



NEWRY STREET UNITE
ANNUAL REPORT Jan 2024 – March 2025
FOR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING April 2025

As Chairperson of the 2024-2025 Management Committee, I am delighted to bring you this report of what we have delivered and achieved from January 2024 to March 2025. It has been another busy year for us and we are extremely proud of the work of Newry Street Unite, our staff, our volunteers, our management committee, and the community.

Children's Activities

Parent & Tots

Parent & Tots continues to have around 15 families regularly attending each week. Our programme offers a variety of activities to facilitate play opportunities for the children and peer support for the parents/guardians.

We have also been running Mourne Multiples in partnership with the Southern Health and Social Care Trust. This is a monthly support group for parents of twins and triplets of preschool age which has been supported by a social work assistant from the Kilkeel Multidisciplinary Team.

After-School Clubs

We have continued to provide After School Clubs on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons.

Tuesdays has continued to be our more traditional After School Club where the children are provided with various activities during the 2-hour session including lego, outdoor play, crafts, cooking etc. Activities provided were often inspired by feedback from the children of what they would like to do as well as providing them with new activities and experiences.

Mondays and Wednesdays have been blocks of different activities which have included cooking, mindfulness, lego club, movie club, Spring Activities, arts and crafts.

From January to June 2024 we ran an afterschool club for those in High School on Thursday afternoon which gave a space for doing homework, catching up with friends and to get some hot food. This was ran in conjunction with then Multidisciplinary Social Work team based in Kilkeel Medical Practice.

Summer Scheme 2024

Our Summer Scheme took place during the 1st week in July and the first two weeks in August, with 32 children attending each day across two sessions. The morning sessions were aimed at P1-3 where we provided various activities throughout the session and trips to Cranfield Alpacas, Ulster Museum, Mourne Grange and The Maritime Museum. We also worked with Mourne Grange, Mourne Honey and Jumping Clay to provide further activities at the centre.

In the afternoons, we organised 3 different camps aimed at P4-P7 and worked with various facilitators to provide art, multisport and cook & craft camps.



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Thursday Youth Groups

Our Thursday evening Youth groups have been engaging in various activities over the term including art, sports, gaming, Trash Fashion, Youth Gym and creative sessions with Art Academy NI. They have also been on trips throughout the year such as We Are Vertigo, YMCA, Mourne Park, Dundonald Ice Bowl and Infinity Trampoline Park.

From September to December 2024 we completed an Arts and Nature programme for Year 8 and 9s in collaboration with JIMS Youth Centre. Participants took part in various team building activities such as wellbeing sessions and art workshops. Some of our youth also participated in the Wheelworks cross community arts project partnered with Patrician Youth Centre in Downpatrick.

In response to concerns from parents, from January to March 2025 we ran an Online Safety programme for 12-15 years through the Department of Justice Asset Recovery Community Scheme. This involved talks from online safety expert Wayne Denner, social media awareness workshops, good relations sessions and a trip to Airtastic and Rushmere Shopping Centre.

Adult Activities & Services

Walking Group

Jennifer continued her walking group throughout 2024 and 2025 in partnership with Mourne Matters. This group is aimed at those with low mobility or a long-term health condition however is open for everyone to join.

Drop In

Drop In usually has around 18-25 regulars attending and participants provide a vital sounding board for developments in the organisation. This year the Drop In Group has taken part in various activities such as cooking, craft, gardening, health and wellbeing workshops Food Essentials course and cultural awareness workshops.

It has been fantastic to see Drop In continue to expand helping alleviate social isolation and loneliness in our local area. During the recent Rediscover You programme which took place from January to April 2025, we welcomed new members to Drop In and its lovely to see new faces in the centre.

Men's Shed

Now Hillside Men's Shed have become a separately constituted organisation, we still continue to support them with their activities and administration. We are delighted to see them develop their workshop and social space and look forward to continuing to work with them in the future to provide essential services for men in the Newry Street and wider Kilkeel area.

NSU Crafters

The Crafters group have become very popular, providing blocks of themed crafts during the year for around 25 participants such as Easter, Autumn/ Halloween and Christmas. We have



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loved seeing their creations each week and are amazed at what they manage to come up with!

