

**Clandeboyne Village Community Association  
Trustees Report – Year ending 31 March 2024  
NIC 103241**

**Group Purpose**

We provide a service for all residents within the Clandeboyne village area, for example 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. Our small team of volunteers work in partnership with other organisations such as North Down Community Network to provide intensive support and services for young people and other residents in 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 are a small group of volunteers so work in partnership with other voluntary and statutory agencies to deliver services and support, such as advice clinics and talks on debt, benefits, safety and housing and will signpost residents to specialist support when needed. 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 McMahon	Chairperson
Mrs Margaret Diane Lowry	Secretary
Mr Thomas Ward	Treasurer
Mr Steven William Dempster	
Mrs Lesley Margaret McMahon	
Mrs Eileen Morrow	
Rev Mark Johnston	
Curtis Mulholland	
Evelyn Wisdom	

**Financial Year 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024**

Please see the financial report and independent examinations of accounts for full details. Our Association has roughly £8,000 worth of assets (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 needs such as food, heating and electric. Our Association has continued to apply for grants to enable us to provide financial and practical support to those most in need via food vouchers and fuel top-ups, and this year we secured funding from Community Foundation NI and Storehouse North Down. This year, we also launched a weekly community café, which is open to all, and it has given residents the opportunity to meet others in the community while sharing a warm, nutritious meal, as well as hearing from guest speakers on issues that matter most to them, e.g., community

safety, energy efficiency, debt, mental health. With funding opportunities like these decreasing, at a time when the full effect of the cost-of-living crisis is being felt, we are concerned for many in the area. We are keen to support as much as we can, but we are a small group of volunteers with limited funds, who can only do so much, so we continue to advocate for the community; encouraging statutory bodies to invest more in the area and its residents.

We are extremely passionate about investing in young people, and for over 10 years have delivered the DICE Project, in partnership with North Down Community Network (NDCN) and funded by the National Lottery Community Fund. Through this project, we deliver 2 clubs per week for 60+ young people aged 10-15; providing a safe, fun and welcoming space to meet and connect with others from Clondeboyne and beyond. We are delighted that NDCN has secured a further 4 years funding to deliver the next stage of this work in partnership with our volunteers: the DICE Futures project, and plans include the 2 weekly youth clubs, educational support, leadership programmes and a range of taster 'try-it-out' activities for young people to sample new sports, careers, foods and educational trips. Our experience of our young people reflects the wider situation being seen in working class PUL communities across NI, with educational underachievement being higher than experienced in many years and family pressures (poverty, job losses, family breakdowns, mental health issues), causing extra barriers and isolation amongst young people. Our focus continues to be on doing better for our young people, but we can only do so much as volunteers, so we put in a great deal of time and effort into advocating for better investment and support from those who can make a longer-term change, especially statutory bodies and local government departments.

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. Thanks to funding from the Community Foundation NI, we were delighted to hold our annual Christmas Lunch at St Andrew's Church; providing 60+ residents with a 3-course meal and entertainment and delivering warm meals to a further 20+ residents who couldn't make the day.

We continue to deliver community events and festivals to encourage and promote community spirit in the area. Our 11<sup>th</sup> July celebration brought residents across the generations together to meet their neighbours and celebrate their culture in an inclusive, welcoming and family friendly way. We see community events like this as vital for light relief and connection in what remains difficult times for many in the area. However, the amount of funding on offer from Ards and North Down Borough Council (ANDBC) for events like this (which is under their remit) has significantly reduced, despite the rise in event costs. A 'one size fits' all approach also continues to be used, meaning that large areas like Clondeboyne receive the same funding as much smaller areas. We therefore work hard to advocate for better and encourage ANDBC to reconsider this and offer a more reasonable and proportional amount of funding going forward.

Our volunteers work tirelessly to provide these vital services, but the reality is that the much loved 'Clondeboyne Community Hall' needs essential works and refurbishment to modernise it and make it more accessible, this will increase community activity and help raise the 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 government budgets. 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 the Clondeboye community and the residents we serve so that what we do can become sustainable long-term.

We have acted as representatives for the Clondeboye area for many years, but the past year has seen us dedicating even more 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 last substantial investment in the Clondeboye area from ANDBC was in 2015, since then it has mainly been neglected, and with the pressure of the pandemic and rise in living costs, there is a severe feeling of neglect, isolation and frustration within many 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 can try to work in partnership and collaborate, then if this fails; to 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.

We are thankful to all of our funders who continued to support our work this year including, Community Foundation NI, Storehouse North Down 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 30<sup>th</sup> July 2024 and signed on their behalf by**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A McMahon', with a small flourish at the end.

**Aaron McMahon, Chairperson**