



Greater Linenhall Area Community Association Trustees Annual Report

1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024

NIC 103609

Greater Linenhall Area
Community Association

52 Mourne View Park
Newry
Co. Down
BT35 6BZ

Charity Details

Charity Name: Greater Linenhall Area Community Association

Charity Number: Registered Charity in Northern Ireland – NIC 103609

Purpose: The (Greater Linenhall Area Community) Association is established to promote the benefit of the inhabitants of the Greater Linenhall Area; that is, the inhabitants of Mourne View Park, Mourne View Close, Erskine Street, Plunkett Street, Plunkett Mews, Davis Street, Emmet Street, Emmet Place, Murphy Crescent, Cochran Road, Barrack Street, Barrack Close, Chequer Court and Canal Street – numbers 79 to 113 and to include Richmond Court; (hereinafter called the “area of benefit”); without distinction of age, gender, sexuality, nationality, ethnic origin, political or religious opinion, by associating the statutory authorities, voluntary organisations and the inhabitants in a common effort to relieve poverty, advance education and to provide or assist in providing facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation or other leisure-time occupation, with the object of improving the conditions of life of the said inhabitants and in particular: to maintain and manage a Community House in the area of benefit for activities promoted by the Association.

Charity Trustees as of March 31st 2024

Mrs Rhoda Mc Kevitt (Chairperson)

Ms Diana Marie O’Hanlon (Treasurer)

Ms Orlagh Morgan (Secretary)

Ms Kathleen Lowry

Mrs Shirely O’Hanlon

Ms Margaret Casey

Ms Lisa Mc Ardle

Ms Denise Fearon

Mrs Catherine Mc Evoy

Ms Ciara Steele

Mr Christopher O’Hanlon

Mr Liam Mc Kevitt

Mr Tommy Mc Cabe

Mr Ross Mc Clymont

Mr Mark Sommerville

Note: No other Charity Trustees in the Year to 31st March 2024

Accountant/Independent Examiner

Marian Shields

4 Archdale, Millvale Road, Bessbrook, Newry, BT35 7NN

Insurance Broker & Underwriter:

Marsh Insurance Ltd (Ecclesiastical Brokers)

Bedford House, 16-22 Bedford Street, Belfast

Bank

Danske Bank, 58 Hill Street, Newry, Co. Down.

Chairpersons Report

Good evening, I'd like to welcome you all here for our Annual General Meeting for the year 1st April 2023 to the 31st March 2024. Thanks to everyone for turning up here and supporting us. This has been another busy year for our Trustees and volunteers, who manage their own busy lives and yet still find the time to volunteer for the benefit of the wider community.

I'd like to thank the Confederation of Community Groups (CCG) for all their help and support over this reporting period, in particular Raymond Jackson and Cathy Mc Mahon. Thanks to the CCG we have been able to apply for crisis and hardship funding to provide vital support to households with oil and/or gas and electricity top ups. We know how much all this support has been appreciated because we have received positive feedback from many residents.

As you will see from the details within this Report, our charity has been very busy providing a range of amazing opportunities for children, young people and their families; we have continued to build our provision for older people and

We continued to fulfil all governance requirements:

- Our committee of volunteer trustees met regularly throughout the reporting period.
- Committee members met regularly with our community development worker at the Confederation of Community Groups; this ensured we accessed all opportunities available and were able to get ongoing support and advice to develop our services, ensure funding compliance and deal with emerging issues/needs.
- We maintained excellent financial records throughout the period and have robust structures in place to safeguard and protect.
- We fulfilled all reporting and monitoring requirements for different funders.
- We completed and updated relevant training, such as Safeguarding and Emergency First Aid.

We have also continued working in partnership with other local community groups, the wider community & voluntary sector, and statutory agencies.

Trustees represent our Community Association on the Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership Board, Neighbourhood Renewal Health sub-group, Education sub-group and Community/Physical sub-group, Northern Ireland Housing Executives' Housing Community Forum, Supporting Communities NI quarterly Inter-Agency meetings and the Confederation of Community Groups Management Committee.

We have found that working in partnership provides us with support and mentoring as well as providing us with the opportunities to ensure that any emerging needs in the Greater

Linenhall Area are addressed in a timely fashion at the appropriate level.

I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge our sincere appreciation for the confidence all our 'partners' have placed in us; without your continued support it would be impossible to continue the work we are doing.

