



**WHITEHEAD COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION  
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT  
FINANCIAL YEAR: 1 APRIL 2022 – 31 MARCH 2023**

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**STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

Registered Charity Name: Whitehead Community Association  
Charity Registration Number: 104912  
Company Registration Number: NI605135  
Principal and registered office: 19 Kings Road  
Whitehead  
Co. Antrim  
BT38 9PT

**Trustees/Directors:** Mrs A Abraham  
Mr P C Abraham  
Mr M R Clarke  
Mr W Dornan  
Mr J Jones  
Mr B Luney  
Mrs V E Reynolds  
Mr D T Robinson

**Company Members:** 221 (as at 1 April 2023)

Whitehead Community Association (the Association) is a company, limited by guarantee. It is administered in accordance with its articles of association and was registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland on 19 May 2016.

The Association was formed in 1981 and is managed by a voluntary committee of up to 17 members, drawn from local residents who serve as individuals or representative members who serve on behalf of local organisations. This management team contribute to the output of the organisation. The 17 posts are made up of executive members (Directors) and non-executive members.

**Directors:** The legal, financial and governance matters of the Association are managed by a Board of Directors. The first Directors were selected from persons willing to serve at the formation of the company. New Directors are identified by the Board or by application to the Board and are appointed subject to demonstrating a strong support for the aims of the organisation. Having demonstrated a commitment to the Association, new Directors are appointed, subject to successful interview. The Executive Committee, i.e., the Chair, Vice

[Whitehead Community Association](#)


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 [facebook.com/whiteheadni](https://facebook.com/whiteheadni)

*Accepted by HMRC as a Charity XN 50304 A*



Chair, Treasurer and Secretary, are appointed from within the Board each year, at the first committee meeting following the AGM.

### **Management Committee**

**Non-Executive Members:** In partnership with the Directors, the non-executive members form the remainder of the general committee, and are responsible for providing support and guidance to the output of the organisation. This includes activities to support its aims and the long-term sustainability of the Association.

**Company Membership:** Any resident of Whitehead, Islandmagee or Ballycarry (defined by the electoral ward of Larne Lough) who is supportive of the aims of the organisation is eligible to apply to become a member of the Association. Applications are made to the Board, they are vetted, and once approved at a committee meeting, the applicant becomes a member of the Association and has voting rights at the AGM.

- Bill Dornan for The Royal British Legion
- Bill Luney for Brighter Whitehead
- Valerie Reynolds for Whitehead Storehouse
- Stan Woods for Whitehead Wombles
- Isobel Day for Whitehead Golf Club
- Sue Harpur for Railway Preservation Society of Ireland

together with 8 local residents: Andrea Abraham, Andrew Brown, Martin Clarke, Jeremy Jones, Robert Logan, David Robinson, Patricia Ingram and Adrian Woods.

Management Committee meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month.

**Employees:** There are two part time Centre Managers, Rosemary Allen and Marianne McVey, and a part time cleaner, Agnes Golec, who look after the day-to-day operation of Whitehead Community Centre and its activities. In August 2022 two part time Community Engagement Officers, Melissa Martin and Ann Hunter, were appointed using three-year funding provided by the Department of Communities and administered by the Rank Foundation.

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## **OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES**

### **Objectives:**

The organisation promotes diversity, especially cross-community, and endeavours to make every person welcome, regardless of religion, ethnic identity, political beliefs, disability, sex, race, creed or nationality.

The objectives of the Association are to promote the benefits of the Whitehead area by associating with statutory and local authorities, voluntary organisations, residents and visitors, in a common effort to advance education, promote and foster a community spirit in



favour of equality and diversity, and to provide or assist in the provision of facilities in the interest of social welfare for recreation.

### **Activities:**

The Association owns and manages the Whitehead Centre situated at 19 Kings Road, Whitehead. The residents of Whitehead acquired the property (a former cinema) in 1977, to form a Community Centre which is located in the heart of the town's Conservation Area. Subsequently, major refurbishments in 2007/08 and 2011/12 extended the community space. In the 2019/2020 the Association received grant funding to refurbish the Kings Road side of the building. This project saw the creation of the Whitehead Centre, which serves as a Community and Tourism Hub, with three additional retail outlet units for start-up businesses in the community. From the Centre, the Association delivers three main activities:

**Community Support:** By providing a range of community spaces, consisting of a large hall including kitchen, 2 function rooms and a meeting room, the Association can support multiple leisure, education and community groups. In addition, the Whitehead Centre on the Kings Road side of the building provides exhibition space and has become a conduit for community & local tourism information. It provides signposting for welfare and leisure activities, together with being a focal point to promote the town to visitors.

**Business Accommodation:** The Whitehead Centre provides and manages a range of small business units that are available to local residents. The Association offers business accommodation on flexible terms to support new employment for the benefit of local residents and to add to the diversity of commercial offerings within the town.

