

# DONAGHADEE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

## TRUSTEES' REPORT 2023-24

### 1. The Organisation

1.1 The Donaghadee Community Development Association was recognised as a charity by HMRC in 2011 and by the Charities Commission for Northern Ireland in 2016.

1.2 The trustees met on 10 occasions during the year. Membership at March 2024 was as follows:-

Denis Waterworth (Chair)	Karen Looney
Carol Day (Vice-Chair)	Martin Looney
John Caldwell (Hon. Sec)	Alan Maxwell
Adrian Kerr (Hon. Treasurer)	Kerry Melville
Kate Boyd	Murdo Murray
Alison Bell	Harry Wilson
Alan Burnside	

### 2. The Purpose of the Charity

2.1 The stated purpose of the Association is

“To promote the advancement of citizenship and community development for the public benefit in the Donaghadee area, in particular:-

1. To improve the area known as Donaghadee for the benefit of the inhabitants of the area
2. To encourage the goodwill and involvement of the wider community
3. To foster and promote community spirit and civic pride
4. To promote and encourage the development of Donaghadee”

2.2 The public benefits that flow from this purpose are:-

- Donaghadee is a more attractive place in which to live;
- Improvements in infrastructure will encourage inward investment;
- The town attracts more visitors which helps the local economy and increases employment opportunity;
- An attractive townscape should increase awareness of the quality of the local environment and, in turn, promote a greater degree of responsibility in areas such as litter, dog fouling and re-cycling.
- A much higher degree of social cohesion;
- Residents take a keen interest in the development of their town and play a positive role in contributing to its development
- There will be higher levels of engagement in local clubs and organisations;
- Reduced anti-social behaviour

2.3 In essence, this means that the Association focuses on organising events and projects, working closely with elected representatives and with other local organisations including schools and statutory bodies to improve the town and engaging in activities which will bring the community closer together.

### 3. Main Activities and Achievements during 2023-24

3.1 In any normal year the Association focusses activity on five strands:-

- Community engagement
- Improving the local environment
- Community support and development
- Expanding the local economy
- Campaigning and representation

3.2 Community Engagement

- a) King's Coronation – A Family Fun Day was organised on 7<sup>th</sup> May to celebrate the coronation;
- b) Summer Festival – Some 50 different events were organised by 31 organisations in the town. Gross attendances were just under 19,000 with large crowds at The Lifeboat Festival, the Horse Relay and at the Ulster Scots Festival. The latter involved the Ulster Fry World Championships which generated substantial media interest.
- c) Christmas – This year some 15 different organisations were involved in the delivery of the programme. The highlight continues to be Santa's arrival by lifeboat on Friday followed by a parade to the market. Sunday's activities included the Dee Runner's Fun Run at the Commons, followed that evening by the community carol service.
- d) Creative Writing for Well-Being – A Creative Writing Course was organised thanks to generous sponsorship from the Co-op Community Fund.
- e) Website and Social Media - The Association uses its website ([www.visitdonaghadee.com](http://www.visitdonaghadee.com)) to inform the local community and visitors of current issues.

3.3 Local Environment

- a) In Bloom – The decoration of the town with floral displays continues to garner community support with some 150 people participating either on an individual basis or as a member of an organisation. Supported by volunteers, we arranged the planting and watering of hanging baskets, planting of containers including window boxes by Killard School, the installation of upcycled displays to promote recycling and also carried out wildflower planting. These displays were supplemented by the painting of utility boxes and other artwork. Our efforts were rewarded by winning the Town Category of Ulster on Bloom for the third year in succession and receiving a Gold Award in Britain in Bloom.
- b) Crommelin Wood – Work continues on Cromellin Wood. A bulb planting scheme with native bluebells, daffodils and primroses was completed. The addition of a Bug Hotel, with the help from Strand Homes and Killard School, has created environment awareness and provides another additional feature for all to enjoy. Sadly vandalism continues to be the problem but we are greatly encouraged by the level of community participation in activities such as litter picking and planting.
- c) Marine Litter - Donaghadee's four schools – Ballyvester Primary School, Donaghadee Primary School, Killard School and St Anne's Primary School – continued to work with the Association on a Marine Litter Project. On each visit to the beach, pupils gather and analyse litter according to type, size and weight. They collect water samples for analysis using water testing kits and digital microscopes. Members of the public have also been encouraged to play their part by collecting litter. Following the closure of St

Anne's PS, Ballyvester Primary School has taken responsibility for the foreshore at the Commons.

