

Clandeboyne Village Community Association

Trustees Report – Year ending 31 March 2023

NIC 103241

Group Purpose

We provide a service for all residents within the Clandeboyne Village area, for example advice services, projects promoting health and well-being, informal education sessions and running events and activities to bring the community together for positive reasons and to build community spirit. We also carry out community initiatives for the benefit of the area and access any relevant funding to endorse the work of the association. We work in partnership with other organisations such as North Down Community Network to provide additional services for young people and residents from our area.

Group Public benefits

The public will benefit from informal education, recreational programmes and projects and activities which we will provide within our local community. These programmes will provide improved health and well-being, mental health, skills and knowledge. We will also provide services from Statutory Agencies such as advice clinics on benefits, crime prevention, housing advice, drug and alcohol services and will provide a sign posting service for any public services available which our local community residents may require. Fees are not charged for this service and none of our committee members will obtain any private benefit. There is no harm flowing from our purposes. The beneficiaries are the residents within the Clandeboyne village area of Bangor.

Trustee board

Mr Aaron McMahan	Chairperson
Mrs Margaret Diane Lowry	Secretary
Miss Marlene McDowell	Treasurer
Mr Thomas Ward	
Mr Steven William Dempster	
Mrs Lesley Margaret McMahan	
Mrs Eileen Morrow	
Rev Mark Johnston	
Curtis Mulholland	
Evelyn Wisdom	

Financial Year 1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023

Please see the financial report and independent examinations of accounts for full details. Our Community Association has roughly 8K worth of assets made up of TVs, furniture, consoles, etc.

Activities

Clandeboyne is a working-class area which already experienced difficult challenges including educational underachievement, unemployment, poverty, mental health issues and an ageing population, and unfortunately, the pandemic and cost of living crisis has only amplified these issues, causing greater isolation, anxiety and financial difficulty. With more and more job losses, business breakdowns and benefit delays, on top of bills rising, residents have continued to contact our group for support to meet basic essentials such as food, heating and electric. We have continued to use

our funding from Lottery Awards for All to provide emergency food vouchers, fuel top-ups and practical help to those most in need in the area, but this funding has now run out, and with more and more people presenting in need with the rise in living costs, especially working families on low-income and older residents with health conditions struggling to heat their houses, we are concerned for many in the area and are keen to support, but we are a small group of volunteers with limited funds, who can only do so much. During this support, we gauged hidden further needs, and have referred in many residents for more specialist support such as benefit advice and mental health support, and in these cases, we have worked collaboratively with statutory and voluntary agencies like North Down Community Network to ensure they get the right information and support they need.

We remain extremely passionate about investing in young people in the area and continue to provide consistent meaningful support in the form of the DICE Connections project in partnership with North Down Community Network. Through the running of 2 youth clubs per week, the volunteers offer a safe, fun and welcoming space for 60+ young people to take part in activities and informal training designed to increase their social skills, confidence and self-belief. The past year of club activities, trips and summer scheme, has shown us clearly the deep negative impact of the pandemic and now cost of living crisis within the young people in club, with many continuing to face struggles that their classmates don't, e.g., poverty, family breakdown, coercion, isolation, so our focus remains on keeping them engaged in a safe setting, where they are supported and can develop and grow, especially to build resilience, trust and self-esteem. Our experience of our young people reflects the wider situation being seen in PUL communities across NI, with educational underachievement being higher than experienced in many years; and we are seeing some young people in Clondeboyne falling behind their peers academically (especially due to lack of schooling during pandemic), struggling with homework (especially core subjects Maths and English), and experiencing bullying (both in person and online) due to the extra vulnerabilities they face (poverty, neglect, family struggles). We have therefore focused the past year on developing our DICE Success Programme; providing regular educational support sessions on Maths and English, raising career aspirations by exposing them to new opportunities (in partnership with SERC), improving physical and mental health through workshops and training, and many more initiatives to develop important life skills for their future.

