

## **NORTH BALLYMENA COMMUNITY CLUSTER**

### **TRUSTEES' REPORT**

The Trustees present their Annual Report with the Financial Statements of the Association for the period ended 31 March 2019. The trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice for Charities (SORP), accounting and reporting under UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in preparing the Financial Statements.

In setting our objectives and planning for the year the trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission NI's guidance on public benefit to ensure that the activities have helped to achieve the charity's purpose and provide a benefit to the beneficiaries. The following report reflects the work of North Ballymena Community Cluster during the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

### **Principal Activities**

The North Ballymena Community Cluster encourages and promotes working together of the residents, community groups, local authorities and statutory bodies within the North Ballymena area in order to:

- Advance community growth
- Develop a sustainable community infrastructure
- Develop and support community services
- Improve information flow and networking opportunities

As the name suggest the cluster is based within the North Ballymena area.

The member groups are:

Ballymena North Partnership  
Doury Road Development Group  
Dunclug Partnership

### **Public Benefits**

The benefits that flow from purpose:

- 1.1 Increased local knowledge, access to information and education and the opportunity to utilise a local community hub.
  - Maintain a community office in Ballymena North Centre where individuals and groups can meet, undertake one-to-one or group training or host meetings themselves.
  - Provide support from a community development facilitator on community development matters and signposting to other organisations as different areas of expertise are required.
  - Maintain a website on behalf of the cluster and its groups and either directly or indirectly support their Facebook pages. Regular weekly posting in relation to engagement, training, funding and networking opportunities and utilise local community notice boards.
- 1.2 Reduce social isolation, improved community infrastructures and improved community life for local people accessing projects and events.
  - Delivered a monthly seniors luncheon club, Forever Young, with an average attendance of 35-40 per month. In excess of 400 seniors attended. Activities included:  
The provision of a meal and in addition educational talks, reminiscence work, musical sessions, workshops to improve physical activity and trips out to both recreational and educational venues. These events bring together local seniors, providing opportunities for social interaction and help to reduce social isolation; they provide them with information on other services available to them and encourage them to improve both their physical and mental health. Our project has made a great difference to the older people in the North Ballymena area as they had a monthly event to look forward to and they really appreciated the chance to get out and meet up whilst enjoying a speaker/activity and a warm meal. Some attendees say they wouldn't be out in the month if it wasn't for the Forever Young session. The senior communities from the three estates in the area mix well together now and there is always laughter and fun at the events. Before the establishment of this monthly club, these older people had limited opportunities to socialise together



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- Provided support to both the local carers group and the retirement group in terms of project development and governance.
- Produced and delivered a Schools Fun Challenge Day engaging with four local primary schools in the North Ballymena area. One of the few events that brings standard and special needs schools together targeting P7 children this event provides an engagement opportunity for children who are approaching a move to secondary education and allows for them to build upon the interaction process that takes place between the schools as part of the shared education programme. It also brings a range of partners such as the Police Service for Northern Ireland, Council Good Relations, Active Community Coaches into direct contact with local children and encourages the development of positive relationships between young people and support agencies.
- Undertake regular evaluation of programmes internally and with outside organisations.
- Supported local partnership working to help the delivery of a youth led colour run.

1.3 include increased community participation, motivation and experience leading to a confident and sustainable community.

- Action planning sessions undertaken
- Encouraged and developed Volunteering in the North Ballymena area
- Continued to circulate the "Volunteering in North Ballymena" booklet, distributed to local shops, agencies, organisations, doctors' surgeries and individuals at events
- Ran engagement days out in the community with local group members to attract new volunteers
- Publicised volunteering opportunities
- Support 10 new volunteers into community activity with local groups
- Ran one-to-one training sessions for group members
- Supported the provision of travel expenses relating to voluntary work undertaken
- Provided training sessions around good governance, GDPR, Facebook administration, face painting for community events and child protection
- Provided best practice visits to other community groups to increase awareness and knowledge of work that could be undertaken
- Provided direct community development support to the groups that make up the cluster
- Supported estate-based community events and programmes
- Publicised SEUPB Peace IV programmes and encouraged engagement of local people in a range of programmes from seniors programmes to local area network programmes to an orchard based programme.

1.4 Increased confidence for local people in their elected community representatives and more local people benefiting from an effective community infrastructure.

- Invited elected representatives to all events to develop strong working links between groups and council
- Supported community development initiatives, worked to improve on good governance, development of policies

1.5 include an increase in partnership working, developing best practice and ensuring maximised participation and co-operation.

Produced and delivered a number of cluster engagement events throughout the year.

- Produced and delivered the OpportuniDAY event - with more than 30 groups networking and presenting their work to statutory agencies and members of the public.
- Worked in partnership with Department for Communities and Consumer Council around citizens' rights. These events provided an opportunity for local groups to engage with each other, to raise awareness of the work being undertaken with the wider public, to start the networking and partnership process to allow for reduction in duplication of services and maximisation of output locally.



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1.6 include an increased understanding of good governance and partnership working, effective community representation, influence on policy making and the building of relationships between the community and statutory bodies and local authorities.

- \* Provided facilitated support around best practice and good governance at each group meeting. Encouraged and supported local volunteers to join training programmes that enabled them to build their confidence and self-esteem to allow them to engage in higher level community and statutory meetings.

- \* Invited representatives from all statutory bodies, local authorities and outside agencies to attend locally based meetings to develop relationships of trust with local residents and support the growth of social capital for the area.

Whilst we are content that we are delivering against the key objectives of our organisation there is still much work to be done to encourage engagement, increase volunteering, to encourage collaboration and partnership working.

We will continue in our efforts to work with other groups to minimise duplication of community services and increase the impact that we can all have collectively in our area of work.

### **Policy on reserves**

The trustees feel that it is necessary to hold an amount in unrestricted funds to enable them to cover expenditure for a period of three months to enable the company to continue at its current level of activity.

### **Review of the Business**

The trustees were satisfied with the results for the year.

No taxation is payable as the association is a registered charity, charity number NI00203

### **Future Strategy**

The Association plans to continue the activities as outlined above.

Their aims are as follows:

1. To further develop a sustainable infrastructure in North Ballymena by developing the North Ballymena Community Cluster in order to strengthen the voluntary and community sector within the defined area; ensuring that Cluster needs are serviced through an operational office providing advice and support to local groups in the area including those of emerging groups.
2. To improve information, networking and funding advice to and among groups in the North Ballymena Area by improving information flow on relevant community based social, economic community and physical infrastructure issues; networking, sharing and collaborative opportunities for all the funding advice to the area in order to improve the quality of life for those who live within the North Ballymena Cluster area.
3. To improve community services by developing and supporting services in the Cluster area which address community needs, helping to build better community relations and support community cohesion.

### **Risk Assessment**

The Board has conducted a review of major risks to which the charity is exposed and systems have been established to minimise these risks. The findings were low risk.

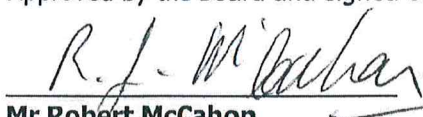
### **Trustees**

The trustees of the Board during the year were:

Mr David McGuckian	Chairman
Mr P J McAvoy	Vice Chairman
Mr Robert McCahon	Secretary
Mr Barry Gordon	Treasurer
Mr Patrick Kevin McCrudden	
Mrs Catherine Patricia McQuillan	

This report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice for Charities.

Approved by the Board and signed on its behalf by:



**Mr Robert McCahon**

**On behalf of North Ballymena Community Cluster  
Secretary**

16 December 2019

**Date**