

Chairperson's Report, Doury Road Development Group 2024

We are coming to another busy year of work at Doury Road Development Group and as I tried to write this report, I looked over a couple of old ones. In 2017 we were happy that we had finally got agreement for the demolition of a row of derelict houses in Sandown, we were looking forward to the promised new premises for us to work from and hoping that we could have the ability to run it and use it properly. We have been here now for a few years and we have made great use of the facilities. The offices are well used and the community allotments standing on the site of the demolished houses has even provided spare veg for residents and a local foodbank. As well as providing another space that has been used for community activities.

It is difficult sometimes to remember just how far we have come with the environmental improvements to the estate and what a benefit to community feeling that has brought. Now we look forward to our next big challenge, the completion of the long-awaited community centre. Made possible by years of lobbying by us and investment from the Council and the DfC "Building successful communities" regeneration programme. Hopefully, we will be able to organise larger events that more of the community are able to attend.

We are grateful for the funding and the faith shown in us by the organisations we work with, particularly the Department for Communities, Mid and East Antrim Council, NI Housing Executive, Tudor Trust and Triangle Housing association. They have helped us change so much. Even the little shop across the road isn't so little anymore as it has recently developed into a much larger Eurospar.

The list of events, programmes and initiatives grows longer every year so rather than pick out individual things we have attached a list of most of them. If any further information on any of these are required, please see Jan or Roni. On that point, I would like to thank George for his work during his time with us. He eventually decided to retire, and Roni has now been with us for a number of months and has fitted in really well. Jan and Roni do the bulk of the work in this

group, we could not do without them. This year in particular has seen an increase in pressure from one funder at least to justify every penny. I know it has at times been incredibly frustrating to deal with the level of bureaucracy and I thank Jan and Roni for sticking with it.

Thank you to Bill for his help and expertise with the relevant projects, the allotments, Fairy Good Wood and the planters around the estate.

Thank you to my fellow Committee members and to the growing number of volunteers that help with the various events. Every one of us, Committee and staff, have experienced varying degrees of physical and mental stress this last while. Whether it has been ill health, family or personal issues, none of us have had it easy. However, we all continue to strive to make the Doury Road a better place for its residents.

We are very grateful, as usual, to Gillian Forrest and all at Supporting Communities for all their guidance and help.

As always, we would welcome any other residents who wish to join the group as volunteers or to help in any way and look forward to working with any individual or organisation who are willing to assist us as we are only a few residents trying to affect these large organisations.

On behalf of all our committee, I can say that our aim is always to act on behalf of all of the community in order to work towards “Supporting, developing and improving the quality of life for all the residents of Doury Road.”

We look forward to being able to continue to do so over the next 12 months.

David McGuckin
Chairperson