Our support to seniors continues to be an important service to the community, delivering activities, events and projects which provide much-needed social connection, friendship and support in the area. This year has been another period of isolation for some of our most vulnerable seniors, but we were able to continue to meet their practical needs (e.g., food parcels, gas/electric top-ups, etc.). We were also delighted to re-launch our annual Christmas event again and brought together 60 seniors in person for a 3 course Christmas dinner, music and entertainment, and delivered a further 40 Christmas dinners to seniors whose health conditions prevented them from attending, and through this project, isolated seniors felt connected, cared for and valued.

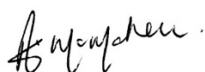
Through our events and festivals, we encourage and promote community activity and spirit in the area. We were delighted to be able to deliver 2 community festivals again in the summer of 2022: our 11th July celebration and a Jubilee celebration event. Both were community-led, and gave local residents the chance to come together, meet their neighbours, take part in fun activities, and express their needs and wants, in an informal, fun and welcoming setting. Residents expressed that it was so important to have some light relief in what remains difficult times for many in the area, and they felt a real sense of connection and community spirit. This year, we hope to run more festivals and events designed to bring residents together in a positive setting, and we hope that by delivering them, hope and connection can be restored amongst residents.

Our volunteers work tirelessly to provide these vital services, but the reality is that the Hall is not fit for purpose anymore and needs essential works and refurbishment to get it to a decent quality, especially to raise the value and aspirations of the community we serve. On top of this, the running costs it takes to run the Association and Hall have substantially increased, due to the rise in the cost of living, and we are concerned that we will be unable to meet our running costs in the future, especially with so little funding out there for these costs, many funders being oversubscribed already and the implications on budgets due to the continued lack of government. We continue to search and apply for funding, with the support of North Down Community Network, but we do need statutory bodies and local representatives to start to invest better in us as a Community Association and the residents we serve so we can become sustainable long-term.

We have acted as representatives for the Clondeboye area for many years, but the past year has seen us needing to dedicate a lot more of our time as volunteers to advocate for the community to statutory agencies such as ANDBC, NIHE, PSNI and DFI to resolve issues like poor housing, continued criminality, inadequate community facilities, dog fouling, littering and anti-social behaviour. The Clondeboye area has been deeply neglected for many years, and with the pressure of the pandemic and rise in living costs, there is a severe feeling of neglect, isolation and hopelessness within residents, with little recognition of the challenges they face and limited support coming their way to combat them. There is therefore a real sense of urgency to ensure the people of Clondeboye and their futures are invested in, to overcome the tough immediate challenges, but also long-standing issues that have never been properly addressed. The past year has therefore seen us increase our advocacy and campaigning work even more, so we hold statutory bodies, elected representatives and others more accountable to provide better facilities, services and long-term support; ensuring the community is more valued, and aspirations are raised. Unfortunately, the past year has seen ASB and dog fouling occurring in the play park, as a result of it being left unopened at night by ANDBC (without community consultation), and this has had an extremely negative impact on residents' physical and mental health. We have been inundated with concerns from residents and have shared these with ANDBC through phone calls, emails, and meetings such as inter-agencies to show just how damaging this change has been; encouraging them that a simple change back to park closure will rectify challenges, that never existed before. Unfortunately, Clondeboye residents' voices of concern and our, voices, time and effort as community volunteers have not been valued. The grass football pitch is another facility that is still not useable, with incorrect dimensions, no longer being lined, posts removed, severe drainage issues and an inadequate heavily sand based surface, meaning it is unsafe, and we continue to advocate for the works to be completed to rectify these issues. As a result of this neglect, it has become a 'dog toilet' and a place for drinking and ASB, which is devastating to the community. With educational underachievement being higher than it's ever been and continued coercion and vulnerability within our young people, we will continue to lobby to rectify these problems, so people across the generations feel safe, our residents are properly listened to and valued, and our community is stronger and more sustainable.

We are thankful to all of our funders who continued to support our work this year including: Lottery Awards for All, Community Foundation NI, Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Ards and North Down Borough Council. We are also extremely thankful to our dedicated team of CVCA volunteers and trustees who give so much time, commitment and care, and to North Down Community Network who continue to be invaluable support to us.

Approved by the Trustees on 25th July 2023 and signed on their behalf by



Aaron McMahon, Chairperson