

NIC103784

Meadow / Armagh Road Community Association

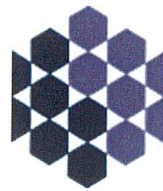
2022 to 2023

Trustees Report



Society of St. Vincent de Paul

Funded and Supported By:



Department for

Communities



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



ea Education
Authority



**CONFEDERATION OF
COMMUNITY GROUPS**

George Underwood, CHAIRPERSON
M.A. Rice - TREASURER

Charity Details

Charity Name: Meadow and Armagh Road Community Association

Charity Number: Registered Charity in Northern Ireland - NIC103784

Purpose: *The Association is established to promote the benefit of the inhabitants of the Meadow and Armagh Road Area, Newry and its environs; to include: (Meadow) - The Fold, Clanrye Avenue, Clanrye Park, Helen's Terrace, Orior Road, Slieve Gullion Road, Iveagh Crescent, Killeavy Road, Derrybeg Drive, Ballinlare Gardens and (Armagh Road) – Violet Hill Avenue, College Gardens, Mountain View Drive, Clonmore, Lisdarragh (hereinafter called "the area of benefit") without distinction of age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnic identity, class, marital status, political or religious opinion, by associating the statutory authorities, voluntary and community sector organisations and the inhabitants in a common effort to advance education, and to provide facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation or other leisure time occupation, with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants.*

Charity Trustees as of September 30th 2023

Mr Gerry Mc Donald (Chairperson)

Mr Brendan Cranny (Secretary)

Ms Noreen Rice (Treasurer)

Mr Niall Quinn

Mr Robert (Bobby) Johnson

Mr Peter Mc Donnell

Ms Helena Young

Ms Megan Creggan

Ms Clare Carroll

Ms Aóibheann Mc Corry

Mr Johnny Franks

Ms Aveen Trainor

Ms Darrelle Shields

Ms Sinead Larkin

Ms Dominika Wojciechowska

Note: No other Charity Trustees in the Year to 30th September 2023

Accountant/Independent Examiner

Gemma Doran

5 Bracken Close, Newry, Co. Down

Insurance Broker & Underwriter

Marsh Insurance Ltd. (Ecclesiastical Brokers)

Bedford House, 16-22 Bedford Street, Belfast.

Bank

First Trust, 42-44 Hill Street, Newry, Co. Down.

Chairpersons Report

This has been another demanding year for our voluntary Charity Trustees and volunteers; not only have we been ensuring our charity continues to meet the needs of local residents and indeed provides a public benefit for as many residents as possible, but we also have management responsibility for a busy community centre which is owned by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council (NMDDC). We work hard to ensure that through our management function we are also ensuring that there is a direct benefit in terms of access to services and programmes for residents. As you will see later in the Report, we have anchor groups in the community centre such as the Happy Days Playgroup, Homestart Newry & Mourne, and the Polish Supplementary Group, who all facilitate local access to their services.

The Community Association are grateful to the main funders who have continued to support the work of the Community Association and the development of the Community Centre, and we extend our thanks to the following:

- The Department for Communities & Newry Mourne & Down District Council – Neighbourhood Renewal Programme.
- All the User Groups in the Community Centre.
- Confederation of Community Groups for Hardship funding to provide financially struggling households, who meet strict referral criteria, support with utility costs.

I would also like to thank the following for their continued support:

Catherine O'Hanlon – Department for Communities who fund the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme and through it, the NR Outdoor Education Programme.

Julie Mc Cann & Rita Lewis – Newry Mourne & Down District Council

Sean Mc Kevitt – Neighbourhood Renewal Coordinator, Newry Mourne & Down District Council

Kerri Morrow – DEA Newry Mourne & Down District Council

Cathy Mc Mahon – Confederation of Community Groups

Martin Connell – Southern Health & Social Care Trust

Euan Morgan & Janet Naughton – Community Restorative Justice

Newry & Mourne Extended Schools

There are many challenges facing small grassroots charities such as us and one of them continues to be in attracting and recruiting new volunteers. The expectation and pressure on volunteers and community-based organisations only seems to increase, with more reporting and bureaucracy than ever before, and it can sometimes be difficult to stay on top of everything. I'd like to take a moment and thank all our charity trustees and volunteers; you are doing an incredible and often unseen job to keep the community centre running

and operating at nearly full capacity, attending numerous meetings to ensure that the needs of our community are being raised and addressed.

