



*Glenelly
Development
Trust Ltd
Annual Report*



Glenelly Development Trust Ltd

Directors' Report

April 2023 – March 2024

The Directors are pleased to present this 2023-2024 annual report.

Objectives and Activities

The company's objects are to advance community development, advance education and training, relieve poverty and promote sustainable means of creating employment and training opportunities in the Glenelly Valley.

GDT is a company limited by guarantee governed by articles of association.

During the year the company carried out a number of activities and projects in the furtherance of its' objectives:

1. Through our property asset scheme, we managed our land and buildings including providing business premises and accommodation for people.
2. Through activities run in Glenelly House, the allotment site and other community venues, we have delivered classes, courses and programmes, community and family events as well as providing facilities, resources, support and information to community and voluntary organisations.
3. GDT continued to develop tourism and opportunities for cultural and recreational activities.
4. GDT continued to work in the spirit of promotion, co-operation and partnership working with statutory agencies and bodies, influencing decision makers and negotiating on behalf of the community.
5. GDT continued to maintain, improve and provide public amenities, promoting the enhancement of the natural and built environment improving the appearance of the area of benefit;

Achievements and Performance

This report relates to events and activities delivered between April 2023 and March 2024.

We are pleased to have secured over £70,000 in grants to support our community activity. This is a slight decrease from last year when we were the lead partner on four different projects across the Sperrin District Electoral Area (DEA). This year we only lead on one project - Derry City and Strabane District Council (DCSDC) consensual grant-making project offering activities for youth. Other funders included Public Health Agency (through the Clear Project), National Lottery, Airtricity, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Western Health & Social Care Trust and Department for Communities Hardship Fund (through RAPID). We have continued to secure one-year funding from DCSDC for our Community Venue Service Level Agreement which helps cover our centre running costs. This supports the delivery of community activities to a wide range of age groups across the different life courses. Our domestic letting income has continued to be a great source of finance to help us deliver on our community activities.

We provide activities for pre-school and youth which help give every child the best start in life. Pre-school children were delighted with the Messy Play sessions, Mini Professors workshop and they enjoyed the Gobblefunk sessions. Discos were held in June and Halloween with over 80 children at each event. The Halloween-themed magic show was a fantastic event for children, parents and carers alike. Support was also provided to parents and carers with a workshop offering guidance and advice on challenging behaviour and anxious children. The youth will engaged in Brave Sole workshops focusing on mental health and wellbeing.

Young people participated in music and dance classes learning new skills such as hip hop, parkour and skateboarding. This was delivered through a number of 1-to-2-hour sessions as well as a 4-hour summer workshop in Eden Orange Hall. We thank Urban Motion and Echo Echo Theatre and Dance for facilitating these. The youth also sharpened up their culinary skills during the recent cookery classes. Team games and wall climbing were just some of the activities they engaged in during the joint Sperrin trip to Todds Leap in late summer. They also enjoyed a joint trip to Lifford Strabane Cinema at Christmas where 96 children from across the Sperrin area came together to watch a movie.

The family fun day, which was held in conjunction with Glenelly Sheepdog Society on 5th August, attracted over 500 people. We supplied the rock-climbing wall, inflatable fun, face painting and organised the ice cream and coffee van. We hope we can secure funding again to allow us to support another event and attract even more families.

Local women engaged in a variety of creative activities from making cards, plaques, bunting and wreaths to napkin sewing, needle felting, ceramic flower and vase classes. The interest in crochet continues with 14 ladies regularly attending the weekly crochet club each Monday morning. They have donated baby hats, blankets and cardigans to the neonatal and premature babies' unit in Altnagelvin Hospital. Enhancing cookery skills has remained as popular as ever with five cooking demonstrations taking place. There were also two demonstrations on how to use a slow cooker. The women's group 'Fab and Fifty', which is funded through the CARE Project, has been meeting regularly with a variety of activities. This ranged from health and fashion to foraging walk and talks, a trip to Coleman's Garden Centre and a trip to Swan Park in Bunrana.

Our bi-monthly hearing aid clinics continue to run and have been very successful with an average of 14 people attending each clinic. We are indebted to our local volunteer, trained through RNID, who helps check the hearing aids. We are glad to see the wheelchair being used to support local people to become more mobile. We hired a disability-accessible toilet for the launch of the allotments site and following the launch, we have renovated a shed to serve as toilet facilities at the site. We have plans to install a fixed hearing loop system in Glenelly House and the Plum Club unit. Unfortunately, our grant application to LFT Charitable Trust for this was unsuccessful but we will endeavour to seek other funding to help achieve this in the future.

