

Community Climate Action Plan

Donaghadee Community Development Association

**KEEP
NORTHERN
IRELAND
BEAUTIFUL**

Foreword

“There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about.”

MARGARET J. WHEATLEY

“The science is clear. We all have to act now to prevent the worst effects of climate change. This means re-evaluating what is important to us, our families and friends and the places where we live. It is hugely encouraging, and a source of hope and inspiration, to see so many communities creating climate action plans and undertaking such diverse work to reduce their carbon footprints. Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful will continue to support communities addressing this critical issue, knowing it is helping protect our environment, our economy and the very future of society itself.”

IAN HUMPHREYS,
CEO OF KEEP NORTHERN IRELAND BEAUTIFUL

Donaghadee Community Development Association (DCDA)

Donaghadee Community Development Association successfully applied to be a part of the Climate Clever Communities programme, facilitated by Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful.

The programme aligns with UK government's Net Zero Strategy: to cut emissions to net zero by 2050. To reach net zero, there is a real need to educate and prepare local communities and businesses in Northern Ireland on the impacts and consequences of climate change. We need to create a carbon and climate literate society.

The UK government declared a 'climate emergency' in 2019, and in 2020, the following carbon budget was recommended for Ards and North Down: to achieve average mitigation rates of CO2 from energy of around -13.2% per year. This target requires Ards and North Down to move towards renewable energy, localise its food production, and empower individuals and communities to take positive environmental action.

In 2022, Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful supported DCDA, providing them with seed funding and training, to help them to create a community climate action plan. The plan serves as an initial consultation project, providing a framework from which the Association can plan and execute a range of short term and long term community environmental projects to improve their local place.

With community, we can achieve great things. Climate action is no exception.

A small working group of the Association looked at the environmental and local challenges, and opportunities, and worked together to form a draft plan. Those directly involved in the sessions have been collecting, discussing and sharing ideas, but they also recognise that this is a collaborative journey and are actively looking for comments and contributions from the wider community too.

This document is a result of the programme, and a record of a series of conversations that took place in 2022 to



explore challenges and opportunities in Donaghadee. The conversations were supported by Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful who facilitated sessions, took notes and guided everyone through the process.

This Climate Action Plan itself is not a fixed document. It is a live, moving, flexible, document in need of regular review. Consultation on its implementation will continue. Climate actions laid out in the document can be changed, they can be actioned sooner, later or removed. New actions can be added at any time. This is a community document, therefore anyone in Donaghadee can contribute to this document and anyone can play a part in delivering on the climate actions identified in the plan.

This will always be a 'work-in-progress'.



The Climate Clever Communities Programme was funded by UK Community Renewal Fund to support 10 communities across Northern Ireland to develop local action plans for climate change. The programme was delivered by Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, with the support and guidance of Keep Scotland Beautiful.

Group overview and description

Donaghadee Community Development Association (DCDA) is a recognised charity which seeks to make Donaghadee a better place in which to live, work or visit. Composed entirely of volunteers, DCDA organises events and activities, undertakes projects of community benefit, and regularly seeks the views of residents through public meetings and surveys. They also engage with statutory bodies, lobbying local and central government for improvements to the town.