I would like to take this opportunity to pass on our sincerest condolences to all those families who have lost loved ones over the past year; we continue to keep you all in our thoughts and prayers.

Finally, I will conclude by thanking our community, without your ongoing support for all that we do there would be little point in continuing. I encourage you to consider getting involved as a volunteer yourself and helping shape our plans for moving forward.

Gerry Mc Donald
Chairperson

Financial Review

Financial Performance

Financial performance over this reporting period has been largely in line with Trustee's expectations although it should be noted that there are difficulties in maintaining anchor groups in the community centre as their own funding streams are being curtailed and there is increased pressure on all resources. When we combine this with the ever-escalating costs of utilities and general running expenses for the community centre it is a challenging financial landscape. Trustees were disappointed not to receive a 'financial lift' from the Department for Communities in this reporting period, as this made a significant difference in terms of easing financial pressures in the previous financial period.

Income:

Income receipts for the year totalled at £32,209 as compared to £36,224 in the previous financial period – see Charity Accounts / Independent Examiners Report for full breakdown of figures.

This income is derived from a variety of sources, with the main ones being;

- £26,358 from community centre activities, including venue hire.
- £3,738 from the Department for Communities, via Newry, Mourne & Down District Council for the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme (Running Costs).
- £1021 from the Confederation of Community Groups, Hardship Funding.

The Community Association's income is healthy overall and remains reasonably consistent with previous years.

Expenditure

Expenditure for the year totalled at £30,236, compared to £41,518 in the previous financial period. – see Charity Accounts / Independent Examiners Report for the full breakdown of the financial spend.

Expenditure was largely in line with previous years, with the main items including:

- £19,720 community centre activities expenses.
- £6,825 running costs/expenses for the community centre.
- £1,599 for insurance costs.
- £1,016 for telephone and broadband.

Funds Materially in Deficit

As of the 30th September 2023 the Meadow and Armagh Road Community Association had no funds in material deficit.

Major Risks

Trustees have identified no major risks moving into the next financial period. However, Trustees do note the inherent risk in trying to secure external funding streams as a means of sustainability, which is why alternative options are being explored.

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 independently examined and presented at the Annual General Meeting.

Statement of Assets and Liabilities

The total assets of the Community Association, as of the 30th September 2023, were £20,670, while liabilities were £3,464; leaving an accumulation fund of £17,206.

Public Benefit Statement

The Trustees of the Meadow & Armagh Road Community Association confirm that they have complied with their duty under section 17 (5) 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 Meadow & Armagh Road Community Association in the year to 30th September 2023.

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, our youth groups' personal development programmes which would not be age appropriate for primary school children; nor would the Over 50's Club be appropriate for the young people. However, many events, activities, seasonal events and fun days are open to all ages in the community.

Summary of Main Activities

Our volunteer Charity Trustees have management responsibility for a large, Council owned Community Centre and, it is from this community base, that many of our main activities are delivered. The community office was opened 4 mornings per week and residents can call in for information, social contact, and access to computers/wi-fi. We are pleased to report that once again the Community Centre was open an average of five days and evenings per week with a vast array of activities, groups, opportunities and events on offer.

There were several anchor groups based in the community centre over this reporting period, and they have provided a range of services to benefit the local community.

The Happy Days Playgroup operated morning and afternoon sessions five days a week, with each session full.

The Polish Supplementary School operated weekly throughout this period, providing support and social opportunities for members of the wider Polish community across Newry City.

Home Start Newry & Mourne joined us as an anchor group and offered group sessions and various training opportunities for parents from the community centre base.

The community centre continues to be a very popular venue for birthday parties, and other family celebrations and we encourage people to get their dates booked into our diary early to avoid disappointment.

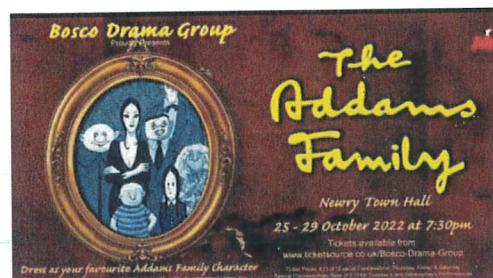
We were delighted to welcome Women's Tec to the centre as a more casual booking, they offered practical DIY classes and opportunities for local women.

