

BALLYNAHINCH
COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE

CHARITY NO: NIC 107457

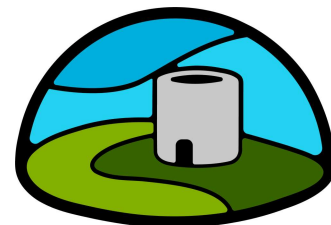
Chairperson's report 2024-2025

In July the new Nahinch Notes music project was awarded £10,000 from Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's art fund to launch a new music project in the town. This resulted in:

- 6 concerts on a monthly basis from Sept – March.
- Over 670 attendees
- Successful launch of Nahinch Jam, space for emerging local musicians to come together and build confidence.
- Project supported by Ballynahinch Camera Club, as well as Oh Yeah Centre in Belfast and Cinemagic.

October saw the annual Halloween celebrations, supported by the Council. Hundreds of people came together in the Square to enjoy a fancy dress extravaganza, with circus and fire artists, a funfair ride, music, arts and crafts and generous hospitality laid on by Harry's Place.

December brought the Christmas Lights Switch-On event, which got pushed back a week due to the unwelcome arrival of Storm Darragh. Despite the unforeseen circumstances, the Collective volunteers rose to the challenge of the new date, and we had a fabulous night in the Square, with songs from the choirs of Ballynahinch and St Patrick's primary schools (Drumlins PS and Hinch Harmony had been planned for the original date, but couldn't make it on the rescheduled night), followed by a barn-storming performance from Tartan Riot as part of the Nahinch Notes series. This event marked the beginning of a new chapter of the relationship between the Collective and the town, for faced with a shortfall in the budget for the traditional Christmas selection boxes handed out in the Grotto, the Collective approached the business community in the town to help with the cost of this treat, and we were overwhelmed by the response. Within a week we raised over £1,000, allowing us to give sweets to all the children at the event, as well as the singers in the school choirs. As we even had some left over they went to the Ballynahinch Food Bank the following week.



BALLYNAHINCH
COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE

CHARITY NO: NIC 107457

The New Year saw the last two Nahinch Notes concerts, and then a period of regrouping and reflection for the Collective. In October five of the former committee members stepped away from the Collective. This came as a surprise to us and left us with a big challenge on our hands to deliver the Halloween event. But we pressed on and were fortunate to be able to co-opt two brilliant new committee members, Mairead Steward who came to the collective via the Nahinch Notes project, and Patricia Barrera, who has taken up the position of secretary.

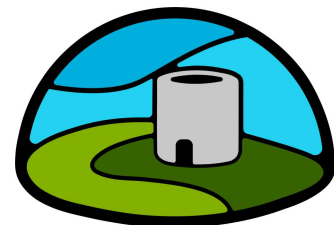
In March we issued an invitation to other local groups, institutions and bodies to join us for an evening of discussion as to the best way to grow the Collective. Once again we were floored by the town's generosity, with multiple representatives joining us for a very productive night of sharing ideas, creativity and inspiration. On the back of this meeting, we decided to spend some time redefining our sense of who and what we are as a Collective, and why we exist. On top of that, the committee decided that it was time to ring the changes with the visual identity of the group, so we now have not only a new Mission Statement, but also a new logo.

New volunteers have continued to cross our paths, something which fills me with pride, and in July just past the Collective organised the first litter pick for a while which had a stupendous turn out of around 20 people.

At the beginning of 2025 we were also delighted to learn we had been awarded over £1,200 in funding from the Housing Executive to go towards the purchase of a new laptop and equipment to allow us to modernise our administrative capabilities.

At present, we are awaiting news of various funding applications, from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland for funds to bring live music into the two annual events. We have also applied to Rural Action, Tesco and B&Q, and in the coming months we plan to organise our fundraising activities on a more formal and structured basis.

Thanks are due to a huge amount of people who have given a lot of their time and enthusiasm to help us get through this past year and come out better placed to grow as a group and continue to bring the community together. In no particular order, Ballynahinch Camera Club, Ballynahinch Men's Shed, all the Primary Schools, Hinch Harmony Choir, Mark Murnin, all of the staff from the Housing Executive and especially Gerard, Volunteer Now, everyone from Newry Mourne and Down District Council who has patiently answered my questions about processes and procedures,



BALLYNAHINCH
COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE

CHARITY NO: NIC 107457

the members of the DEA forum, the CDRCN, as well as the local representatives who have supported and encouraged us. But there is one organisation without whose support I think it is fair to say we would not have survived the year, without the endless patience, good humour and bottomless coffees. I refer of course to Gareth, David and all the Harry's Mates who have been absolute stalwarts and who have made huge efforts to make sure we could deliver the events that the town was expecting.

Gareth Gordon

Chair, Ballynahinch Community Collective

23/01/2026