

GADDA Annual Report 2023

Overview:

The year 2023 was filled with a variety of engaging and creative community-led activities for all age groups. These programs were designed to promote social inclusion, creativity, and skill-building, fostered by several local groups and facilitators who contributed their time and expertise to strengthen community ties.

Weekly Community Groups

Tuber Tuesday Men's Group

Recommenced in January 2023, meeting weekly from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm. The group, supported by social workers, maintained the community garden and took on woodworking projects to benefit the community. Notable projects included:

- Building four potting tables for Kathleen Thompson Fold.
- Designing and constructing two sensory play tables for Sandleford Special Needs School.
- Partnering with Rasharkin Community Group to build raised allotment beds with funding from The Big Lottery Fund.

Wednesday Women Group

Continued to meet weekly from 10:30 am to 12:30 pm, with approximately 20 women attending each session. Activities throughout the year included:

- Mental health awareness sessions covering breast screening, bowel screening, postpartum psychosis, and Alzheimer's.
- Arts and crafts workshops.
- Designing posters for the Forest Community noticeboard.
- Organizing and participating in the Garvagh Forest Easter Event.

Monday Morning Art Class

Commenced in January 2023 for 12-week terms, running through to December 2023. Around 10 participants attended each term under the guidance of artist Louie Winward.

Monday Singers (Community Choir)

Held weekly meetings starting January 9, 2023, with performances at key community events, including:

- April Coffee Morning for Garvagh Combat Cancer fundraising.
- Garvagh Vintage Club Charity cheque presentation evening.
- Garvagh Village Christmas Celebration.

Garvagh Forest Strollers

Met every Thursday at 10:00 am, bringing together 10-15 community members for weekly strolls, led by Sharman Wilson and William Boyd

Workshops and Special Events

1. Children's Workshops

Valentine's Day Bear Workshop (February 14, 2023): Approximately 30 children created Valentine bears with Jumping Clay Magherafelt.

St. Patrick's Day Leprechaun Workshop (March 11, 2023): 35 children attended.

Easter Bunny Workshop (April 2023): Over 30 children made Easter bunnies from Jumping Clay.

World Art Day Workshop (April 15, 2023): 20 children celebrated with squishy floral paintings under artist Louie Winward's guidance.

2. Summer Schemes

GADDA organized several summer schemes for children aged 5+, featuring:

A three-day Jumping Clay workshop, a painting workshop, and a Build-a-Bear workshop, each with 25-30 children attending.

3. Music Workshops by Claudia Keller

Held in July 23 and August 23 and included:

Music sessions for toddlers, children aged 5-7, and children aged 8+, where participants explored music games, percussion, and creative sound stories.

4. Crafty Teddies Bear-Making Workshop

Held in August, October, and December 2023, this oversubscribed workshop allowed children to make their own bears, complete with a wish star and birth certificate.

5. Paint-a-Plate Workshop (August 2023)

Artist Louie Winward led a session where 20 children designed and painted their plates, which were then fired and made ready for collection.

6. End of Summer Live Music Event (August 2023)

In collaboration with Live Music Now and traditional musicians from Réalta, this BYOB evening celebrated local culture with ballads, reels, and songs set to poetry by Anne McMaster.

7. Halloween and Christmas Celebrations

Halloween Spooktacular Workshop (October 2023): 40 children participated in a festive Jumping Clay workshop.

Christmas Workshops: High demand led to two Jumping Clay workshops in December, in addition to carol singing and Christmas dinners for the local senior citizens group.

Summary

2023 saw a broad range of activities that brought together community members of all ages to learn, socialize, and celebrate. Through collaborative projects, artistic exploration, and holiday events, the programs nurtured a sense of belonging and creativity in Garvagh. Plans are underway to continue and expand these initiatives in the coming year, aiming to further enrich community life.