**Annual Events:** The Association aims to deliver three major and a number of smaller annual events in support of its object; each of these events are run to foster community spirit and pride in the town.

**The Easter Monday 5-mile Road Race:** The road race is the oldest non champion race in Northern Ireland and has been contested since 1924. The Association has facilitated this event since 2006. It attracts competitive and fun runners from clubs locally and across Northern Ireland.

**The Whitehead Festival:** The festival is run over a 2-week summer period and brings together a wide range of groups and organisations to celebrate the best of Whitehead in a broad spectrum of activities and events.

**The Victorian Street Fair:** Established in 2008 and usually run on the last Saturday in November or first Saturday in December, the street fair celebrates the heritage of the town with its Victorian theme. Street entertainers, craft and Christmas stalls, together with street vendors offer the perfect backdrop to the Christmas lights switch on.

### **Public Benefit:**

The public benefit resulting from the Association's work is the creation of social cohesion, allowing Whitehead and its environs to develop together as a community, offering chances



for people to meet and work together, developing skill sets and widening the circle of social interaction and influence.

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## **ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE**

The 2022/2023 financial year saw the community centre return to near pre-pandemic levels of occupancy and facility hire. Sadly, a number of facility hire groups did not survive the enforced lock down periods resulting from the covid pandemic. New groups have joined us throughout the year and footfall has steadily increased. We are proud to have retained our Safe Place status, providing signposting to those needing help in domestic abuse situations.

In September, Genesis Drop-In centre sadly lost its funding and reluctantly gave notice that they would no longer require the use of one of our upstairs rooms. Genesis had been a much-valued tenant since joining us to run a computer group in March 2014.

The space vacated by Genesis was leased in October by Chrysalis Counselling and Training who specialise in child and adult trauma counselling. This has proved to be a very beneficial addition to the existing businesses and brings family groups and individuals from around the province to the town. In the near future, Chrysalis are planning to run training seminars on a broad range of community focused topics, using our McGuigan Suite facilities.

Things Bright and Beautiful gave notice and vacated their unit at 25 Kings Road in April. Artisan Style subsequently moved premises from 21 to 25 Kings Road as this provided more usable space for them. 21 Kings Road has since been used to accommodate the seven e-bikes given to the Association as a result of DAERA funding. It is planned to refurbish this area to better facilitate the e-bikes and their accessories. With appropriate marketing and management, the Directors are confident the revenue from e-bike hire will significantly exceed the previous rental income from the unit.

In January 2023, the Small Meeting Room was transformed from a limited use storage area to a welcoming meeting room. Staff and volunteers provided the manpower to renovate the room and donations of furniture, games, jigsaws, pictures and books turned the space into a very popular facility. An application for MEABC's Warm Spaces Grant was successful and three sessions per week for six weeks in February and March 2023 were hosted by one or two members, some of whom were engaging with the Association for the first time in the capacity of volunteers.

### **The Whitehead Centre:**

With part of an allocation of DAERA grant funding, an history-based exhibit was designed by committee members, Isobel Day and Adrian Woods who trawled through the archive materials organised by Vivian Scott to find suitable photos and write the supporting text. Local media company Circle Creative were engaged to produce the displays. The exhibit consists of two large display stands depicting pictures and text about the history of Whitehead and the Whitehead community. These are used when the exhibition space is not



booked and, together with other archive material have been well received by the community.

DAERA funds also provided the exhibition space with electronic equipment to allow videos and audio-visual displays to be viewed on a large TV screen. A replica of the old cinema stage, complete with red velvet curtains, was commissioned to house the TV screen and the area has been successfully used on a number of occasions for presentations throughout the year.

The Exhibition Space continues to host local art, craft and photographic displays although the number and frequency of these has reduced since the opening of The Gallery in December 2022. Throughout the year the Centre has hosted successful exhibitions from Steam Art, The Hidden Art Show; Angela Turkington's Selkie Cloak talk and exhibition; Methodist Church Art Sale, Janine Dempster Art, East Antrim Artists, Islandmagee Camera Club and Audrey Kyle Art; and pop-up shops for The McMillan Cancer which raised an amazing £3,800; Royal National Lifeboat Institute (RNLI) and Royal British Legion (RBL)

### **E-Bikes**

In March 2022 the Association took delivery of seven electronic bikes from McCallen Bikes, purchased with funding provided by DAERA and administered by Mid and East Antrim Borough Council (MEABC). WCA Staff undertook relevant training in the maintenance and operation of the bikes and an official launch was held with DAERA, Tourism NI and MEABC officials present. The bikes have been used by visitors to the town and were showcased to locals at the summer festival. Looking forward, it is hoped the revenue from these will provide an ongoing source of funding for the Association.