I'd like to thank all our funders & supporters over the past financial year, the Confederation of Community Groups, Department for Communities (Neighbourhood Renewal Funding via Newry, Mourne & Down District Council – including the NR Outdoor Education Fund – with special thanks to Sean Mc Kevitt); Newry, Mourne & Down District Council's Financial Assistance grants; our local Councillors and elected representatives; Southern Health & Social Care Trust health sub group; BBC Children in Need; NI Housing Executive and Orlagh Mc Cann at Supporting Communities NI; Newry & Mourne Extended Schools via the Education Authority; Newry & Mourne Enterprise Agency @ WIN; and Helena's Local Shop for always being there for the whole community, all of your support has been invaluable and will be absolutely essential for the future.

I'd also like to say many thanks to Norbrook Ltd for their kind donations of Christmas Hampers and weekly meals, they have been gratefully received by our older and more vulnerable residents.

We are also grateful to Marian Shields who has once again been the Independent Examiner for our accounts, thank you very much for your help and support.

Finally, I want to thank our community, our families, friends, and neighbours because without your continued support we could not succeed. The last few years have no doubt been difficult and the ongoing impact of the cost-of-living crisis continues to challenge local families and households. I hope that some more of you will consider coming on board as volunteers to help us to provide even more opportunities for the local community.

Rhoda Mc Kevitt
Chairperson

Financial Review

Financial Performance

Financial performance received a boost with an external grant from BBC Children of Need which provided vital project costs over an 18-month period. Trustees are reassured by the continuation of the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme from the Department of Communities, which is managed locally by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council; this funding covers essential running costs for the charity and the community house. Trustees were also pleased to receive additional funding from the Confederation of Community Groups to allow for continued support with utility costs to be provided to financially struggling households across the area of benefit who meet the strict referral criteria.

Income:

Income receipts for the year totalled at £25,951 compared to £16,622 for the previous financial period. The main income streams were as follows:

- £15,000 grant funding from BBC Children in Need.
- £5386 from Newry, Mourne & Down District Council – this was made up of funding from Department for Communities Neighbourhood Renewal Programme, for our running costs and funding from their financial assistance programme for a community festival.
- £5075 from the Confederation of Community Groups for Crisis and Hardship funding to respond to the cost-of-living crisis by providing support with utility costs to financially struggling households who meet referral criteria.
- Fundraising of £490.

See independently examined accounts for a full breakdown of the income figures for the year.

Expenditure

Expenditure for the year totalled at £18,277 compared to £22,097 for the previous financial period. The main items of expenditure were as follows:

- £8,504 for outings and community activities.
- £3,575 for utility vouchers and top ups.
- £2,034 for the purchase of a Defibrillator and external storage box.
- £1,088 for Public Liability Insurance.
- £955 for telephone and broadband.
- £694 for maintenance work at the community house.
- £600 heat and lighting.
- £134 for volunteer costs.

Trustees would like to formally note the incredible commitment of all volunteers who give so much of their time freely to benefit the local community; without this voluntary input our grassroots charity could not continue to function.

See independently examined accounts for a full breakdown of expenditure for the year.

Funds Materially in Deficit

As of the 31st March 2024 the Greater Linenhall Area Community Association had no funds materially in deficit.

Major Risks

No major risks have been identified.

Assets & Liabilities

The Trustees of the Greater Linenhall Area Community Association can confirm that the Association currently hold no assets and have identified no liabilities moving forward.

Financial Management

The Community Association maintain robust financial systems and have good financial management systems in place; all cheques must be signed by two out of our three cheque signatories; we have successfully held many grants and have always fulfilled all accounting, reporting and monitoring requirements; our annual accounts are always independently examined, and our current independent examiner is Mrs Marian Shields.

Public Benefit Statement

The Trustees of the Greater Linenhall Area Community Association confirm that they have complied with their duty under section 4 (b) of the Charities Act 2011 to have regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and that the public benefit requirement has informed the activities of the Greater Linenhall Area Community Association in the year to 31st March 2024.

In evaluating public benefit, the Trustees note that membership is open to all residents in the 'area of benefit' – (Full members aged 18 and over, Junior members under 18) – and we strive to provide a range of activities that will cater for all ages but some necessary and reasonable restrictions have been put in place for example, personal development programmes for the older youth would not be age appropriate for primary school children. However, many events, activities, seasonal events and fun days are open to all ages in the community.

Summary of Community Activities

Community House Activities & Projects

Our community house remains at the heart of our community delivery, and it has been the base for most of our projects and activities over this reporting period. Notwithstanding the focus on the community house, we have continued to work in partnership with our neighbours in the St Joseph's Boys High School and in the local Enterprise Agency, availing of their larger premises as required.

