



**MOUNTSANDEL DISCOVERY & HERITAGE GROUP**

**Charity Commission No. NIC 108552**

**Date registered: 23 February 2022**

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**MOUNTSANDEL DISCOVERY AND HERITAGE GROUP  
ANNUAL REPORT  
YEAR 2024**

**COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

**Royal Court Hotel – in person**

9 <sup>th</sup> January (AGM)	12 <sup>th</sup> March	11 <sup>th</sup> March	19 <sup>th</sup> June
12 <sup>th</sup> September	11 <sup>th</sup> November	11 <sup>th</sup> December	

**ZOOM**

12 <sup>th</sup> February	15 <sup>th</sup> April	13 <sup>th</sup> May	15 <sup>th</sup> July
12 <sup>th</sup> August	9 <sup>th</sup> October	23 <sup>rd</sup> October	

24<sup>th</sup> June (Corbally Rd.)

**Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council (CCGBC) - Engagement Meetings**

- February 6 - Lunch-time meeting with CCGBC staff officers to discuss possible sponsor partner re Heritage Lottery funding.
- February 13 - Members met with Anne McNicholl re CRUN becoming sponsor partner for HLF Funding. (CRUN's board thought our project did not meet their objectives).
- 26<sup>th</sup> April - Mountsandel Concept Meeting held with New Director of Leisure and Development, Head of Tourism, council officers, Finance Minister and Elected Member: Discussion re Vision: shared space /education resource/ regeneration / tourism potential, essential economic and community benefits/possible Working Group reinstatement.
- 10<sup>th</sup> June - MDHG meeting with CCGBC and Ulster University Coleraine (UUC). Peace Plus application – Community, Education and the Environment was successful and Special European Programme Body (SEUPB) have apportioned £232,000 to spend.
- UUC Education Department guaranteed monies from the application to work with schools and history department to further develop the project.
- June - Discussion Meeting to allocation of SEUPB £232,000 on environment pillar and education pillar (in attendance – CCGBC Officers: Peter Thompson, Patricia O'Bryne, MDHG members: Chair Maura Hickey, Patrick Lennon and Liam Hickey)
- 30<sup>th</sup> October - CCGBC Working Group (Staff, Councillors and MDHG members) reinstated as first step and driven by elected members. Outcome Niamh Archibald (Councillor) was elected as Chair and Dorothy Black (MDHG) Vice Chair.
- Progress of project will be driven by CCGBC, remainder of Peace Plus money to develop 'the field' work in conjunction with HED. It is council's responsibility to raise money and potential areas of funding considered were, Landfill Fund, Shared Ireland Fund. Council to apply to 'Towns Programme' to raise money for realistic estimate of the project to include a bridge across the river.
- December - Laura Henry, Biodiversity and Habitat officer for CCGBC has stated that she is keen to work with MDHG.

## ULSTER UNIVERSITY ENGAGEMENT MEETINGS

- Peace Plus Application, Project and next actions were discussed. Round table event to include all stakeholders ie Waterways Ireland, The Honourable the Irish Society etc. Master Plan Blueprint to be available to all stakeholders. Joined up thinking essential, all working towards a shared goal. Waterways Ireland stressed, “The Bann” is the spine of the project, the site is the “core”.
- UUC, Schools and CCEA to collaborate using Peace Plus money for education. Members met with Duncan Morrow (Director of Community Engagement) to discuss proposed round table event postponed until early 2025. Dorothy Black is working on the UUC Education Pillar.
- MDHG Chair (Maura Hickey) contacted Claire Mulrone, ‘Head of Widening Access and Participation’ regarding the rebranding and upgrading of social media platforms. Patrick Lennon worked with students from the interactive media department during the first semester, to realise the project.
- Due to this success, CMDHG contacted MDHG Chair , as part of the ‘Science Shop,’ and was offered a new ‘Mountsandel History Project’ in the second semester with the opportunity to work with forty undergraduates mentored by four PHD graduates. MDHG are liaising with UU Science Shop and History Department.

