

Bannside Stitchers

Chairperson's Report November 2025

We have had another busy and successful year since our last AGM with lots of stitching activity and outings.

We continue to operate with four classes weekly to accommodate forty-eight members. Participant numbers are restricted to twelve per class to afford everyone adequate space and tutor time. Each class is currently full, and some have waiting lists.

In consultation with members and tutors, it has been agreed to run with thirty-six classes this year 25/26. This afforded a later start in September, a longer break at Christmas and an earlier finish in June.

We have been successful in our application for Lottery funding once more which has enabled us to keep our class costs as low as possible. With the costs of everything else going up, it is a very welcome subsidy.

We held a Winter workshop at the end of November hosted by Diane from 'Sewing NI'. Participants made either a Christmas stocking, an apron or a tote bag. All materials were supplied, and everyone went home with a finished article, or two, in some cases! There were supportive responses from all who attended.

Our Christmas Dinner, complete with Secret Santa, was held in The Wild Duck and was enjoyed by all. It was felt that having it in the small function room on this occasion added to the success.

Early in the new year we had all our electrical equipment (machines, Irons and extension cables) PAT tested by an electrician, to reassure us of continuing safe use.

This year, to adhere to data protection guidelines, we have purchased a security box to store members' personal data. Members were informed that this was happening as we collected personal details. This will be stored in a locked cupboard and only tutors and appointed trustees will have access to this information.

The introduction of a 'Suggestion box' in class sessions has proved to be a useful means of relaying ideas back to the Committee. All suggestions are welcome and are considered at Committee meetings. One suggestion was, that in addition to the separate class WhatsApp groups, a WhatsApp group to include all members be set up. Lynette, our communications secretary, has obliged, and it is proving to be well used.

Another suggestion was to run a wet-felting workshop, and we hope to organise one in the new year.

Again, a suggestion was made to have a photocopier/printer available in class time. Thanks to Committee member Libby (Padgett) we now have had one donated to us. Thank you very much again, Libby.

Lynette is as busy as ever getting information out to everyone, and most members do make use of WhatsApp. The newsletter attached to each new session timetable is also an additional means to get general information out to you all.

Our summer outing in May was a very enjoyable day. We travelled by coach to The Everglades Hotel for the North- West Quilt Fayre. Facilities at the hotel were excellent, and we enjoyed a lovely meal, and excellent service in The Belfray Hotel on the way home.

Our summer workshop had to be cancelled due to the tutor's unexpected family commitments, so we set about booking an autumn workshop with Nancy Moreland from 'Nifty Needles' This was an 'Inktense Colouring' workshop on a Christmas theme which took place last Saturday 1st November.

To round off our Stitching year we gathered once again in Fullans 'Library' for a coffee morning. It's an opportunity to meet members from other classes, and to express our thanks to our dedicated tutors, Patsy (Gribbin), Caitriona (Mackle), and Rosemarie. We are so lucky to have such talented and knowledgeable tutors.

We were again represented at 'The Big Splash' in July. As there wasn't going to be space for a big display, we were going to have to find a way to let visitors know what The Stitchers are about. Our new WhatsApp group was

put to good use, and members soon supplied an abundance of pictures of their year's work. It's a very impressive record. Lynette has managed to collate these pictures, and they will be on display again at our Fayre in The Bank on Saturday 8th November. Thanks to Libby, Lynette and Annie for manning the information table at The Splash.

Our craft Fayre will take place on Saturday 8th November in 'The Bank'. This will be an opportunity to showcase all the great variety of craftiness we have in our group. Members will be able to hire a table and sell items privately. It will also be an opportunity to host representatives from the other lottery funded groups in the village.

Another highlight of the year still to come is The Knitting and Stitching Show on the 15th November at the Eikon Exhibition Centre, Lisburn. We will be bringing a coach load of fabric and wool collectors and craft lovers of all kinds. An evening meal in the Adair Arms, Ballymena will round off the day.

We gratefully continue to be supported by PEG (Portglenone Enterprise Group) and place great value in the help we receive from both Clares and Conor. Thankyou to Clare for chairing our AGM today.

We are grateful too to Karen Duffin Accountant, who audits our accounts and doesn't charge a fee.

Before our Chair declares all situations vacant, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank our hardworking committee members for their efforts this past year. Apart from attending many meetings, it's impossible to quantify how much work goes into keeping things running as smoothly as they do. If you've ever been on the committee, you'll know how much goes on behind the scenes. So, a big thank you, in alphabetical order, to Annie, Carmel, Helen, Libby, Lynette, Nathana and Philma