

Cairncastle Community Association

Registered Charity number NIC 103512

May 2023

Chair Report - AGM for period May 2022 – May 2023

Background

‘Cairncastle Community Association’ is a charitable, voluntary group. We are based in the rural hamlet of Cairncastle, outside the town of Larne and in the Mid and East Antrim Borough (MEABC) and our aims are non-sectarian and non-political.

Our objective is to promote...

- The advancement of community development through the provision of social, educational, and recreational opportunities.
- Promoting the health and well-being of the residents of the area and working together as residents regardless of age, ethnic origin, ability, sex, belief, or political affiliation recognising the value of our many differences.
- The protection of the environment and facilitation of environmental improvements in the Cairncastle area.

To help support the funding of activities which promote the above we avail ourselves of local grants and the committee organise fundraising events.

Covid-19 pandemic

March 2020 brought us the Covid-19 pandemic also known as the coronavirus pandemic and as a result life as we know it, changed. This meant changes to how we met, communicated, and organized events.

It also brought challenges, as a rural community we wanted to ensure our community, (largely elderly) and anyone who could not leave their homes due to Government restrictions were safe, well and still felt part of the community. At the same time, we had to apply our own risk assessments to any activities our committee or volunteers undertook.

Fortunately, we are coming out of the pandemic and the worst of it is behind us, however we are still feeling it in parts, where there is some resistance to larger

gatherings and some people are still fearful of leaving their home, possibly from a lack of confidence and feeling of loneliness

Report 2022-2023

The details in the following report will outline what we as an association did within our community.

This report represents one year, as we had a planned exceptional AGM after our first year due to a planned change in the position of chair. At the end of this year, we currently have thirteen active committee members and eighteen active volunteers (plus many other helpers).

1. All committee meetings were held in person. We met in Matties Meeting house, meetings start at 2000hrs and generally last one hour.
2. Committee has on-going communications with MEABC and other public organisations to contribute to policy changes impacting community, give feedback on concerns within local area and ensure any information regarding our main objectives, listed above, are shared with all committee members and the wider public.
3. **May 2022** – MEABC have started to look to create Cluster groups for the Larne area, where different community groups can come together to share resources, ideas and collaborate going forward. Chris Farrier and Mary Neill originally engaged in this. As the cluster group has evolved it has become more meaningful for our group and Cairncastle Community Association are represented by our committee member Alison McKeegan who attends monthly meetings and feeds back to the committee.
4. **May 2022:** Plans to run a 'good relations' grant funded community event to help engage all groups and businesses as well as families in the area were discussed. We were successful in getting a 100% £2500.00 good relations grant from MEABC which allowed us to hold two big events for the community at large. This took considerable planning on the part of the committee and was an enormous success. The planning took several months and were executed in August/September 2022, details noted below.
5. **May 2022:** The committee discussed concerns about the speed of cars going through the village. We agreed to speak with the PSNI to see if we could get a speed monitoring system (similar to what they had in Ballygally). This will hopefully deter high speed driving. The PSNI often set up speed 'gun' in the village (carpark space for the old blacksmiths),

in addition to this, later in the year they put up a monitoring system which advised drivers what speed they were going at.

6. **May 2022:** The committee discussed the need to have the association on a social media platform for use of communicating within the rural area. A committee member has been assigned to review this possibility with the aim of setting up a Facebook page.
7. **August 2022:** We were delighted to get a donation of £250.00 from the workplace of our committee member, Nicky Marcus. They have a scheme which supports their staff when volunteering.
8. **August 2022:** We ran the first of our Good Relations event – Rafting experience for teenagers with family BBQ on 12th August.

Overall, it was felt that the whole activity had gone very well. The organisation of the Raft building Company was of a remarkably high standard with all the participants fully engaged. The organisation of the committee and volunteers supporting the afternoon ensured everyone had a positive experience.

There were forty post primary school children from five different schools identified and invited from within the Cairncastle area (as identified within our constitution). Twenty-one children took part in the event of building, launching, and racing the rafts. The sun shone and we had a great spot on Ballygally beach near the steps to the hotel car park. The children's families joined to watch the race and enjoy a BBQ after the event along with committee members. Between 90-94 people were there at some part of the afternoon.

The feedback was incredibly positive both verbally and from 'Thank You' cards received. Siobhan shared on social media and sent press release with photos to Larne Times, however the Larne Times did not run with the article.

9. **September 2022:** We ran the second of our Good Relations event – Community gets together over coffee and music in the carpark of the Old Presbyterian Church on 16th September

We posted invitations to all the families in the area (about 144 homes), and on the evening in September, 1830-2030 we had a very informal gathering supplying free coffee and cakes with music in the background.