We are delighted to support the Plum Club with free use of the unit so they can continue to provide their weekly social club activities for older people on a Thursday morning which finishes with lunch. The members take part in an array of activities including games, bingo, cookery, crafts, exercise and excursions. We work closely in

partnership with the Plum Club to support the delivery of meals on wheels in the Glenelly area. This includes helping promote the service, secure funding to purchase meal containers and support the meal subsidy as well as help deliver meals. At Christmas time we met with Leo McCullagh to give him a small token of appreciation to mark his retirement from the meals on wheels service. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to Leo for all that he has done for meals on wheels over a long number of years. His dedication, passion and commitment were truly amazing. Since Leo's retirement, GDT has recruited volunteers to help deliver the meals and we are actively looking for new clients to join the service. We were delighted to secure funding to allow us to work, once again, with the Plumbridge Parish Hall committee who prepared and served the delicious Christmas Dinner to 76 of our older people, which was followed by a game of bingo.

In February we completed the second year of the Collective Approach to Rural Exclusion (CARE) project. This four-year project, led by Learmount Community Development Group, is supported by the Big Lottery People and Communities fund and targets those aged 50+ across the Sperrin DEA. Bronagh is funded for 15 hours a week to help coordinate the activities in the Glenelly area and meets regularly with her colleagues in the other areas. A representative from Glenelly sits on the CARE Project steering group and several representatives sit on the user group. A variety of activities are delivered through the CARE Project and those where mainly women participated were highlighted previously. We held several workshops in which men also engaged such as the very popular crook-making with Tom Crowe. The networking events with other groups across the Sperrin DEA were well supported with visits to the Ulster American Folk Park, Belfast Christmas markets and the Valentine's afternoon tea dance in Donemana Presbyterian Church Hall. An external evaluation is already underway, and we are looking at the exit strategy to see how we can sustain the activity once the funding has ended. As our Chairman mentioned, the highlight of the year for the CARE Project was attending the Pride of Place awards and receiving the runner-up prize in the Age Friendly category.

A number of education and training classes targeting the wider community were held with themes such as grow your own vegetables, gardening, social media, writing your CV, food hygiene and first aid. We hosted an information session by North West Regional College to allow local people to become aware of courses the college offers. We also held a fishing information session. Five youth workers from Glenelly area attended youth training which focused on yoga, mindfulness and regulation. We also worked along with Glenelly Historical Society to bring the plant and invasive species identification workshop, as part of the Loughs Agency's Streamkeepers programme. The Tuesday library sessions offer a useful space for anyone interested in reading to drop-in to borrow a book. They can also enjoy a cup of tea and coffee as well as free printing services.

Glenelly House and the Plum Club unit continue to be used by a number of different groups for their activities. Jack and Jill Community Playgroup have held committee meetings, taken school photos as well as a space for the community midwife and parents to meet for appointments regarding child development. Plumbridge SureStart also used the premises for their official photos and Friends of St. Peter's have met to discuss fundraising, as well as holding their own fundraising Christmas wreath making. We were delighted to support Glenelly Players drama group as they

were back performing with the Maiden Aunt play last year and we look forward to hearing more about a potential upcoming performance as they start to meet again this year. Cappagh Badoney CCE used the premises to help rehearse for their Christmas concert. The AA continue with their weekly support group meetings on a Monday night. We have renewed our Zoom licence to allow groups like Glenelly St. Joseph's GFC to hold online meetings. The memorabilia from St. Joseph's High School, which is on display in Glenelly House, continues to be of interest to all those using the premises. These groups and other groups like Parish of Badoney Upper have also availed of the free photocopying and printing service or equipment such as laptop, projector, screen and speaker.

We promote the 'Take 5 steps to wellbeing' encouraging participants to get active, keep learning, stay connected, take notice and give to others. We update our website and social media on a weekly basis providing details of health and wellbeing campaigns as well as our own programmes. We have close to 1.5k followers which is absolutely fantastic. We continue to publish details of our activities in the local shops, newspapers and parish bulletins.

