

Purposes and objectives of Ballymacconnelly Renewal Group

The purpose of Ballymacconnelly Renewal Group is to advance community development and encourage civic pride and active citizenship by providing a range of services and programmes which have been highlighted through community consultations. The benefits include increased development, skills, and a better quality of life and improved mental health and wellbeing for the beneficiaries; enhanced independence, reduction of rural isolation and provision of a safer and inclusive community.

Objectives, Activities and Performances 2022/23

In setting our objectives and planning our activities for the year the Committee have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit to ensure that the activities have helped to achieve the Charity's purposes and provide a benefit to the beneficiaries. During 2022/23 we were still in recovery mode from the Covid pandemic. Covid was still very much around and although vaccination programmes were now well established there was still plenty of fear in the community especially amongst the elderly and other vulnerable groups. This highlighted more than ever the importance of organisations like our own and the valuable part they play in their communities offering support from loneliness and an escape from isolation and mental health issues.

In our aim to fulfill our objectives and ease the food poverty and financial burden of our community at that time we secured grant funding from The Arn Foundation to deliver a Winter Warmer's Programme. The funding allowed us to provide a warm space on 5 different days for local particularly vulnerable individuals; they were provided with a warm cooked, 2 course meal on each occasion and another light meal. Each individual was also presented with a warm pack containing a blanket, thermal underwear, hats, fleece jackets, and socks. Being able to meet together with people in the same situation was in itself a comfort and a boost to their mental wellbeing.

During the year we had various speakers at community meetings including PCSP addressing personal security and local policing and giving residents the opportunity to voice/raise any concerns they had. COAST advised on local support services available to residents ie. Handyman, Keysafes, Home Security, Good Morning phone service, nuisance call blocker etc. Other meetings included Beetle Drives, Bingo, Treasure Hunt, a Christmas Party with a guest of honour dressed in red, a day on the Allotments and annual Summer Outing.

It was an exceptional year for BRG as we had been announced as winners of QAVS in the Queen's Platinum Jubilee birthday honours. This was an exceptional achievement for our volunteers as we were 1 of only 6 groups in NI to receive the award in the announcements. The presentation took place in January 2023 at a special ceremony attended by The Lord Lieutenant of Co Antrim and a QAVS Representative amongst others.

During 2023 we also celebrated the Coronation with a number of events including a Treasure Hunt, a Royal Exhibition, a Coronation Tea Party, a Sunday Service and a trip to Hillsborough Castle.

Another major achievement during the year was securing grant funding from Energia Long Mountain Fund to create a Children's Play Area at the Allotments. This work was well underway by financial year end with a formal opening scheduled to take place in October 2023 and representatives from Energia Long Mountain Fund due to attend.

Being solely dependent on volunteers we are delighted with what was achieved for our small rural community during the year. A number of grants were secured and programmes delivered successfully to the benefit of the local community. We aim to strive to continue in any way that we can to this end.

Grant Funding was secured from the following:

Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council

NACN

PCSP

COAST

The Arn Foundation/The Community Foundation

Energia Long Mountain Fund/The Community Foundation

T L Dallas (Sponsorship for QAVS Event)

Without this funding we would be able to achieve a mere fraction of what we are currently enabled to do so it is therefore essential to us and is very much appreciated.

The Chairman & Committee

Ballymacconelly Renewal Group