## LOBBYING

- 12<sup>th</sup> January - MDHG committee members met with Duane Farrell, the new CEO of The Honourable the Irish Society. A presentation was organised to inform him of the importance of the Mountsandel site and our progress so far.
- 8<sup>th</sup> March - The Chair attended the Causeway Chamber President’s Annual Dinner with Malachy O’Neil (UU Director of Regional Engagement), held in the Lodge Hotel. The outcome of that evening was that Malachy nominated Duncan Morrow to work with MDHG.
- 24<sup>th</sup> May - Chair wrote introductory letters to the Taoiseach’s office, and the Tanaiste Michaël Martin, on behalf of MDHG and received a reply from the Tanaiste’s office. apologising for the late response and stating that we were too late to apply for funding this year but can apply early 2025 for Shared Island Funding.
- October - Chair contacted Economy Minister to seek a meeting.
- 28<sup>th</sup> November - a group met Economy Minister to seek his support for Mountsandel project, which was very well received by the Minister.
- MDHG contacted Council’s Biodiversity Officer.

## EDUCATION DEVELOPMENTS

- 1<sup>st</sup> August - CEO, Duane Farrell (The Honourable the Irish Society) was approached by members regarding funding for the schools' days.
- 24<sup>th</sup> September - Annual Mountsandel Schools Day Workshops in collaboration with the Rotary Club of Coleraine. CEO, Duane Farrell, The Honourable the Irish Society, also attended part of the event and saw for himself how the children enjoyed the outdoor learning experience.
- Work was undertaken with UU Media Department to rebrand and upgrade the Mountsandel website and social media outlets for getting our message out.
- Peter Thompson, CCGBC agreed to contribute £500 to the £950 online cost for renewal of website hosting, domain and SSL.
- 15<sup>th</sup> October - Mountsandel talk to Probus.
- 11<sup>th</sup> November - Initial meeting with representatives from MDHG, UU, CCGBC, about possible Round Table invitees. The project is seen as Community Outreach and Liam Campbell, Robin Ruddock and Jim Allen were suggested as possible invitees. CCEA needs to be involved.
- A follow up was undertaken re CCEA current educational strategy on Teacher Professional Learning which contributes to CCEA's resource bank of Thematic units and Interconnected Learning Ideas.
- 29<sup>th</sup> November - Zoom Meeting with Esther Martin CCEA was organised and a nominated member of staff to liaise with MDHG was agreed.

## OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

- 14<sup>th</sup> March 2024 - "Amazing this Space" Members attended a showcase event at Hillsborough invited by Matt Gamble of Co-operation Ireland.
- 18<sup>th</sup> June - Meeting with Matt Gamble, Co-Operation Ireland, at Juniper Hill Caravan site re migration/Mountsandel/River Bann. The committee decided that we could not work with Co-operation Ireland as we are a lobbying group and did not have sufficient volunteers or time to undertake the activities that they need to fulfil their conditions.
- 5<sup>th</sup> September - Heritage Trust Network (HTN) Event in Derry/Londonderry. Group member attended. Outcome from that networking event led to engagement with Alan Clarke (HTN).
- 13<sup>th</sup> September – Ulster University (UU) Course Director of PGCE Primary, Beverly McCormick, met with MDHG member.
- 25<sup>th</sup> September - Patrick arranged a visit to Friel's Bar Swatragh to investigate how they set up their museum.