We have continued working in partnership with our neighbours in Bolster Community and have welcomed them to the centre on a few occasions to facilitate programme and project opportunities.

Our volunteers and trustees have been busy delivering our own programme of activities, events and opportunities over the year. The weekly Community Bingo nights are going from strength to strength, with numbers increasing weekly. These nights are all about the community coming together, reducing isolation and providing a safe and warm place for new friendships to develop and for everyone to enjoy some light-hearted fun.



We have launched a Tuesday night youth group and are heartened to see so many children and young people turning up each week. We have offered a range of different games, team-building activities, arts & crafts and much more.



We were delighted to be able to offer the children and young people the opportunity to go and see the local Bosco Drama Group production of The Addams Family.



The community centre was a hub of activity over both the Halloween and Christmas periods when we offered the local community a range of events and activities. Thanks to the NR Health subgroup we were able to offer the children and young people a Dance Camp over their midterm break where they got the opportunity to learn the Thriller Dance under the guidance of a professional dancer. This was then showcased at the end of the week for wider family members to come along and enjoy. Families also came together and enjoyed the fancy dress disco at Halloween, with all the children and young people getting a treat bag.

For Christmas time, we had a visit from Santa who toured around the area of benefit, bringing some much-needed festive cheer and distributing selection boxes along the way. Our senior citizens thoroughly enjoyed a Christmas dinner at the Canal Court Hotel. Indeed, our older people's group have continued to meet weekly in the community centre and enjoy both the social opportunity provided and the chance to learn some new skills at the different activity classes on offer.

The Community Association, through the Neighbourhood Renewal Health Sub-Group and, through the Neighbourhood Renewal Outdoor Education Programme, was able to get access to a wide range of health programmes for the Community Centre and provide children and young people access to outdoor activities. The physical activity programmes ran throughout the year in the community centre and offered the local community free opportunities with no barriers to participation.

We are grateful to the Southern Health and Social Care Trust for managing this programme.



Throughout this reporting period there have been a range of additional opportunities on offer for children and young people, these have included:

- A Funk Soul Media workshop with Ruairi Cahill
- Jamming Sessions at the Crisis Café where everyone got the opportunity to learn some basic drumming and guitar techniques.
- Trip to the Sheepbridge for bowling and a bite to eat.
- Trip to Formula Karting for Championship go-karting.
- Fun Fitness Week
- Exploring Sports – a good relations sports programme offering taster sessions in a range of different sports.

We also ran a Family trip to Newcastle which was a brilliant day out for everyone. Our senior citizens also got a day trip to Carlingford, then onto the ferry, travelling onwards to Newcastle, then the Spelga Dam and stopping off in Hilltown on the way home for a well-deserved dinner at the Downshire Arms.

Our Summer Festival offered something for all ages over the three-day period. We held a fancy-dress parade to launch the festival and families joined in as we walked through the area, the weather may not have been favourable, but it didn't dampen our spirits.





We'd like to offer a special word of thanks to Meadow man, Marty Carroll, for his very generous donation of burgers and sausages for our Family Fun Day BBQ.

We have also been developing links with the local Indian community and have been delighted to welcome the Indian

Arts Club to the community centre on a regular basis.



Trustees have also been mindful of the ongoing impact of the cost-of-living crisis on many households throughout this area; as a designated Neighbourhood Renewal area due to the high levels of multiple deprivations prevalent, these pressures are felt more acutely on already struggling households. We have close working links with the local St Vincent de Paul chapter and have referred many families on for additional confidential support. Likewise with Community Advice for support with access to benefits and assistance with the completion of claim forms; and we have been working local foodbank at The Larder to facilitate referrals. Thanks to Hardship funding received from the Confederation of Community Groups we were able to provide immediate support to struggling households with top up vouchers for gas or electricity.

The Trustees of the Meadow and Armagh Road Community Association have continued representing the area on several different partnerships and networks to ensure that the needs of the area are being addressed through the proper channels. These include; the Newry Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership, and associated sub-groups; Newry Mourne & Down District Council DEA Forum, Confederation of Community Groups, the NIHE Housing Community Network, Community Restorative Justice, Policing in the Community Forum and inter-agency meetings.

Photographic Highlights



Photographic Highlights



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