

**Conlig Community Regeneration Group
Trustees Report – Year ending 31 March 2024
NIC 108280**

Overview of Group Purpose and Public Benefits

Our group's purpose is to work in partnership with other statutory, community and voluntary agencies to promote and enhance social welfare, community facilities, culture and heritage, the natural environment, citizenship, community development, community consultation and to address disadvantage and hardship in the village of Conlig and its surrounding areas.

The direct benefits that flow from our group purposes are improved community cohesion, community relations, increased community spirit, a better sense of belonging, reduced isolation, increased social connection, improved activities and services for the elderly, better understanding of local heritage and identity, better facilities and access to services, improved quality of life for those in need, reduced levels of stress and anxiety and increased health and well-being among those in need. As you can see from our annual update of activities below, we achieve this through a range of consistent support, activities, events and projects, including our seniors' group, community-led festivals and fun days, resident-led environmental and heritage projects, a War Memorial project, financial and practical support to those in crisis and advocacy work, and the impact of these can be demonstrated by attendance numbers and feedback from participants, statutory agencies and other community related groups. None of our purposes give rise to any harm.

There are no private benefits arising from these purposes. Fees are not charged for our services and none of our committee members will obtain any private benefit.

Trustee board

John Ballard – Treasurer
David Ballard – Chairperson
Diane Harvey-Smith – Vice Chairperson
Kerry Miskelly – Secretary
Richard Wilson
Rev John McConaghie
Mary Ballard
TJ Young
Lee Thomson

Financial Year 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024

Please see the financial report and independent examinations of accounts for full details. Our charity does not own our own premises but has roughly £1,000 worth of assets made up of laptops and office equipment.

Activities

Conlig Community Regeneration Group has had a busy year, continuing to work on a voluntary basis to address the needs of the people living in Conlig village and its surrounding areas.

Our weekly seniors' group continues to be an important service to the community, offering a safe and welcoming space to build friendships, take part in activities for improved health and well-being, and access the information and advice needed to live a better quality of life. It has been great to see so many regulars coming back every week, and we have been encouraged to see new members join, especially those recently retired. As well as

conversation over a cuppa, our members have enjoyed a monthly warm meal as part of our Hardship project with NDCN and the other voluntary-led Associations in Bangor, funded by Ards and North Down Borough Council (ANDBC). We have welcomed a range of speakers who have delivered educational sessions on energy efficiency, sign language and community safety, and have taken part in activities such as chair-yoga and singing. The cost-of-living crisis continues to have a negative impact on some of the older generation in the village, and we have been able to support with food vouchers and fuel supplies through Community Foundation NI's The Older People's Fund, as well as supporting the wider community through the ANDBC Hardship Fund.

Our small team of volunteers organised and delivered a range of community events again, including a Kings Coronation celebration, Ulster Scots Summer Festival and Christmas Festival. These large-scale events brought residents across the generations together to feel more connected, build positive community spirit and learn about local heritage and traditions. Although ANDBC provided the majority of the funding, the amount of funding available has not changed in many years, or has drastically reduced, despite the high rise in event costs. This causes our small charity and its volunteers pressure and effects the quality of events we can deliver so we continue to advocate for better, encouraging ANDBC to offer more reasonable amounts of funding going forward.

Our group remains passionate about the environment and making the most of the limited green areas in the village and have delivered various environmental projects throughout the year, including an In Bloom project. We continue to run a weekly Tuesday maintenance group in partnership with the local Church and local residents and hope these men will be instrumental the planning of our Men's Shed pilot. Unfortunately delays continue in securing the portacabin we need to run the Men's Shed, which is out of our control, but we hope this will be resolved soon so we can start planning this valuable project.

We remain committed to highlighting the local history of the area, which includes War Memorial project, advocating for a memorial in the village to recognise, remember and mark the local men who lost their lives. Our volunteers have worked hard on this project for 8 years; carrying out extensive research and planning and have now raised the funds needed to build the memorial, thanks to our fundraising efforts and the generosity of the local community. But in order to complete the project, it has been vital to get a recommitment of support from ANDBC; both financial and practical. We are a small group of volunteers who mostly work full-time, so have appreciated the support from NDCN in setting up and facilitating numerous collaborative meetings with ANDBC elected representatives and staff to progress the project, as well as helping us to create a detailed Memorial proposal, which we will present at the June 2024 ANDBC Corporate Services Committee. We hope the memorial can be erected as soon as possible, to meet the wishes amongst residents.

Our advocacy work remains extremely important to ensure that residents are getting what they are entitled to in terms of housing, benefits and safety, so they can have a better quality of life. This role has been more important than ever with the added challenges that the pandemic and now cost of living crisis has brought. As well as representing the people of Conlig at annual estate inspections and various meetings, we are a member of the Community Practitioners Forum, facilitated by NDCN, where we work collectively with the other 4 key volunteer-led Community Associations in Bangor (Bloomfield, Breezemount, Clandeboye and Whitehill). The Forum encourages peer support between the volunteers, greater group sustainability and more effective advocating for better investment, services and support across the areas, which all continue to experience under-investment, and a vital part of this work is our quarterly meeting with the ANDBC Councillors who cover the 5 areas.

We are a small group of volunteers with limited funds, so continue to work closely with other voluntary and statutory organisations to ensure we can run services and support for the residents of the area. We are thankful to these organisations, as well as our Funders, which this year included Community Foundation NI and Ards and North Down Borough Council. But mostly we are thankful to the committed and dedicated volunteers of Conlig Community Regeneration Group who continue to give so much.

Approved by the Trustees on 29th July 2024 and signed on their behalf by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Ballard', written in a cursive style.

John Ballard, Treasurer