- October - Waterways Ireland grant application for £1,150 was awarded in March 2024. The grant was used for a number of outreach events to promote the importance of the River Bann and Mountsandel such as promotional event for one week arranged in Coleraine Library, 'Mountsandel River Bann Talks' and by the committee at the Sandel Centre regarding, 'An Evening Celebrating the River Bann' for residents and interested people. Application for a grant in 2025 will be submitted..
- 27<sup>th</sup> November - Museum Services, Sarah Calvin, was approached regarding the Blue Plaque to honour Andrew McLean May whose work contributed to Professor Peter Woodman's discoveries at Mountsandel.
- 6<sup>th</sup> September and 13<sup>th</sup> December - Meeting with Alan Clarke Heritage Trust Network for his thoughts on how to develop the project with heritage to the forefront.
- The Honourable the Irish Society CEO has agreed funding of £800 per event for "Schools-days" for the next two years, subject to approval by the board. Application will be submitted

## SUB-GROUPS

**Education:** Dorothy Black, Loretto Blackwood, Carol Martin

**Symposium/Round Table event:** Donna Copsey, Derek Sinnamon, Thomas McErlean, Dorothy Black, Carol Martin, Loretto Blackwood

**Lobbying:** Derek Sinnamon, Patrick Lennon, Liam Hickey

**Council Working Group:** Dorothy Black., Maura Hickey, Derek Sinnanon, Carol Martin , Donna Copsey, Loretto Blackwood.

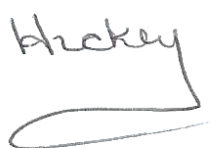
## Press Coverage

Library Event  
Sandel Centre  
Schools Day

BBC live interview, "Your Place and Mine" re Mesolithic site and its synergies with the river.

**Chair: Maura Hickey**

Maura T Hickey



**INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS REPORT TO THE CHARITY TRUSTEES OF  
MOUNTSANDEL DISCOVERY AND HERITAGE GROUP**

I report on the accounts of the Trust for the year ended **31 December 2024**, which are set out on the following pages.

**Respective responsibilities of charity trustees and examiner**

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 65 of the Charities Act
- follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland under section 65(9)(b) of the Charities Act
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

**Basis of independent examiner's report**

I have examined your charity accounts as required under section 65 of the Charities Act and my examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland under section 65(9)(b) of the Charities Act. The examination included a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also included consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as charity trustees concerning any such matters.

My role is to state whether any material matters have come to my attention giving me cause to believe:

1. That accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 63 of the Charities Act
2. That the accounts do not accord with those accounting records
3. That the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act
4. That there is further information needed for a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

**Independent examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination and have no concerns in respect of the matters (1) to (4) listed above and, in connection with following the Directions of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, I have found no matters that require drawing to your attention. Signed:

Signed: *JR Esler*  
Name: *JOHN ESLETT (Accountant)*  
Address: *39 Kylebeg Road Coleraine BT52 1VZ*  
Date: *19th October 2025*

**MOUNTSANDEL Discovery and Heritage Group**  
**INCOME & EXPENDITURE Account 1 January 2024 - 31 December 2024**

	2024	2023
Opening Balance as at 01 January	128.63	313.13
<b>INCOME</b>		
<b>Grants:</b>		
Waterways Ireland	1150.00	720.00 THTIS
Fundraising Donations	219.54	130.00
<b>Total Income Received</b>	<b>1369.54</b>	<b>850.00</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Events & Projects	376.44	1034.50
Bank Charges		
Petty Cash		
Fees		
Equipment		
Travel		
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>376.44</b>	<b>1034.50</b>
<b>Surplus of Income/Expenditure</b>	<b>993.10</b>	<b>-184.50</b>
Account Balance as at 31 December	<b>1121.73</b>	<b>128.63</b>

**MOUNTSANDEL Discovery and Heritage Group**

1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024

Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2024

	2024	2023
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Bank	1121.73	128.63
Debtors	0.00	0.00
	<b>1121.73</b>	<b>128.63</b>
<b>Creditors</b>	550.70	94.40
<b>Net Current Assets</b>	<b>571.03</b>	<b>34.23</b>

This income and expenditure report has been produced from the information supplied by the committee of **MOUNTSANDEL Discovery & Heritage Group**

Chair (MAURA HICKEY)

*Maura T Hickey*

Treasurer (LORETTO BLACKWOOD)

*Loretto Blackwood*  
*Maura T Hickey*