

**DONAGHCLONEY COMMUNITY GARDEN - ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024
CHARITY NUMBER -108152**

The Donaghcloney Community Garden was started in May 2017 at the Royal British Legion with the help of The Conservation Volunteers. Since the beginning the group has grown in numbers, on average 30 per week, and attracts self-employed, pensioners, people with various mental health problems, strokes and the unemployed. The garden meets twice weekly, Monday and Friday mornings, 10.30 - 13.00, not only to promote horticultural aspects but provides educational information by various projects facilitated by The Conservation Volunteers/other organisations. The volunteer ages range from 16 - 80+, including those with disabilities, retired and those still working. The aim of the garden is to provide the opportunity to learn new skills, work with partners to promote health/wellbeing, physical activities and healthy eating programmes. The Community Garden received charity status on 9 December 2019 No 108152.

The garden provides an opportunity for all to keep active and related to their abilities. It has encouraged TCV's Green Gym model approach ensuring there are strong links made between the enhanced green space, health and well-being. We have also made connect with the Donaghcloney Surgery and they are promoting wellness in participating in the garden.

Great use was made of the polytunnel during the year to grow plants from seed – vegetables and flowers. The vegetables were used by the Community Lunch Group which met monthly at the RBL. The flowers were used to supplement the plants from the ABC Small Floral Grant Scheme. Sweetpea was used to decorate the Lunch Group tables and these were then given to members in the community.

Recycling of materials, garden kneeler/seats have been made for individual needs, window boxes, an automatic watering system and bug hotels. DGC has made huge efforts to ensure everyone feels welcome, has a role and included in the gardening project, an extremely positive approach has seen the group grow from strength to strength in numbers and skill base.

The Community Garden and its volunteers have gained the confidence/respect of the wider community. This is evidenced by the work now undertaken in the village re planters, raised beds, hanging baskets, litter picks and working in collaboration with TCV to provide community window boxes, all increasing community ownership. The feedback received from the wider community for their regeneration of the village Bell Garden has been amazing, with young families and older people alike describing it as a life-line - being able to access safe green space during lockdown.

DCG continues to work closely with the Donaghcloney Royal British Legion, ABC re revenue costs, The Conservation Volunteers, Live Here Love Here, TADA Rural Support Network, DAERA, Co- Operation Ireland, various funders, local Primary School, other garden groups willingly sharing its advice/experiences and welcomes visitors who go away with some of the vegetables, fruits, etc.

Donaghcloney is a growing village with many newcomers, people who are in early retirement and seeking new outlets for their spare time. The garden is meeting this need as well as reducing social isolation. It is a key player in creating and bonding new friendships within and around the area. We are now being asked by youth groups to identify ways the young can learn and participate within the community garden. The Brownies was an example of this. They planted a tree in The Bell Garden and tidied the area. The Chairperson received a phone call enquiring if the garden would contact a gentleman from Thailand who had returned to Northern Ireland. He was very interested in working in the community and has been very beneficial with his skills in horticulture.

Facebook is used to promote the garden and allow those who cannot attend in person to see what is going on.

Walter Ferris, Chair

Public Benefit and Purpose

In setting our objectives and planning our activities for the year the trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland'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. All our activities are related to one or more of the following charitable objectives:

The advancement of citizenship or community development.

The trustees who served during the year 2023 - 2024 are listed below

Mr Walter Ferris
Mrs Shirely Coggan
Mrs Helen Wilson
Mrs Eleanor Ferris

There were no funds by held by our charity that was in any way deficit at the end of our financial year and we had a closing balance of £183.20

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'W Ferris', written in a cursive style.