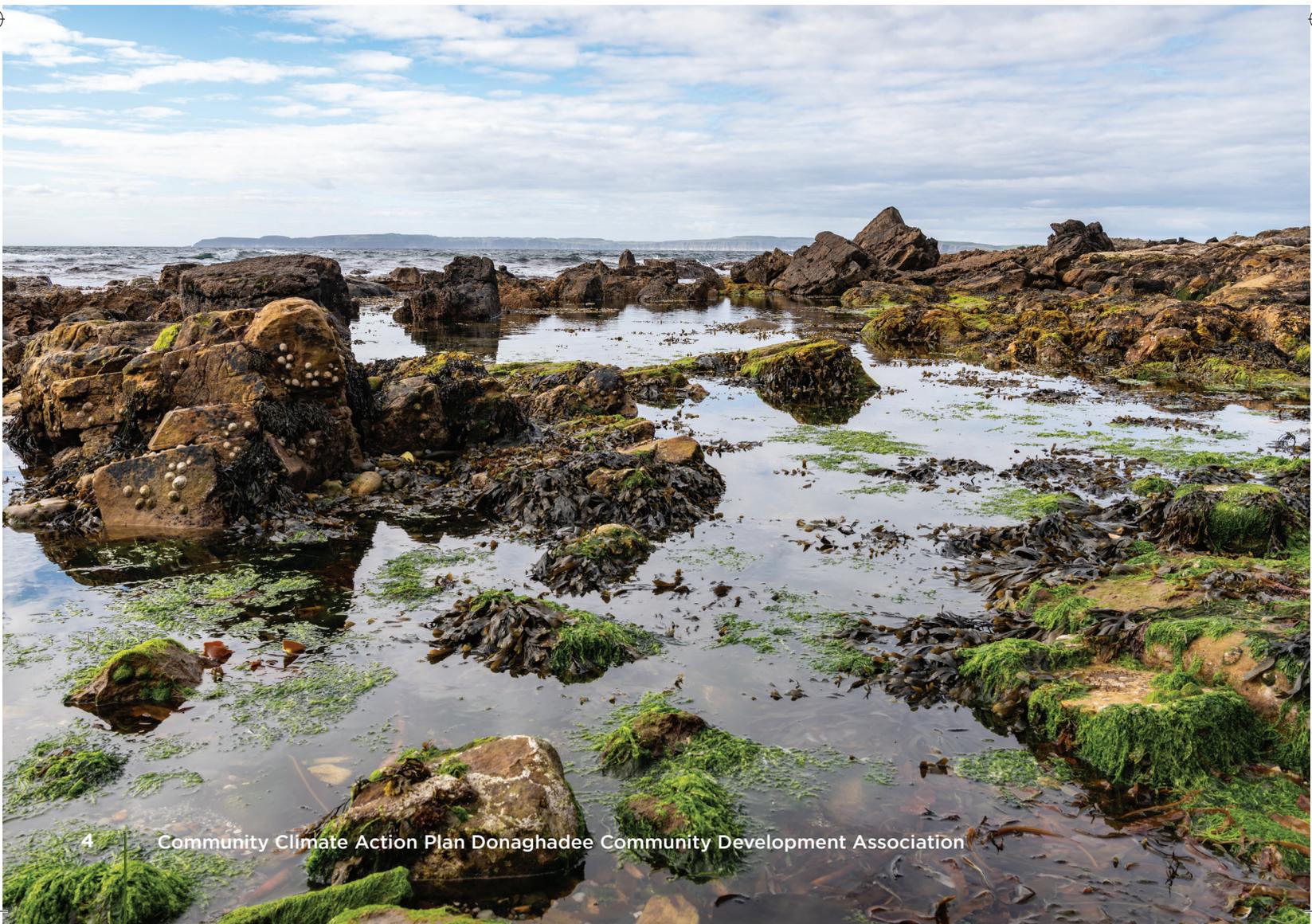
A Snapshot of Donaghadee in 2022

Donaghadee is located along the Ards Peninsula, at Northern Ireland's closest point to Scotland. As a coastal community, Donaghadee is particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change: experiencing high tides, coastal flooding and coastal erosion.

The population is estimated at close to 8,000, a high proportion of whom are retired. 27% population are over 60 years old, and just over 1,000 people aged over 65 live in single occupancy houses.

