

Ecological Design Association Northern Ireland (EDANI)
Annual Report 2021
Registered Charity Number 107826

80 Church Road, Crossgar, Downpatrick BT30 9HR

The Aims and Purposes of the charity

Our objective is to emulate the activities of the Scottish Ecological Design Association promoting the benefits of creating more harmonious, healthy and environmentally friendly places to live, while safeguarding the natural environment. Ecological design activities involve helping the public with information, training and guidance so that they can benefit from living in a more harmonious, peaceful and healthy environment. Our focus has been on information, education and training. We have developed these aims successfully through our first full year of activity by providing information and education about one-planet living, providing information and training about natural construction materials such as hempcrete. Despite our limited size and activities we believe that we have raised awareness of ecological ideas and principles in Northern Ireland and that this has significant benefit to the wider community and the public.

Activities

2021 has been a difficult year but despite this we have managed to carry out some activities.

Web site:

A holding web site was established

<https://www.ecologicaldesignassociationireland.com/>

This included the basic information about EDANI and a link to the campaign for One Planet Living Planning policies

The web site needs further work, including some attractive images, but this will depend on finding a member who knows how to do web sites etc.

One Planet Living Work:

With the help of Mark H Durkan MLA and a few other people a proposal was put forward that Northern Ireland should consider adopting the Welsh One Planet Living (OPL) planning policies. OPL is well established in Wales and allows people to develop ecological small holdings and ecological buildings in the countryside providing they comply with a number of quite onerous conditions. A proposal was drafted, supported by EDANI, and this went out to consultation through Stormont and eventually was approved to progress by the Speaker. The next stage was for civil servants in the Bills office to draft the Bill but it seems to have stalled at this stage. An enthusiastic and supportive civil servant was moved to another department and it seems unlikely that the bill will make much progress before Stormont shuts down for the May 2022 elections. Despite this disappointment this action has drawn attention to the existence of EDANI and there was massive support for the proposals in response to the survey. This is a non-political proposal which seemed likely to achieve support from most parties in Stormont as well as a wide range of environmental organisations. Unfortunately, there are also two climate change bills going through Stormont and these have been given priority.

Hempcrete training:

EDANI has supported and organised several events to provide education and training in the ecological form of construction known as hempcrete or hemp lime. Mixing hemp and lime to create solid insulating walls is a remarkable low carbon form of building construction which is attracting increased interest in Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK and Ireland. We have worked with a private company, Heritage Ltd who supply hemp and lime materials who have generously donated time to this work, Hemp Co-operative Ireland, The Co-operative Foundation, Co-operative Alternatives, NI, the Groundwork Trust (NI) CTR construction and many others have provided assistance.

Training workshops have been run at Lime Technology (Near Ballymena), The Hollywood Men's Shed and the Refill Hut in Killyleagh. A further workshop is planned to be held at the National Trust HQ in Rowallane in 2022 and another in the North West, Derry or Donegal. The workshops were partly funded by a small grant from the

Co-operative Foundation and voluntary input from members. Numbers were kept small with the workshops run mainly outside to allow for COVID rules. No charges were made to attend but in future we should impose a small charge as some people who registered didn't bother to turn up on the day but are more likely to do so if they had paid. Despite this demand was high and there are requests for more workshops. Participants came from as far afield as Wicklow and Dublin.

Some of the funds from the Co-op Foundation Grant remain unspent as voluntary help kept costs low and can be used to support further events in the future. Co-operative Alternatives were very happy with the use of the fund and have featured the workshops on their newsletters and blogs.

<https://www.coopalternatives.coop/blog/> Surplus materials were also left with the Holywood Men's Shed in the hope that they could carry out further insulating work to their building,

The Killyleagh and Holywood Mens Shed hempcrete workshop Photos



Membership and other activity:

Not much work has been done over the year to recruit additional members and this has to be a priority for 2022. A delayed "launch" in person meeting is needed to generate enthusiasm for this. There has been a quite a bit of contact with other organisations and people. For instance, members took part in an event in Belfast to coincide with COP 26 and there has been contact with groups on line such as Architects Climate Action Network, the Unite Trade Union Climate Action branch, the Take Back the city organisation in Belfast, the All Party Climate Change group in Stormont, which brings together a wide range of environmental people, Collaboration for Change and the Northern Ireland Clean Air Champion among many others. There have been some initial discussions about works to the currently unused building at the back of Ballynahinch Credit Union to provide space for a range of charitable and community activities and it's is hoped to secure a small space to provide a base for EDANI and minimal cost. This would provide somewhere easily accessible by public transport where a small library of books and magazines and information leaflets could be kept and a small office facility. We are also exploring possibilities with Belfast City Council.

Public Benefit

The trustees believe that they have met the Commission's Public Benefit requirements. We have taken account of the public benefit guidance and tried to ensure that our activity in promoting ecological ideas has reached a wider public audience. While only a small number of people have attended our training workshops, many more expressed interest in attending and we are confident we can gain wider public attention in 2022. As there is greater interest in climate change and environmental issues, we believe that our work in assisting understanding of this meets the public benefit requirements.

Tom Woolley Chair January 20 2022