The after-school Homework Club has continued to run twice weekly and provides children and young people with a warm, safe place to complete homework and/or assignments under the supervision of a classroom assistant who is funded via the Newry & Mourne Extended Schools (NAMES) programme.

Trustees organised the now annual Wave of Light Ceremony in remembrance of all the babies and children who are no longer with us.

Youth Group

Our youth group for post primary ages continued to meet weekly in the community house where the young people get access to different activities and opportunities each week. They have held pool tournaments, baked cookies & muffins, created Chinese curries and other tasty meals, engaged with arts & crafts activities, held board game nights, and pizza and movie nights. This group provides vital space for young people to come together and connect with their peers in a safe and supportive environment. It helps build social networks, reduce isolation and encourage involvement in community-based activities.



We facilitated a series of brainstorming sessions with a local artist to allow the young people to feed into the design and planning of a new mural for the local playpark.

Youth group members were invited to attend the Newry Light Immersive Installation, followed by a trip to Friar Tucks. They also got to attend a Newry City football match and availed of a trip to Formula Karting.

Summer Scheme

Our volunteers and charity trustees devoted considerable time in the planning and execution of the annual Summer Scheme; we understand how important this is for everyone in the community as it provides vital experiences and access to activities which would never otherwise be available.

Throughout the summer we offered Sensory Play Days in the community house, these were for smaller numbers of children to avoid anyone feeling overwhelmed and provided access to play materials and equipment to allow for sensory outlets. We hope that some parents have been able to pick up some ideas for low-cost sensory play at home.

Alongside these sessions we offered Stay & Play sessions for parents and young children. These allowed parents to connect with other parents, provided opportunities for young children to engage with other children, and overall, helped to reduce isolation and create connections within the community.

Over the Summer we were delighted to be able to run several trips, catering for different age groups and interests, alongside family outings. These included:

- Sheepbridge Entertainment Centre for a visit to Cheeky Monkeys and Laser Quest.
- A family trip to Streamvale Petting Farm.
- The Imaginarium at Sticky Fingers for messy play and creative fun.
- Gosford Forest Park for our Teddy Bears Picnic.
- Airtastic Entertainment Centre.



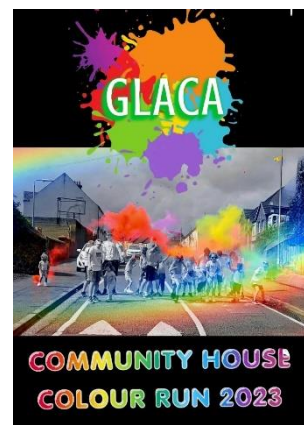
We made best use of all that we have on our doorstep and went on many nature walks along the canal tow path; we hosted many outdoor games in the local play park; walked to Mc Donald's for a special treat; walked the opposite direction to Timoney's for ice cream treats; availed of the facilities at the local Q Club.



We offered Make, Bake & Create sessions throughout the summer, due to a small kitchen these were for small numbers of children each time, everyone enjoyed cookie making and decorating, fruit skewers, sweet skewers and more. Arts & Crafts workshops were another popular feature over the summer scheme, and we had a variety of different creative activities on offer for everyone. We held a pyjama and movie night in the community house with popcorn and hot chocolate.

Magic Eamonn the Magician was a hit when he visited over the summer, getting all the children involved with his amazing show.

The Annual Colour Run keeps growing year on year and it is uplifting to see the estates awash with colour and laughter.



Our Summer Scheme concluded with the annual Community Festival, providing an impressive 3 days of fun and activities for all the family. Everyone got involved in the friendly competition for Sports Day, and we had lots of old-fashioned outdoor fun. This was followed by the Awards Ceremony, which was the opportunity to recognise the contribution of everyone. Everyone talked about the visit from Daisy the Cow as part of the Phil's Petting Farm Experience!



The Community Carnival was an incredible family fun day with bouncy castles and obstacle courses, face painting, Community Tribal Drummers, hula hoop games, circus skills, bubbles, food and treats.

As part of the festival, we also hosted dancers on the green as part of the Lur Cinn Fleadh.

There was also an evening just for the adults with community bingo, food and entertainment.

Seasonal Events

Easter: Local families got involved with the visit from the Easter Bunny, it was great to see the wider community come outside and get involved in the celebration. The community house was open over the school holidays and provided access to facilities, equipment, arts materials and more.