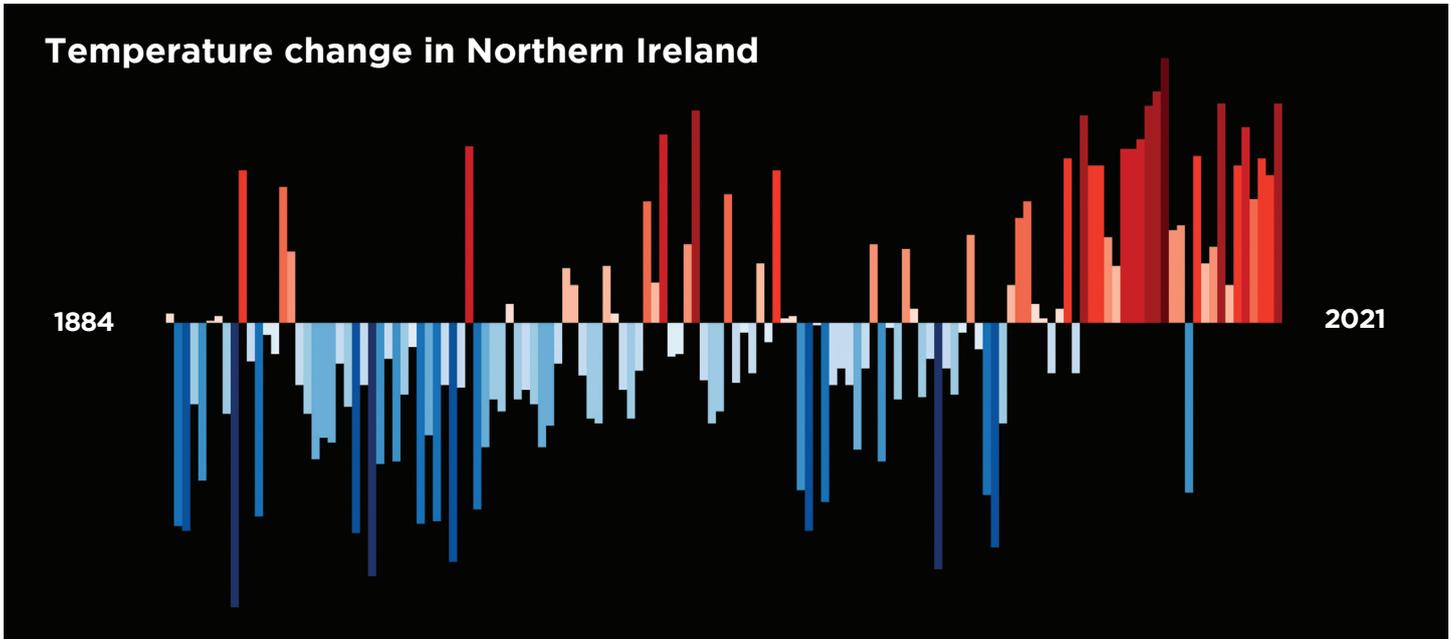
Donaghadee's coastal location and lack of adequate public transport links may be one of the reasons that Donaghadee has one of the highest levels of car ownership in Northern Ireland – sitting roughly at 17%. 80% households in Donaghadee own at least 1 car. That is 3 percentage points higher than the average in Northern Ireland.

There is a strong sense of civic pride and environmental awareness among the community, with Donaghadee having won Tidy Towns in 2019 and Ulster in Bloom in 2021.



The climate crisis in 2022

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released a report on 28th February 2022 that explained how the threat that climate change poses to human well-being and the health of the planet is “unequivocal”. The fossil fuels that we regularly emit into the atmosphere are causing the global average temperature to increase and this is having significant effect on our communities and our planet.



Met Office

Globally, we are seeing increased wildfires in California and Australia, rising sea levels claiming land from Fiji and the Maldives, and extreme weather events causing catastrophic flooding in Bangladesh. Closer to home in Northern Ireland, we are experiencing hotter, dryer summers and warmer, wetter winters with less snow. We can also expect more extreme weather events such as storms and wildfires.

Met Office Hadley Centre

Headline result:
“a greater chance of warmer, wetter winters and hotter, drier summers”

The infographic illustrates the UKCP18 (UK Climate Projections 18) framework. It is a circular diagram with six segments, each representing a different aspect of the projections:

- Update to Probabilistic Projections:** Represented by a bell curve icon.
- Global (60km):** Represented by a globe icon.
- Regional (12km) & Local (2.2km):** Represented by a map of the UK.
- Derived Projections:** Represented by a map of the UK.
- Observations:** Represented by a satellite dish icon.
- Marine Projections:** Represented by a wave icon.

The central circle is labeled **UKCP18**.

Met Office

There will also be other impacts that are not always considered. The graphics below, created by Climate NI, show some of the impacts that climate change may have in Northern Ireland.

These risks not only affect our natural environment, but also our infrastructure, health, built environment, business and industry.

However, whilst some impacts are locked in, we can still make changes to prevent some of the more significant impacts. This means making changes at the international level, but also at the local, community level. It also means thinking about both mitigation (actions which help to prevent some of the worst impacts of climate change) and adaptation (actions which helps to adapt to existing impacts of climate change).

This Community Climate Action Plan aims to do just that.

45K NI Homes at flood risk



70 MPH Gusts



94CM Sea Levels Rise



Heatwave chances increase

90%



Climate NI

Climate NI

Climate action is approaching in two main ways:

Mitigation and Adaptation

MITIGATION ACTIONS

AIMS TO

Reduce the severity of climate change

HOW?

Reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

VS.

ADAPTATION ACTIONS

AIMS TO

Prepare for the impacts of climate change

HOW?

Understand how you are at risk and make a plan.

Current Achievements and Activities

In sessions, there were many comments about all the great work that was going on right now in Donaghadee, but which not everyone knew about. To illustrate some of what is going on right now, there are some examples below. There are likely to be many more. This helps to show all the great actions happening in Donaghadee all in one place.

Current activity

Summer festival

DCDA organises an annual summer festival from June - September with some 35 different organisations taking responsibility for around 75-80 events. Gross footfall is approximately 15,000.

Marine litter project

The Marine litter project launched in April 2022. 4 schools (Ballyvester Primary School, Donaghadee Primary School, Killard School and St Anne's Primary School) have been provided with over £16k of equipment to clear and analyse marine litter. Each school has been allocated an area of coastline in Donaghadee, and an individual litter picking station has been installed. On each visit to the beach, pupils gather litter, and analyse it according to type, size and weight. They also collect water samples for analysis using water testing kits and digital microscopes. Their findings are recorded against previous analyses, and compared between schools.

Cromellin Wood Project

Cromellin woodland is an attractive woodland in the heart of Donaghadee. Donaghadee are in the process of gradually restoring Cromellin Wood, which is currently owned by the Council, but has been granted to Donaghadee Community Development Association under licence. The launch of 'Friends of Cromellin Wood' initiative encourages local residents to support ongoing work, and assist with maintenance.



Planting

The Association plant and maintain council-owned containers on the seafront and some beds. The plants have been provided by Council. The Association also developed a hanging basket scheme, with each trader in the town invited to pay for the filling and maintenance of one or more hanging baskets. This year, a total of 69 hanging baskets are in the town centre. The baskets are planted by local garden centres and florists.



In an innovative project, the Association provided Killard School with over 220 window boxes, compost and plants. The pupils, all with special needs, planted out the boxes and these were distributed to town centre properties. This was not only an invaluable learning experience for the pupils but also allowed the school to become even more involved in the local community.

Floral displays

In June 2022, the Association worked with local craftsmen to produce 4 floral crowns, made from entirely recycled materials, which were placed at various entry points to the town. They also launched 'entry boats', placing 4 boats at locations on the shorefront. These boats have been planted and maintained by: Donaghadee Primary School, Donaghadee Women's Institute, Donaghadee Methodist Church and Donaghadee Rugby Club.

Future Short-Term Actions

Actions proposed for the next 12 months are listed below. They are not listed in any particular order, and some can be done in parallel with others. This is a long list and may seem daunting, but this is a list of opportunities, and every small step is valuable. Some might have immediate capacity or potential for funding that could enable them to happen straight away, whilst others may need more community buy-in or development time.

Partner organisations should be involved as early as possible, and connections with the council and local elected members should be expanded, both to gain increased support for local issues, but also to highlight the benefits of community-led climate action plans, and their ability to identify priorities of residents.

Actions:

Continue work on restoration of Cromellin Wood

Firstly, the Association want to extend their native tree-planting efforts and wetland restoration in Cromellin Wood. Wet woodlands are now some of our least common woodland habitats, and wet features are vital for maintaining woodland species, especially invertebrates. Woodland and wetland restoration feeds into a larger goal of creating a 'Forest Education Project': to educate people on this valuable habitat. DCDA also wish to continue the reformation of a woodland on adjoining land, owned by DeLacherois Estate, which is currently badly neglected. Harnessing this local natural asset for community benefit would assist in addressing anti-social behavior.

Secondly, DCDA want to reduce pollution in the Moat Stream. Moat Stream, which skirts the border of the woodland site, has been the subject of dumping. This has led to pollution and obstructions to the natural water flow at the entrance to the wood. Greater environmental awareness could help resolve this issue, and the Association would like to involve the wider community in this project.

Preserve the area of wetland in Cromellin woodland

DCDA would like to construct 2 "piers" of rough stone, surfaced with gravel, to allow users to walk 15 yards into the wetland and enjoy a seated area. They have funding (£4k) for fencing, but need further support to help with construction of the piers.

