities for a variety of age groups. We provide a caring, safe environment where people can come and make friends, share life stories and feel supported. We hold an annual Christmas dinner for the over 60s in our groups. All our activities are advertised on our website and social media and are open to all in the community.

Achievements and Performance

Staff and Management Committee

Andree Martin, in a paid capacity, manages the work of the ODC in providing admin support, sourcing and supplying resources and overseeing the maintenance of the building.

Structure, Governance and Management

Our Management Committee consists of: Lynn McKenzie (Chair), Sandra Clarke, Holly Clarke, Roberta Lindsay, Christine Gillespie, who are responsible for all matters and decisions regarding the ODC including deciding on how funds are to be spent.

Each member volunteers to either lead a weekly activity or supports the Centre Manager with administrative and grant funding duties.

Weekly Activities *Connect Friends : Over 60s Club*

Connect Friends meets on the second and last Monday of each month and provides a place of friendship and recreation. Each meeting begins with refreshments and includes either a talk from a local speaker of interest or an interactive activity e.g. Bake Off, armchair aerobics, singers etc. The group members returned slowly post-covid with some caution and some didn't return but new members began to attend and the group returned to full capacity.

Playtime: Parent and Toddlers

Playtime meets every Tuesday during school terms for parents and children aged 0-3/preschool. Each week there is an interactive program of crafts, singing and games. These are organised in a manner which encourages parents to interact with their children. There have been guest speakers such as a speech therapist and a nutritional advisor. Feedback has shown us that some parents have made friends and social arrangements with other parents outside of the group meetings. This group has grown to capacity as new members continued to attend.

Cosy Cuppa

This group launched in September 2022 as organic growth out of the previous Carer's Cafe. The group has expanded its reach beyond carers but also still involves carers. The group has

responded to to the need for social inclusion and the wellbeing requirements of spending time outside of organised activities and being an open space where people can gather to meet friends and eat together. This has proved to be a successful group with it containing our largest group of participants.

Carrickfergus BabyBank

Carrickfergus BabyBank is an emergency supply service for families in need. They provide a three day pack of emergency baby toiletries, baby and young children's clothes and can help source baby equipment if needed. They work on a referral basis and have built up a network of community and statutory groups who act as referral agencies. Our work to rebuild relationships with families post-covid has been successful.

Teams

We would like to thank all who work so hard to make our organisation a safe and welcoming place of support. We would like to mention all the team leaders who give their time freely to benefit both the smooth running of programs and the care of others. Their invaluable contribution of time and effort keeps the organisation operational.