It was very well received and a brilliant opportunity for conversation over coffee and cake. We brought a specialty coffee cart to supply the drinks, committee members make home made buns and cakes and Zolene and AIS provided the music. We borrowed two marquees from MEABC, and

committee members brought garden furniture, lights etc. – a brilliant team effort which was appreciated by all.

10. **October 2022:** Pub quiz for fundraising for a charity was held in Matties Meeting House. We kept the money for our own charity, CCA, this year as our funds is low. The amount raised was around £200.00
11. **December 2022:** Christmas round the tree and in the church, all resumed as normal. It was an immense success with the biggest crowd in attendance yet. The school children from Cairncastle Community Association joined in, music by ALS and the usual homemade delights. We had attendance from the local clergy as well. We believe the magnificent work we did over covid with the door stop deliveries and the good relations built over the two events in August and September has really lifted the community spirit and added to the additional involvement by all.
12. **January 2023:** It was agreed that the Inter Church Walk will be reinstated this year as it is an excellent way of bringing the community together. This will be organized by local clergy, possibly in June and refreshments will be supplied and served by CCA.
13. **January 2023:** We are delighted to have Susan Nicholson join us as a new member of our committee. Sadly, Margaret Magill has resigned as a committee member but is still staying with us as an active volunteer.
14. **March 2023:** We were successful in securing a MEABC grant to fund our annual insurance.
15. **March 2023:** It was discussed about resuming our annual Opera outing, but unfortunately, we do not have enough funds to purchase outright the 50+ tickets (far in advance to give us good seats). It was agreed to build up funds in our account to put us in a strong position for 2024.
16. **March 2023:** We are delighted to have new members join our committee, namely: Lindsay Ward and Michelle Blair. They live within the Cairncastle area as defined within our constitution.
17. **March 2023:** It was agreed CCA would hold a fundraising event of 'The night at the Races' in November 2023.
18. **March 2023:** It was agreed we needed to nominate a 'safeguarding champion' within the committee and create a procedure to support that role.
19. **April 2022:** Village clean-up on 1st April including weeding at both village greens and a litter pick within the village boundaries was completed by

committee members – this activity could be completed with safe distance in line with covid-19 restrictions. It was noted, there was not as much rubbish as the Eco-rangers are doing a wonderful job locally. All volunteers enjoyed tea, buns, and scones in Siobhan's house after – committee members make lovely home bakes. We got great online publicity from the Larne Times online.

20. **May 2023:** Coronation event. We were successful in getting a £500.00 grant to help fund a local Coronation event to mark the historical occasion of King Charles III and Queen Camila. We held the community event, inviting all, at the old Presbyterian Church with Coffee Cart, music, and home bakes. There were over one hundred in attendance from all generations and a great community spirit was felt, it was an enormous success.

21. **On-going:** In May 2021, MEABC on behalf of an application made by the 'Friends of the 36th Ulster Division, Cairncastle' want to erect a war memorial on the village green in Cairncastle. CCA had not been properly consulted on the decision to proceed with the installation of the war memorial which is contrary to the commitments made by Mid and East Antrim Borough council within its Memorials and Commemorations Policy Framework.

Whilst the committee has no objection to a war memorial being sited within the village of Cairncastle itself, CCA believes that, however well-intentioned the proposal is, if the memorial were to be sited on the village green, this would lead to division within the community and detract from the long standing neutral shared nature of the village green civic space.

Sadly, this was evidenced in the not-too-distant past in November 2018, when the temporary war memorial, in the form of a Tommy silhouette, was placed on the green. The unwarranted and unacceptable vandalism attacks on the temporary memorial led to a great deal of unnecessary upset, division, and tension within the whole community.

The reasonable expectation of CCA would be that a proper consultation (in line with the council's own guidelines) should have included information provided by the applicant on the proposed design, size, and siting options for the war memorial.


This is ongoing although we now know the village green is not an option due to a clause the landowner has on the lease with MEABC.

22. **On-going:** The Res-Group have put an application in for a wind farm on the hills above the Drumnageagh Road. Full details can be found on their website <http://www.ballygilbert-windfarm.co.uk> This application is

ongoing, as CCA support the whole community and this windmill will have supports for and against within our community, we decided to not submit an objection from CCA, however, should any members wish to support or object in their own right, they were encouraged to do so.

Siobhan Mulvenna (Chair)

Cairncastle Community Association

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Siobhan Mulvenna". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line at the end.

9th May 2023

CONFIDENTIAL