

CHAIRPERSON & SECRETARY'S 2023 REPORTS TO THE TRUSTEES

In the past year we met formally as a group 9 times plus the ad hoc meetings connected to consultations, ongoing issues and planning meetings connected to the King's Coronation Event

- December - we organised the Christmas Festival with the turning on of the Christmas Lights, followed by Christmas Bazaar in the Village Hall each child received a gift from Santa. We also organised a Children's Christmas Party and supported the Seniors Christmas Dinner
All the activities were very well attended and positive feedback from the community received via social media.
- January- Made application to the following funding bodies:
Ards & North Down Borough Council- Community Grants to cover our running costs

Ards & North Down In Bloom Funding – to help purchase plants etc for the community planting scheme

Ards & North Down Borough Council -King's Coronation event
- February- We formed a King's Coronation Event working group with the other organisations and businesses villages within the village to plan, organise and deliver the event in May. Some members completed OCN level 1 Ulster Scots course
- March- Regular meetings with the working group to ensure the smooth running of the King's Coronation Event. Ards & North Down Borough Mayor invited us over to the Town Hall in Bangor and presented BCAG with a Making a Difference in Your Community Award
- April – May Regular planning meetings to ensure the smooth running of the King's Coronation Event. Coordinated and managed the tombola and refreshments at the event on Sunday 7th May.
- June – Through the dedication and continued voluntary maintenance of our community planting scheme we were highly commended in the Ards & North Borough Council community planting scheme.
- August – Committee members involved in the planning and coordinating Ards Peninsula Village Kite Festival in Ballywalter with over 9000 attendees at the festival
- September – Following the summer break we resumed monthly meetings. Application was made to NIHE Rural Community Spirit Cleaner & Greener Community Awards 2023

- October -Through BCAG securing funding from Public Health Agency MDT Seeding Funding the gardening club installed a polytunnel, garden shed and gardening equipment which will allow projects to take place with the school children and space for the gardening club to propagate plants for the village planting scheme. Planning meetings with the school to implement an Arts & Crafts project in partnership with Ards Peninsula Villages Partnership to produce a mosaic of the village

Outside Groups we are represented on:

NIHE Housing Community Network

Ards Peninsula Coastal Erosion Group

Ards Peninsula Villages Partnership

Ards & North Down PCSP

At this point I would like to thank the serving committee who give up their free time on a voluntary basis to improve community spirit, enhance the village through our community planting scheme and help and support to the Seniors Club and our social activities within the village. Our big achievement this year was securing funding from Public Health Agency MDT Seeding to install a Polytunnel and garden shed at the Primary School as part of the Intergenerational Gardening Project, many thanks to Mandy for managing the project

BALLYWALTER SENIORS & OVER 50'S GARDENING CLUB

Activities in 2023 included the following:

- Fortnightly seniors' sessions with afternoon tea provided.
- Robbie Burns Celebrations
- Cross Community St Patrick's Day Celebrations
- 6 week Your Life Your Story Course with participants stories printed.
- 2 x10-week Water Colour Course (beginner & Intermediate)
- Summer social Outing
- Christmas Dinner
- Christmas shopping outing
- Arts & Crafts Sessions
- Aromatherapy Sessions
- International Women's Day

Over 50's Gardening Club:

Activities in 2023 included the following:

- Fortnightly sessions with the gardening tutor
- Village Spring/ Summer and Winter planters maintained on a regular basis
- Autumn Wreath
- Christmas Wreath
- Invited to launch the Ards & North Down Borough Council's In Bloom Competition with the Mayor
- Highly commended in the NIHE Cleaner Greener Award and presented with a bird feeder station