

The Breakaways

01 September 2024

Charity Number: NIC103752

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

The purpose of The Breakaways seniors group is to reduce isolation and loneliness of older people by providing a range of social and leisure activities that will encourage older people to get out of their homes and enjoy the company of others.

Some older people have limited or no family and really depend on the Breakaways to support and assist them to maintain social contact. Others have families who have work commitments and for them to have a bit of reassurance that their mother or father is being cared for and supported can be very comforting for them.

Throughout the year we have been listening to our members to learn from them the type of activities that they are interested in and to see what has worked well this year. We put together a timetable of activities based on this information.

We have found that our seniors enjoy music and dance, hobby activities and outings to places of interest.

This year the Breakaways Committee have organised various outings for members to Newtownards, Ballymena, a mystery bus run around Co Down and a fun filled weekend of country music to Donegal.

Our weekly tea dance continues to gain attention within our community, and we continue to attract new members who are always welcomed.

We will continue to encourage other older people to join us at our weekly tea dance on a Tuesday in Whitehouse Workies. We will also reach out to other local groups to invite them to join us. We also support other local groups and attend their tea dances and activities.

This year we provided hot food during tea dances in the winter months which helped ensure older people were getting some warm food that day. We have also arranged themed tea dances for Halloween and Easter. At the request of family's we have organised tea dances in support of those bereaved.

The Breakaways have provided a Christmas dinner and Christmas outings which are annual events and always a huge highlight and enjoyed by all.

Our committee work extremely hard to secure external funding. This year we have attracted over £12,000 of grant aid from different funders, and this will cover some of the tea dances, outings, information sessions and some hobby classes. We will continue to fundraise to make up any short falls.

Due to increasing membership we sometimes require 2 buses for outings which incur an additional cost however, our aim is to keep any ask from members as low as possible as the cost of living is affecting everyone and we are aware of that.

We plan to continue with the charity work with Cancer Lifeline. This organisation has been greatly beneficial to some of our members and their families particularly those we have recently lost and the ones that have been newly diagnosed this year. We have also donated to NI Hospice and Marie Curie this year.

If there are any suggestions for other charities to donate to for next year, please put in writing to the secretary.

I would like to draw your attention to the change this year in voting for the Board Members which is normally done on an annual basis but to enable us to focus more on business we are suggesting that we appoint the Board for three years as opposed to one and I hope you will accept this change. It will enable Board Members to focus on fundraising, developing the Breakaways and expanding our timetable of activities.

The Breakaways continue to represent older people on the Rathcoole Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership Board and lobby for increased service delivery for older people and raise any concerns that older people bring to us through this platform. We will continue to feed any information from these meetings to our members.

On behalf of myself and the Breakaways Committee, I wish to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your continued support as always.

Many thanks

Joyce Campbell