Bingo

Our bingo group went online during the pandemic and has continued online. We were pleased to see numbers returning to play in the hall increasing every Sunday night and develop this as a hybrid activity. This is a completely volunteer-led operation and we would like to thank all involved in all aspects of this very important activity. Bingo was high on the list of activities that the community identified in consultations, and we are pleased to be able to continue to provide this service.

Short Courses

Throughout the year, we have also provided one off or short courses including flower arranging workshops, emergency first aid, art, silversmithing, Transform Your Trolley, sewing classes and Winter Wellness sessions.

Earlier this month, we had our first Age 50+ Lunch where we welcomed lots of both new and familiar faces to the centre for some lunch, view photos of Newry Street from years gone by but also to ask them what services they would like us to provide their age group. We were delighted by the interest and are happy to announce we will be running a regular 50+ Lunch Club fortnightly from mid-May.

Good Morning Calls

We are continuing to work with the Confederation of Community Groups to host a local hub to provide the Good Morning Call service to those experiencing social isolation and loneliness. This hub, based in the Men's Shed office, would provide a base for volunteers to access laptops and receive training as well as a place for them to receive support. We are delighted to be able to contribute to this work and welcome new volunteers to the centre to provide this service.

Hall Rental and usage

Regular users of our hall include: NI Chest, Heart and Stroke who provide 2 monthly Wellness sessions, RNID provide a service for hearing aid users every 2 months and Kilkeel Community Church until very recently used the hall for their weekly services.

Southern Regional College have provided Autism Spectrum Disorders and Mindfulness in Children classes and are continuing to provide courses into 2025 as part of their community outreach.

McCartan Dance School of Irish Dance has continued to provide weekly classes for primary school children throughout 2023.

Autism Support Kilkeel have used the hall for their various outreach programmes, including Rhyme and Sign, Makaton courses and the Autism Experience Bus. It's a privilege to be able to support a fellow local charity to provide much needed services to the community.

Our hall continues to be a popular location for children's birthday parties and family events and is regularly hired out at weekends by members of the local community.



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Community Events

Summer, Halloween and Christmas have provided opportunities for bringing the community together throughout the year.

Our Summer Party was held in early July where we welcomed around 300 people to the Green to participate in various activities and attractions, we then ended the summer with a Colour Run.

Our annual Boo Bash took place at Halloween, with a family fun day, disco with DJ Alex and fireworks in the evening which was well attended by the community.

Santa Sunday saw 109 children welcomed to the centre to take part in various festive activities such as gingerbread decorating, crafts, facepainting and reindeer food making as well as visiting Santa.

Through all these activities, services and events, our hope is to provide something for everyone no matter of their background. We aim to meet our aims of combating social isolation and loneliness as well as promoting good health and wellbeing amongst the local community and promote better access to services. As we look to the year ahead, we hope to sustain and continue this work and bring new opportunities to the Newry Street and wider Kilkeel areas.

None of this would have been possible without the time and effort of our volunteers, our staff and our Management Committee

Staffing

In September 2024, we were delighted to welcome Brenda on board through the JobStart Scheme as a temporary Activities Support Assistant and Zita re-joined us as our new After School Leader after Cathy's departure in October 2024.

We continue to be supported by the Henry Smith Charitable Trust who provide funding for Ann and Jennifer's positions until late 2026.

Funding

We have been fortunate to have received funding from various sources to support our projects, some examples include:

- Newry, Mourne & Down District Council for our Summer Scheme, Fun Day, Santa Sunday, sports activities and various short courses.
- Asset Recovery Community Scheme from the Department of Justice to run an online safety programme for young people.
- Resuscitation Council UK to run free emergency first aid classes for the community.
- Woodward Trust and Hope for Youth Foundation for Youth programmes.
- Clanrye Group to run the Transform Your Trolley programme.
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive who continuously support us through their Cohesion and Community Grants.



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Volunteers

This centre is heavily reliant on volunteers to support the many activities we offer as well as our fundraising efforts. We are extremely fortunate to have many energetic volunteers who are enthusiastic about Newry Street Unite and its vision. Our volunteers remain our backbone, and without them, Newry Street Unite would not be able to deliver on any of these achievements.

Our Management Committee Oversee the management of the community centre and manage all the Finances ensuring all funds have been spent in line with funding agreements as well as making decisions in relation to the charity. I would like to acknowledge and thank each one of them for their dedication to Newry Street Unite and for being a voice for their local community to whom this centre serves.

Theresa Maginn

April 2025