They would, then, like to build an outdoor learning classroom by the piers. This would be used to host events (e.g. carol singers, teddy bears picnic) and would be a viewing area for walkers.

Conduct a feasibility study to examine the potential for community allotments

DCDA are developing a concept plan for allotments, with the support of Social Farms and Gardens. Allotments have proved very popular elsewhere, and there may be a demand for a similar facility in Donaghadee. Council own a disused hockey pitch, on the outskirts of the town, and this space could be turned into allotments. The concept study will examine how to power the site using renewable energy. Community allotments will tackle food insecurity, encouraging people to 'grow their own' and could also give rise to other projects, like vegetable growing courses and soil analysis. This project will not only require technical expertise, but also more volunteers. There is no local horticultural group in Donaghadee, and mentoring and training is required to kickstart this initiative.

Expand volunteer base

The Association would like to identify more volunteers who could support their work. Some young people currently volunteer at the Association as part of their community service for Duke Of Edinburgh Award, and the Association are keen to promote more intergenerational collaboration. An expanded volunteer base, with the possibility of access to appropriate grant programmes, would allow for an expanded series of actions including: free or cut price home energy audits for those most in need, provision of smart meters, Council-led school competitions to promote sustainable behaviours, and a Peninsula Wide Beryl Bike Scheme.



Longer Term Actions

A range of actions were identified as worthy for consideration in subsequent years, and some of these may require more research to determine if they are realistic or needed. Community engagement would need to be expanded for some of them to determine the level of interest and support.

Actions

Examine the potential for a Sensory Garden

DCDA would like to provide a sensory garden which could be used by the general public and provide an opportunity for volunteer input. A number of sites are being explored alongside potential funding partners.

Conduct a condition report on Cromellin Wood

The Association would like to conduct a condition report on Cromellin Wood, but this requires considerable funding and expertise. In the long-term, the Association would like to develop a tree nursery, forge additional pathways in woodland, and fell trees no longer in a healthy state.

Commission a sculpture for entrances to the town

The sculpture could be made from stone, metal or natural materials, like wood. The Association would work with Council Arts Department on this project, and could tie in with the maritime heritage of Donaghadee.

Improve active travel options

The Association would like to purchase E-bikes, install more bike racks, and link up with other greenways in North Down (e.g. Holywood and Bangor). DCDA intend to explore potential for Beryl Bikes, this would promote eco-tourism and could be part of a Peninsula Wide Scheme.

Reduce energy consumption in the town

The Association could run friendly competitions and awareness campaigns among the community, e.g. homes that saved most electricity in a year. As part of their energy reduction initiatives, DCDA would like to explore ways to cut the price of energy audits and install smart meters in homes of local residents.

Encourage residents to 'Shop Local'

Online traders, like Amazon, represent a threat to small communities, and DCDA want drive retail into town centre. They plan to launch at least 2 'Shop Local' campaigns each year. DCDA could consider launching a Repair café, Zero waste shop or opening a tool library to help drive a circular economy in Donaghadee. Although the 'Shop Local' has been strongly promoted, with hessian bags distributed among community with a promotional message, there is scope to push this area of activity.

Promote seaweed harvesting

Some members of the Association are interested in seaweed harvesting, and have identified the potential to tie in with seaweed project at Queens' University, Belfast. The locality of Donaghadee means there are opportunities for research in this area, e.g. feeding livestock with seaweed, using seaweed as fertilizer.

Create more bespoke facilities for co-working

Quite a bit of Donaghadee is commuter land, and creating more shared spaces for co-working could reduce carbon emissions from cars: saving people energy and fuel. Although Donaghadee was one of the first towns in Northern Ireland to have free wifi, the wifi quality is now poor. This would need to be resolved as part of this project.

Keep Beach Clean

The beach and seafront is a key community site within Donaghadee. It is also environmentally important with sections of the coast designated Area of Special Scientific Interest. The site known by locals as 'the Commons' adjoins the seafront and is currently not utilised to its full potential. Community consultations have identified the need for a transformative change of this site, with provisional ideas that a linear park could be created there to enhance connectivity/access for the local community to their local coastal environment.

Reduce Single Use Plastic

There is interest amongst the business membership of the Association to become more environmentally friendly. DCDA could offer the local business community support on a range of inter-related pilot projects to tackle plastic pollution, e.g. trialling refill stations, delivering compostable packaging projects, or incentivising customers to bring their own cups.