- d) Hunts Park – With support from the international tree Foundation and Ards & North Down Borough Council, DCDA arranged for the planting of a community orchard with hedging. The orchard was opened in April 2024 by Andrew Muir MLA, Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs,
- e) Sensory Garden/Walk – Discussions have been initiated with Killard School and Clifton Special School regarding the creation of a Sensory Garden or Walk.
- f) Community Garden – We were able to assist a local group of enthusiasts in the creation of a community garden behind the houses in East Street.
- g) Climate Action Plan – Activity focussed on two strands:-
  - With support from the National Lottery Community Fund a series of talks and workshops have been held
  - Collaborating closely with the Sailing Club, we published a report on the dangers posed by rising sea levels and storm surges

### 3.5 Community support and development

- a) Information reel – The Association is a conduit for information on a wide variety of subjects ranging from government and public notices through to details of local events. All notices are now placed on a rolling display which is published on our website and social media platform each Friday.
- b) Supporting groups – Community Group members have access to a range of equipment including gazebos, a pa system, presentation boards, laptops and a digital projector and screen. Information on grant opportunities is also circulated.
- c) Royal Statistical Society – The Association was successful in an application to the Royal Statistical Society for pro-bono work to create a Community Profile of the town based on the on the 2021 Census. The report was published in February 2024 at a meeting attended by elected representatives and officials from government departments, the Council and statutory bodies.

### 3.6 Expanding the local Economy

- a) Shop Local – A shop local event was organised in March 2024 with participating traders given free gifts to distribute.
- b) Painting Shop Windows The Association subsidised a town centre shop window painting scheme featuring attractive Christmas themed painting on each window.

### 3.7 Campaigning and representation–

- a) Town Advisory Group – The Association has two representatives on the Donaghadee Town Advisory Group which also includes councillors and representatives of statutory bodies. The main issues were support for retail following lockdown and the review of the Commons and improved signage within the town
- b) Car parking – we continue to press for improved car parking. No success thusfar but efforts continue
- c) Seahill Right of Way - The Association was successful in proposing the assertion of the pathway from Seahill to the lane leading to the Water Tower as a public right of way
- d) Five Towns – DCDA meets regularly with counterparts in Bangor, Newtownards, Holywood and Comber.

- e) St Anne's Primary School – DCDA worked closely with the school and lobbied strongly for the retention of St Anne's Primary School.
- f) Concessionary Bus Passes – DCDA responded to the consultation on changes to the concessionary bus pass scheme arguing strongly for no change.

#### *Thanks*

3.8 The Committee acknowledges with thanks the help and support received from a wide range of individuals and organisations throughout the year, in particular:-

- Elected representatives and officers of Ards and North Down Borough Council without whose support the Association would not be able to function at the current level;
- Local MLAs and our local MP who have all been supportive of our efforts; and,
- The many individuals, local organisations, churches, sporting clubs and traders who support our work through volunteering, sponsorship and support.

#### **4. Financial Review**

4.1 The Association has a single bank account with the Ulster Bank, Newtownards and the accounts are prepared and audited by Stanley Woods & Co. The financial year is April – March. The Association's finances are healthy. The Association has no paid employees.

4.2 The Association acknowledges with thanks the many organisations and individuals who provided financial support during the year by way of grants, advertising, sponsorship, donations and membership fees.

#### **5. Community Involvement and Public Benefit**

5.1 The Association is anxious to involve the wider community and general public as much as possible in its activities. The Association had 118 members in March 2024 with 2,300 following on social media.

5.2 In undertaking these and other activities during the year, the Trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's statutory guidance on public benefit. No harm arose to any individual or organisation as a result of the Association's activities.

#### **6. Priorities for 2024-25-**

6.1 The Trustees have identified the following key priorities for 2024-25

- a) Subject to approval, organising festivals in the summer and at Christmas
- b) To continue with work on the various environment projects;
- c) To support the establishment of a programme of arts and creativity projects;
- d) To complete a feasibility study on the creation of Community Hub (Mens Shed) and,
- e) To press for improvements Donaghadee in meetings with Council officers and officials of other statutory bodies

#### **7. Further Information**

7.1 Further information on the work of the Association can be obtained from the Honorary Secretary, John Caldwell, c/o 21 New Road, Donaghadee, BT21 0DR

SIGNED

Date:

*Denis Waterworth, Chairman*