

CHARITY COMMISSION REPORT 2024/25

The purpose of Ballymaconnelly 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 2024/25

In setting our objectives and planning our activities for the year the Committee, once again, considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit to ensure that the activities have helped to achieve the Charity's purpose and provide benefit to the beneficiaries. Experiences during the pandemic made us more aware than ever of 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; all grant funding received is put to good use with this in mind.

In May we held a fund-raising event which took the form of a table quiz. This event also served to celebrate the 80th Anniversary of VE Day and commemorate a late member of our own community who served in WWII; the family of late Airman Samuel McGinnis presented a framed photograph of him in uniform which now hangs in the Meeting Room in the Hall. The event raised £800 which was presented in October, together with an additional donation, to BLESMA.

During 2024/25 we were fortunate to receive grant funding for several programmes from various bodies. Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council's annual support grant enables us to pay for heating, lighting, insurance, utilities and other miscellaneous items. We made a grant application to The Lottery to fund a wider programme of activities for our Seniors Group over a 2 year period; we were delighted when we were awarded £20,000 to spend over a 2-year period. This funding enabled us to run such activities as a Mosaic Craft class, Beetle Drive, Armchair Exercises to 50's and 60's music, Ulster Scots verse, tales, music and songs, Papercraft Class as well as funding the lunches at our meetings. The Lottery grant also funded a Spring Outing, by coach, in March 2025 to Titanic Belfast with evening meal on the way home at Millside, Cloughmills. A Summer Outing, by coach, was also enjoyed in June to Florence Court in Co. Fermanagh followed by shopping in Enniskillen; on the journey there we enjoyed breakfast at Sloan's Café, Loughgall and a tour of the onsite Museum of Orange Heritage. A grant from COAST helped fund our Christmas lunch. With grant funding of £3000 from Energia Long Mountain Community Fund we were able to redecorate the main Hall, kitchen, meeting room, toilet facilities and back hall; this grant also funded the insulation, wiring and lighting to the outside storage facility. The final grant award we received this year was from RES and was the first time we had received grant funding from them. The sum awarded is to be used to finance 6 bi-monthly breakfasts from October 2025 until August 2026 and also to fund 3 community evening events during Winter 2025 and Spring 2026.

We are delighted to have added to our faithful band of volunteers during the year; this is most encouraging and gives a boost to those who have been volunteering for many years. It reassures us that with the invaluable support of our funders we can continue to provide this facility and service to our small rural community in the years ahead. Our ongoing aim is to strive to continue in any way that we can to benefit the local community and promote improved mental health and physical wellbeing.

Grant Funding during this financial year was secured from the following:

Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council

COAST

Energia Long Mountain Fund/The Community Foundation

RES

The Lottery Fund

This funding was vital in enabling us as an organization to continue delivering a valuable service and programme of events to the local community as well as making it possible for us to maintain and improve our community meeting space.

The Chairman & Committee

Ballymacconnelly Renewal Group