Strengthen Eco Schools initiatives

DCDA believe that children and young people are the climate ambassadors of the future, and want to invest in their environmental education. They want to develop more projects with Eco Schools, and start conversations with Energy Sparks. Some ideas for future projects include: providing each school with reusable water bottles to encourage disposal of plastic bottles, and promoting a Council-led school competition to tackle recycling.

Campaigning and advocacy

To keep Donaghadee green and clean, the Association should maintain regular contact with locally elected Councillors, MLA and MP representatives, telling them what they care about and campaigning on targeted issues. These are issues that cannot be fixed by individuals alone, but that need collective action, and in some cases, systematic change.

Quality of the Environment

Donaghadee is a picturesque town with delightful seaside walks, but on occasions this is offset by littering and dog fouling. The Association would strongly support a Council-led campaign to keep the town and Borough tidy. Litter and dog fouling present environmental quality issues and health hazards, and these issues need addressed.

Improvements to harbour

Storm Barra in December 2021, coupled with an exceptionally high tide, was a graphic illustration of the destructive power of nature and the resultant risk to lives and property. Waves came through the harbour mouth, crashed over the seawall and into houses. DCDA will continue to press the Council to implement the recommendations of the report by RPS in 2020, especially the construction of an environmentally friendly outer island to protect the harbour from south easterly gales. A key problem is finance, and the Association notes the £5.5bn programme in England and Wales and the absence of any similar programme in Northern Ireland where no single government department has responsibility for the issue.

Sources of funding

DCDA want to ensure that Council makes use of funding opportunities for climate related activities under PEACEPLUS. Theme 5 (A Sustainable and Better Connected Future) is highly relevant to the Association.

Recycling

Current recycling centre at Donaghadee is not fit for purpose, and opportunities to recycle are therefore limited. Any replacement of the Recycling Centre should be fit for purpose, and located in an area which will encourage usage.

Alternative energy sources

DCDA will continue campaigning for alternative energy sources in Donaghadee, including: solar farms, tidal and wind. Any future energy projects should be built with nature in mind, and DCDA would consult nature organisations (e.g. Copelands Bird Observatory). DCDA would also like free electric charging points in the town, and they see value in an Energy Saving Officer, employed by Council, who could advise residents on how to save energy in their homes.



Donaghadee Community Development Association already partners with different organisations and bodies to achieve shared goals. There is scope to build on existing partnerships, and even to establish some new ones.

Existing partnerships:

- Ards and North Down Borough Council
- Co-Op Community Fund
- Rotary Club of Donaghadee
- Local churches and community organisations
- Local sporting clubs
- 4 local schools
- 5 local garden centres
- Social Farms and Gardens
- Donaghadee Heritage Preservation Company
- Donaghadee Historical Society
- Local traders
- Donaghadee Town Advisory Group
- North Down Community Network
- NICVA



Partnerships seeking to establish:

- Food for Planet
- Young Ulster Farmers Union
- NIEA
- National Trust
- Ulster Wildlife
- RSPBNI
- Northern Ireland Resource Network (NIRN)
- Education Authority
- Local Men's Sheds
- Energy Sparks UK

Next Steps

DCDA is conscious that any Climate Action Plan needs community buy-in. Following on from initial support in 2022, DCDA will arrange an open meeting with the wider community to refine and develop this Climate Action Plan. They will regularly update the plan, building in measures to monitor progress, and continuing to consider what tailored support the community might require.

Listed below are some organisations that could help Donaghadee to achieve their goals:

- Action Renewables
- Belfast Food Network
- Belfast Healthy Cities
- Belfast Hills Partnership
- Bryson Recycling
- Business in the Community NI
- Carbon Literacy Project
- Climate NI
- Cooperative Alternatives
- Friends of the Earth
- Funders Forum NI
- Greenpeace Belfast
- Groundwork Northern Ireland
- National Lottery Community Fund
- National Trust
- Net Zero Skills Academy
- NI Community Energy (NICE)
- NI Water
- Northern Ireland Environment Link (NIEL)
- Northern Ireland Resource Network (NIRN)
- RSPBNI
- Social Farms and Gardens
- Sustainable Northern Ireland
- Sustrans NI
- Translink
- Ulster Wildlife
- Woodland Trust
- WRAP



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