



## **Portavogie Regeneration Forum Annual Report 2024**

This report outlines the work and achievements of Portavogie Regeneration Forum since our previous General Meeting in June 23.

Please see below a timeline of our project delivery from the start of April 2023.

- Spring-Summer 2023                      In Bloom – completed
- April 2023 – March 2024              Running costs - completed
- Winter 2023                                  Christmas Festival - completed
- Spring-Winter 2024/5                  In Bloom – applied for awaiting decision
- April 2024 – March 2025              Running costs – applied for awaiting decision

In addition to these achievements, we have continued to work with elected representatives, statutory, and voluntary agencies around many regeneration issues.

Throughout the period we have also supported and advertised numerous ‘Beach Cleans’ with NIFHA and Portavogie Primary School. Our thanks to Mrs Murray who brought the P7’s to the clean and has agreed to support future cleans. I hope we have inspired a few eco-warriors!! The school also support us with our In Bloom projects not only do they allow us unlimited use of their polytunnel but the pupils assist with the planting of potatoes and onions. Susan and Anne do a fabulous job leading the planting sessions and I hope in years to come one or two of the children will have picked up enough skills to grow some of their own produce. We are currently working with a candidate from the Duke of Edinburgh scheme to complete the volunteering section of her bronze award.. We look forward to continuing these partnerships over the next year.

I would like to thank Ards and North Down Borough Council for their support, both financially and in terms of guidance. The ongoing support from elected representatives is appreciated and we hope these strong relationships will continue. The running costs we receive from the council and the department of communities is invaluable without this we would not be able to function.

The advice and mentoring given to us by Frances McCormick of County Down Rural Network has been invaluable and the Regeneration Forum would like to publicly thank Frances and the network for this, without you the PRF would not exist. We certainly would not be able to navigate the demands of HMRC and the Charities commission which increase every year with the introduction of charities commission accounts.

We only have six members, all of whom have work and family commitments, so it has been a struggle at times to deliver projects. To avoid sounding like a broken record but it is very clear that we must try again and again to attract more members who will bring a much-needed boost and hopefully key skills that would help make the group more productive in the future.

The Regeneration Forum is dedicated to driving and overseeing the regeneration and community development within Portavogie. This year as well as attracting more members we must try to fundraise to boost PRF monies in our account. This would enable the forum to apply for more grants that require groups to provide project money in advance to its completion. It is also our hope that this year will see the forum grow, both in terms of numbers on the committee, and in terms of reputation within the village and the wider Ards Peninsula.

**Susanne Young (Treasurer)**

**James Kelly (Chairperson)**