### **Community Support:**

The early part of 2022 saw an increase in community usage with the centre welcoming several returning and new groups using our facilities including: N.I. Blood Donation Service, Latin Dance, Line Dancing, Whitehead Community Orchestra, Tai Chi, Ju Jitsu, Wee Gamers Board Gaming Club, Whitehead Youth Club, Tots that Bop, Steve Diamond Art classes, Glee Club holiday programme, Messy Minds Playgroup, Sound Bath, traditional yoga, craft groups, needle felting, book binding, natural wool dyeing, lino block printing, , community tour guiding, Japanese dance, silk printing, natural dye workshops, Repair Café Whitehead meetings, bird shows and Whitehead Book Club among others.

Whitehead Youth Club's premises at Castlevue underwent significant renovation and we were glad to have been able to offer the Club use of our main hall facilities for a number of months.

WCA supported a number of non-profit groups in the town with use of facilities including Small World Group, Storehouse and Friends of Beach Road Dye Garden; Leukaemia and Lymphoma NI; Radius Housing Coffee Mornings; Repair Café Whitehead; Music and Mind.



Financial and administrative support was also provided to the Whitehead Wombles and Music and Mind.

**Business Accommodation:** The Association's support to local business continues to facilitate jobs and extend the retail spectrum available to the community. Completion of the refurbishment of the Kings Road side of the building provided an additional three start up units, the Whitehead Centre and community hub while providing existing tenants, the Yau Kee Chinese Takeaway, with newly refurbished premises. The net effect of the latest development is that the community centre hosts eight businesses which provide 14 direct jobs for local people. The businesses housed in the centre during the 2022/2023 financial year were:

- The Laundry Room
- Balmoral Barbers
- Snowglobe Training and Solutions
- Yau Kee Chinese Takeaway
- Little Einsteins Child Care Facility
- Artisan Style
- 2020 Art
- Chrysalis Counselling and Training

#### **Events run for the Community by the Association**

- **April 2022 Easter Road Race:** We were delighted to have our historic road race back in 2022 which hundreds of runners from all over the province and abroad taking part. It was a very successful event, partly sponsored by Wrights' Spar.
- **June 2022 The Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations:** A great day of family fun and celebrations run in conjunction with the Methodist Church.
- **July 2022 Summer Festival**
- **August 2022 – NI Craft Month**
- **September 2022 Local Legends event:** a fantastic event recognising and celebrating local sporting heroes Mark McHugh (Commonwealth Lawn Bowls Gold Medallist) and Callum Pollard and Luke Simpson who won world and national sailing championship awards.
- **November 2022 Victorian Street Fair**
- **January 2023 Burns Night Ceilidh**

#### **Committee Contribution**

The Association and the community centre are reliant, by their nature, on the voluntary contribution of individuals serving as members of the committee. The Association is supported on a daily basis by the work of its volunteers in numerous activities including administration, planning, support to events and practical assistance.

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## **FINANCIAL REVIEW**



The Association operates as a non-profit making organisation. The Statement of Financial Activities shows ?????????????????????? during the year. This has been achieved with the assistance of grants received, income from tenants and income from the Service Level Agreement agreed with Mid and East Antrim Borough Council.

Grants have been received over the year from several sources to help offset the costs including the Rank Foundation and Mid and East Antrim Borough Council,

The Association continued to meet its obligations in respect of the Community Finance Ireland (formerly UCIT) loan and are delighted to report the final payment of this long-standing loan was made early in April 2023.

The Community Centre operates on a very tight budget which requires the Committee to be constantly vigilant to the income and expenditure of the organisation.

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### **PLANS FOR FUTURE PERIOD**

The focus of the Directors is on developing the Whitehead Centre, in particular the Exhibition Space and visitor information facility. The Exhibition Space has a program of arts, craft and information events booked in the next financial year. The tourist information facility provides visitors to the town with a focal point for information and it is planned to increase our engagement with accommodation, activities and hospitality providers in the town. Marketing of our electronic bikes will be significantly increased in the 2023/2024 season and it is hoped to offer more walking tours to residents and visitors.

In March 2023 MEABC informed the Directors that they would be reducing, and eventually ceasing payment of the Service Level Agreement to the Association. The agreement has been in place since 2007 and the Association relies upon these funds to help with wages and the costs associated with utilities. Without these funds WCA will struggle to provide the level of service to our community which it currently enjoys. Directors are actively seeking to have this decision reversed while looking at alternative sources of funds and will continue to plan for and set the Association's priorities for the next three to five years to ensure the centre remains relevant and financially stable.

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### **STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE**

In setting our objectives and planning our activities for the year, the Directors have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit to ensure that the activities have helped to achieve the charity's purposes and provide a benefit to the beneficiaries.

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Signed on behalf of the Trustees/Directors



**Valerie Reynolds**  
**Chairperson and Director**  
**Whitehead Community Association**

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