The Macmillan Coffee in September was well supported and local people gave generously to this good cause. Our walking group meets every Friday morning for a 1-1.5 hr walk and a group of 13 people participated in a guided hike up Dart and Sawel. The 8-week couch to 5k started in early January with an average of 26 people per week. We held two 5-week sessions of jiving and line dancing with keen dancers filling the Parish hall. We completed our 6-week Pilates session which 18 people enjoyed.

Our Christmas lights switch on was our biggest ever with 140 children visiting Santa and an estimated 250 people in attendance. The disco, carol singing, readings from our local clergy, music from CCE Cappagh Badoney as well as the presence of the fire engine, Christmas tractor and of course Santa and his elves all helped to make it a special occasion.

Another highlight of the year was the grand opening of our allotment site in July. We owe a debt of gratitude to the allotments sub-committee who met frequently to ensure the site was prepared and the layout of the raised beds, polytunnel and other resources were in place to allow us to allocate these to allotment holders. We were pleased to purchase a prefab unit at the allotment site which will be used by allotment holders as well as gardening classes. A new gardening club has been established with a few sessions provided by the Conservation Volunteers. We look forward to the upcoming growing season in which the allotment holders will get the chance to display their growing skills.

We continue to build our social capital by developing current and creating new relationships with a variety of people and organisations. We have representatives from the Glenelly area on DCSDC Age Friendly committee, Easilink Community Transport and the Sperrin Strategic Growth Partnership. We attended the official launch of the giant sculptures at Sperrin Heritage Centre and have continued to liaise with DCSDC on the potential development of the site. We have promoted, attended and been instrumental in advocating for changes highlighted through the estate inspection of Glenelly View. Attending a variety of networking meetings on themes such as social supermarket, positive ageing, linking generations, power of

the outdoors and hardship fund helps bridge new relationships and develop future projects.

We are pleased to announce that we were successful in our initial application to DCSDC SMART Village Network. This project will enable the transformation of a venue in Plumbridge into a digitalized co-working space as well as provide training and support for communities and business use. The hub will initially be established in Glenelly House with the opportunity to grow and expand in other sites once developed. We carried out a lot of research into digital hubs to help address the application form questions. We then availed of mentoring support from Bable to help refine the project. There are seven other partners in the project. GDT will be specialising for those in the farming community and those with partial hearing as well as catering for those working from home, meetings, etc. Peace Plus 2.5 funding opened on 18th January and we look forward to co-producing the final funding application for the digital hub.

Public Benefit

The objectives of the Trust are as listed. The Trust has considered Northern Ireland Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and plans to ensure that it provides benefit and achieves its objectives as set out in the Trust's Memorandum and Articles of Association.

Appendix 1

The public benefits that flow from purpose (1) are:

- (i) increased efficiency and effectiveness of community and voluntary organisations, resulting in enhanced outcomes and service delivery and, consequently, an improved quality of life for those who benefit from the work of these organisations;
- (ii) opportunities to engage in social activities that bring people together and an increased sense of well-being and fulfilment;
- (iii) enhanced accessibility to free or affordable facilities and amenities;
- (iv) increased engagement in civic society and the local community;
- (v) improved environmental conditions, leading to a reduction in stress and anxiety and improvements in people's well-being;
- (vi) enhanced ability to provide advice and information to statutory sector bodies and agencies, funders and others and to outline the needs of and exert a positive influence on the development of policy on community development.

The public benefits that flows from purpose (2) are:

- (a) enhanced educational attainment, transferable skills, capabilities and capacities and improved potential to secure employment;
- (ii) increased self-awareness, confidence and resilience and the development of social and communication skills and abilities and an enhanced sense of purpose and fulfilment
- (iii) reduction in unemployment, hardship and poverty, leading to a better quality of life for the beneficiaries and consequent improvements in their health and well-being.

The public benefits that flow from purpose (3) are:

- (i) the creation of employment, training and work experience opportunities and consequently a reduction in poverty, unemployment and hardship, leading to a better quality of life for the beneficiaries and consequent improvements in health and well-being;
- (ii) enhanced accessibility to free or affordable facilities and amenities, leading to an improvement in people's quality of life and well-being.

These benefits can be evidenced through monitoring records kept by the Trust and other agencies and organisations with regard to the progress of those participating in training and the creation of employment opportunities; records kept of attendance at, or participation in, recreational, cultural, and social events and activities; feedback from the beneficiaries, independent and internal evaluations and reports of the work and impact of the Trust and of the groups and organisations assisted by the Trust; and the findings of community surveys.