

DONAGHADEE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION (NI103332)

TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE PERIOD

April 2024- March 2025

Donaghadee Community Development Association (DCDA) is committed to making Donaghadee a better place to live, work, and visit. During 2024-25, the Association continued to engage the local community through a diverse range of events and environmental projects while advocating for improvements to local infrastructure and facilities. The Trustees are pleased to present this report, prepared in accordance with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 and the guidance issued by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland.

1. The Organisation

1.1 The Donaghadee Community Development Association was recognised as a charity by HMRC in 2011 and by the Charities Commission for Northern Ireland in 2016.

1.2 The Association is managed by a committee of trustees elected annually from the membership, meeting monthly to oversee activities and financial management. The trustees met on 10 occasions during the year. Membership during the year was as follows:-

Denis Waterworth (Chair)	Alan Maxwell (<i>resigned 4th November 2024</i>)
Carol Day (Vice-Chair)	Liz McWatters
John Caldwell (Hon. Sec)	Kerry Melville
Adrian Kerr (Hon. Treasurer)	Murdo Murray
Kate Boyd	Seonaid Murray (<i>co-opted 3rd February 2025</i>)
Alison Bell	Alison Taylor
Alan Burnside	Harry Wilson

2. The Purpose of the Charity

2.1 The stated purpose of the Association is

"To promote the advancement of citizenship and community development for the public benefit in the Donaghadee area, in particular:-

1. To improve the area known as Donaghadee for the benefit of the inhabitants of the area
2. To encourage the goodwill and involvement of the wider community
3. To foster and promote community spirit and civic pride
4. To promote and encourage the development of Donaghadee"

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with their duty under Section 18 of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 to have due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland.

2.2 The public benefits that flow from this purpose are:-

- Donaghadee is a more attractive place in which to live;
- Improvements in infrastructure will encourage inward investment;
- The town attracts more visitors which helps the local economy and increases employment opportunity;
- An attractive townscape should increase awareness of the quality of the local environment and, in turn, promote a greater degree of responsibility in areas such as litter, dog fouling and re-cycling.
- A much higher degree of social cohesion;

- Residents take a keen interest in the development of their town and play a positive role in contributing to its development
- There will be higher levels of engagement in local clubs and organisations;
- Reduced anti-social behaviour

2.3 In essence, this means that the Association focuses on organising events and projects, working closely with elected representatives and with other local organisations including schools and statutory bodies to improve the town and engaging in activities which will bring the community closer together.

3. Main Activities and Achievements during 2024-25

3.1 In any normal year the Association focusses activity on five strands:-

- Community engagement
- Improving the local environment
- Community support and development
- Expanding the local economy
- Campaigning and representation

3.2 Community Engagement

- Summer Festival – Some 31 different organisations were involved in delivering events. There were 56 different events with several operating on more than one occasion meaning a total of 107 events over the period of the festival (85 days). The total cost was just under £27k. Private sponsorship was excellent with just under £3k raised and this helped mitigate the reduced level of grant from the Events and Festivals Fund. Gross attendance was 20,500.
- Christmas – There were some 14 different organisations involved in the delivery of the programme. Feedback has been very positive. The highlights continue to be Santa's arrival by lifeboat on Friday and the community carol service followed by the switching on of the Christmas tree lights.
- Well-being Showcase – DCDA worked with Ards Community Network to provide opportunities for 22 organisations to showcase their activities. A total of 120 had attended the event and feedback was very positive.
- St Patricks Day - A series of events including circus performers, a magician, poetry, music and dance were organised for 15th March. These had been well attended with traders reporting increased footfall.
- Creative Donaghadee – A new sub-committee was formed to take forward the co-ordination and organisation of arts and culture events.
- Website and Social Media - The Association uses its website (www.visitdonaghadee.com) to inform the local community and visitors of current issues.
- Newletter – in a new initiative a newsletter was produced and issued to every home in the area. This updated readers on activities, events and projects.

3.3 Local Environment

- In Bloom – The decoration of the town with floral displays continues to garner community support with some 150 people participating either on an individual basis or as a member of an organisation. Supported by volunteers, we arranged the planting and watering of hanging baskets, planting of containers including window boxes by Killard School, the installation of upcycled displays to promote recycling and also carried out wildflower

planting. These efforts were rewarded by winning the Town Category of Ulster on Bloom for the fourth year in succession.