We were also able to offer the children and young people an outing to the local cinema to watch one of the newly released movies.



Halloween: We were delighted to run a family trip to Mount Panther Farm Park where everyone got to enjoy spending the day together, picking & carving pumpkins, availing of the play facilities and interacting with all the animals.

We held a spooky Halloween fancy dress party night, with lots of games and treats on offer, and were once again lucky to have an amazing fireworks display in the community.

Christmas: Throughout November we held weekly arts & crafts workshops in the community house, this provided opportunities for the children and young people to get involved with a range of different creative activities in a safe and structured environment. We treated the adults to an evenings Bite & Banter, bringing people together to reduce isolation and create social networks.

The highlight of the Christmas activities was the Santa Sunday event with over 200 attendees from across the local community. It was heartening to see so many people avail of this opportunity, creating links between people from different backgrounds, welcoming newcomer families to the community and breaking down barriers.

Mid- Term: Children and young people got to enjoy a trip to Infinity Trampoline Park over the February mid-term break.

Focus on Health and Training

We are grateful to the continued funding being provided by the Neighbourhood Renewal (NR) Programme (Department for Communities) and the work of the local subgroups. Thanks to the funding provided via the NR Health subgroup, which is managed by the SHSCT, we were able to access a range of physical activity programmes at no cost to residents, alongside access to additional services.

These included:

- Boogie Bounce for the children over 4 weeks.
- Multi-sports outdoor activity week over the summer scheme.
- Health Checks with the Chest, Heart & Stroke Association.
- The Action Cancer Bus visited the community, providing a range of bespoke services.
- Fitness Classes for children ran over a 4-week period in January.
- Adults Circuit Training & Fitness classes ran over 4 weeks in February.
- Gymnastics classes for children ran over 6 weeks in March.



Quality Care - for you, with you



Safeguarding

The Trustees of the Greater Linenhall Area Community Association can confirm that there was no safeguarding concerns raised during this reporting period.

Trustees updated their Emergency First Aid and Safeguarding training during this reporting period.

Cost-of-Living Community Support Response

As a grassroots charity operating in a designated Neighbourhood Renewal area, due to the high levels of multiple deprivation as evidenced by statistics, we are acutely aware of the ongoing impact of the cost-of-living crisis. Families and households are really struggling with budgets stretched beyond breaking point and detrimental impacts on physical health and overall emotional health and mental well-being. Trustees have been able to access limited crisis support funding, which was being managed by the Confederation of Community Groups; this essential funding allowed us to address emerging needs within the community by providing utility support for gas and electricity costs. Through a partnership with the local Credit Union, we were also able to get vulnerable households support with an oil delivery. This support has all been provided on a confidential referral basis, with proper scrutiny and safeguards in place to ensure that we are not duplicating the support being provided by another agency.

We have also been able to distribute ready-made meals to vulnerable or older residents on a weekly basis in December thanks to a community partnership with the Confederation of Community Groups and Norbrook Ltd.

Partnership Working

The Trustees of Greater Linenhall Area Community Association continued to fulfil all governance requirements and have continued working in partnership with:

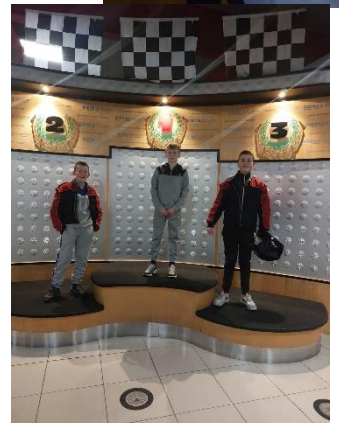
- NR Partnership & associated NR sub-groups
- CCG Community Development Officer and CCG Management Group
- NIHE Housing Community Network
- Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
- Inter-Agency Meetings

Greater Linenhall Area Community Association Photographic Highlights for 2023 to 2024

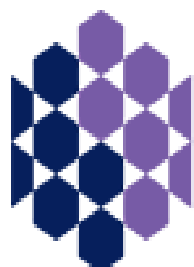








Funded & Supported By:



Department for
Communities



**CONFEDERATION OF
COMMUNITY GROUPS**



Comhairle Ceantair
an Iúir, Mhúrn agus an Dúin
Newry, Mourne and Down
District Council

Northern Ireland
Housing
Executive



BBC
**Children
in Need**



ea Education
Authority



**Southern Health
and Social Care Trust**

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