

The year April 2023 to March 2024 was a very busy and successful one for the Loughmacrory 50+ Community Group with approximately 40 members engaged in a wide range of activities carefully planned by our Club Leader, in liaison with the Management Committee. This programme of activities was conducted over 30 weeks, in 3 blocks of approximately 10 weeks each, April to June, Oct to Dec and Feb to March in the local Community Centre, hired from Loughmacrory Community Development Association.

The Afternoon Club took place on Mondays 2pm to 4pm, with a Social Dancing class that evening and on Thursdays evenings Sewing and Crochet classes were held. Substantial funding from the National Lottery and John Moores Foundation, with lesser amounts from Developing Health Communities NI and the Southwest Age Partnership enabled the deployment of tutors and with the cooperation of individual committee members, enabled the successful delivery of this comprehensive programme.

The Afternoon Club was introduced after Covid and has continued to be popular with 18 to 20+ members attending consistently each week. Activities included Aerobics, Seasonal plant potting and Flower Arranging, Demonstration Cookery, Talks on Health and Wellbeing, Nutrition, Skin Care and Mindfulness. Tea / coffee and treats were served at the end of each session with the opportunity to chat and socialise. Christmas, Easter and Summer were celebrated with the local primary school providing musical entertainment and all enjoyed treats together afterwards.

Weekly contributions to the Social Fund by members, together with some funding, supplemented the very enjoyable Shopping Trip in November to Coleman's Garden Centre, Templepatrick, Sprucefield and a meal in Moy on the way home. Christmas Dinner in Killyclogher was another enjoyable event. However, the highlight of the year was the 2 day trip to Westport in May 2023, when the 25 trippers enjoyed good food and nightly entertainment and each other's company in the comfort of the Castlecourt Hotel and savoured the beautiful scenery of the Wild Atlantic Way.

The weekly Social Dancing classes were popular and attracted people from outside the surrounding area of Loughmacrory and Carrickmore. At the end of each block the 2 committee members involved organised dances with supper and a local musician. The entire committee then took on the different tasks for the smooth running of the dances which have now earned a very good reputation in the wider area. This in turn, resulted in large attendances which have

proved to be a valuable source of income for the group.

Thursday night's sewing and crochet classes, with competent tutors and the help of 2 dedicated committee members resulted in enjoyable sessions and a very high standard of work being produced. Patchwork items like small throws, table runners and shopping bags together with beautifully crocheted items were proudly displayed in an exhibition, in an effort to attract more participants but unfortunately numbers have remained small. However, the enthusiasm and the enhanced skills of those attending have persuaded the committee to allow these two fun filled and relaxed classes to continue.

The group held their annual AGM in September 2023 when the officers presented their reports.

The entire committee stepped down but all agreed to serve for another year. As Chair of the committee I can say it's been a pleasure to work with the other 10 members. Our shared aim is to ~~the~~ loneliness and reduce isolation and increase health and well being....Alone we can do a little, together we can do much.

Shirley Crystall

Chairperson