- b) Crommelin Wood – Work continues on Cromellin Wood. Ulster Wildlife have been commissioned to produce a plan for the restoration of the wetland
- c) Marine Litter - Donaghadee's three schools – Ballyvester Primary School, Donaghadee Primary School, Killard School and Millisle Primary School –continued to work with the Association on a Marine Litter Project
- d) Hunts Park – With support from the International Tree Foundation and Ards & North Down Borough Council, DCDA arranged for the planting of a community orchard with hedging. The orchard was opened in April 2024 by Andrew Muir MLA, Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs,
- e) Sensory Garden/Walk – Work on the creation of a Sensory Garden or Walk was delayed but some initial work will be carried out in 2025.
- f) Community Garden – A group of enthusiasts continue to provide a community garden behind the houses in East Street.

3.5 Community support and development

- a) Information Reel – The Association is a conduit for information on a wide variety of subjects ranging from government and public notices through to details of local events. All notices are now placed on a rolling display which is published on our website and social media platform each Friday.
- b) Supporting groups – Community Group members have access to a range of equipment including gazebos, a pa system, presentation boards, laptops and a digital projector and screen. Information on grant opportunities is also circulated.

3.6 Expanding the local Economy

- a) Painting Shop Windows The Association subsidised a town centre shop window painting scheme featuring attractive Christmas themed painting on each window.
- b) Survey – Traders were asked for their views on a range of issues including ideas for regenerating the town centre and training needs.

3.7 Campaigning and representation–

- a) Town Advisory Group – The Association has two representatives on the Donaghadee Town Advisory Group which also includes councillors and representatives of statutory bodies.
- b) Car parking – a public meeting was held to discuss car parking
- c) Rising Sea Levels – DCDA worked closely with the Sailing Club to produce a report on the dangers posed by rising sea levels. This had prompted substantial media coverage including local television and radio
- d) RAISE – DCDA was an active participant in a group established by the Department of Education to develop a strategy to address educational underachievement in the town.
- e) Five Towns – DCDA meets regularly with counterparts in Bangor, Newtownards, Holywood and Comber.

Thanks

- 3.8 The Committee acknowledges with thanks the help and support received from a wide range of individuals and organisations throughout the year, in particular:-

- Elected representatives and officers of Ards and North Down Borough Council without whose support the Association would not be able to function at the current level;
- Local MLAs and our local MP who have all been supportive of our efforts; and,
- The many individuals, local organisations, churches, sporting clubs and traders who support our work through volunteering, sponsorship and support.

4. Financial Review

- 4.1 The Association has a single bank account with the Ulster Bank, Newtownards and the accounts are prepared and audited by Stanley Woods & Co. The financial year is April – March. The Association's finances are healthy. The Association has no paid employees.
- 4.2 The Trustees have reviewed the major risks to which the Association is exposed, including financial sustainability and volunteer capacity, and have implemented systems to mitigate these risks.
- 4.3 The Association acknowledges with thanks the many organisations and individuals who provided financial support during the year by way of grants, advertising, sponsorship, donations and membership fees.

5. Community Involvement and Public Benefit

- 5.1 The Association is anxious to involve the wider community and general public as much as possible in its activities, seeking to engage all sections of the community regardless of age, ability, religion, background or gender. The Association had 152 members in March 2025 with 2,600 following on social media.
- 5.2 In undertaking these and other activities during the year, the Trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's statutory guidance on public benefit. No harm arose to any individual or organisation as a result of the Association's activities.

6. Priorities for 2025-26

- 6.1 The Trustees have identified the following key priorities for 2025-26
- a) The Trustees will also explore opportunities to increase membership and volunteer engagement to support ongoing and new projects.
 - b) Subject to approval, organising festivals in the summer and at Christmas
 - c) To continue with work on the various environment projects;
 - d) To support the establishment of a programme of arts and creativity projects; and,
 - e) To press for improvements Donaghadee in meetings with Council officers and officials of other statutory bodies

7. Further Information

- 7.1 Further information on the work of the Association can be obtained from the Honorary Secretary, John Caldwell, c/o 21 New Road, Donaghadee, BT21 0DR

SIGNED



Denis Waterworth, Chairman

Date: 8th September 2025