

## **Garvagh and District Development Association Secretary's Report – 2024**

### **Classes and Workshops**

#### **Tuber Tuesday Men's Group**

The Tuber Tuesday Men's Group resumed in January 2024 and has met weekly on Tuesday mornings from 10:00am to 12:00pm. Supported by social workers, the group focuses on maintaining the community garden and undertaking woodworking projects for the benefit of the local area.

Key projects completed in 2024 included:

- Constructing a community table for Rasharkin.
- Creating wooden Christmas trees for the Garvagh Christmas Lights Switch-On event.

The group is also collaborating with Rasharkin Community Group on a project to build surrounds for raised allotment beds. This initiative, funded by The Big Lottery Fund, awaits final approval from departments within Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council before implementation can begin.

#### **Wednesday Women's Group**

Meeting every Wednesday from 10:30am to 12:30pm, the Wednesday Women's Group welcomed approximately 20 participants each week throughout 2024. The programme featured:

- Workshops on mental health and deaf awareness.
- Ballet and arts and crafts sessions.
- Organisation and participation in key community events including the Garvagh Forest Easter Event and Christmas Lights Switch-On.
- A heritage quilting project, *A Legacy*, in collaboration with Helen Perry of Strombolito, funded by the Heritage Fund UK and facilitated by Enterprise Causeway. Participants created quilt pieces reflecting personal stories.

These activities were supported through seed funding.

#### **Monday Art Class**

The Monday Art Class ran throughout 2024 in 12-week terms. Led by artist Louie Winward, the class consistently welcomed approximately 15 participants each term.

#### **The Monday Singers**

The Monday Singers, Garvagh's community choir, met weekly at 7:45pm in the Garvagh Community Building. Under the direction of Ciaran O'Driscoll, the choir performed at several community events in 2024 including:

- A coffee morning for Garvagh Combat Cancer

- Garvagh Vintage Club's charity cheque presentation
- The Garvagh Christmas Celebration

Around 18 members regularly attended, contributing £5 weekly to support venue hire and facilitator costs.

### **Garvagh Forest Strollers**

This walking group met every Thursday at 10:00am throughout 2024, attracting 10 to 15 participants each week. The group, led by Sharman Wilson, promotes health and social connection through guided forest walks.

### **Children's Activities**

A wide variety of workshops and seasonal events were organised for children throughout 2024:

- **St. Patrick's Day:** 30 children attended a Jumping Clay Leprechaun workshop.
- **Easter:**
  - Over 30 children created Jumping Clay Easter Bunnies.
  - A Build-a-Bear workshop by Crafty Teddies allowed children to make their own Easter Bunny bears.
- **Summer:** GADDA delivered popular summer schemes featuring:
  - A 3-day Jumping Clay workshop
  - A painting workshop
  - Multiple Build-a-Bear sessions (25–30 children each)
  - A seaside-themed art workshop with Louie Winward, attended by 20 children
- **Halloween:** A Spooktacular Jumping Clay workshop was held for 40 children.
- **Christmas:** Due to high demand, two Jumping Clay workshops and a Build-a-Bear session were offered. A festive Christmas card-making workshop also took place.

In May 2024, local poet Anne McMaster launched *Martha and the Vargo* to raise funds in support of GADDA's work.

### **10th Annual Garvagh Craft Fair**

The 10th Annual Garvagh Craft Fair, held in November 2024, was a major success. Highlights included:

- Over 20 local craft stalls
- Live music by Hampsey Harp School
- An art exhibition by the Monday Art Class
- *A Year in the Life of Garvagh Forest* – a photography exhibit by the Garvagh Forest Strollers
- A children's Jumping Clay workshop
- Refreshments with proceeds donated to Action on Postpartum Psychosis

### **Hampsey Harp School**

2024 was another strong year for Hampsey Harp School, which currently supports 20 pupils and employs four tutors: Lauren O'Neill, Kerri Mullan, Mairead Comer, and Sinead Close. Pupils receive 10 half-hour lessons per term.

Key highlights in 2024 included:

- Participation in the Coleraine Music Festival, where pupils achieved 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place awards
- Two students sat the London College of Music exams in Irish Traditional Music, achieving merit and distinction
- Pupils competed in the County Derry Fleadh
- Six pupils performed as part of the Derry Harp Ensemble at various events throughout the year

Special appearances by Hampsey Harp School included:

- Harp Day 2024 at The Pantry Kitchen
- The 10th Annual Craft Fair
- The Garvagh Christmas Lights Switch-On