



DONAGHADEE
THE BLOSSOM OF THE COAST

Donaghadee's Bloomin' Marvellous!



**A guide to the town's floral
displays in summer 2023**

Previous Awards

1995

Winner of Ulster in Bloom (Small Town Category)

2019

Winner of Tidy Town (Small Town Category)

2021

Winner of Ulster in Bloom (Small Town Category)

2022

Winner of Ulster in Bloom (Small Town Category)

Mayors Welcome

I am thrilled to extend a warm welcome to all visitors and residents of Donaghadee as we launch the Bloomin' Marvellous campaign for 2023. This is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the Donaghadee Community Development Association, who tirelessly strive to make our town an exceptional place to live, work, and explore.

Donaghadee has shone brightly in recent years, earning well-deserved recognition as the winners of the Ulster in Bloom Small Town category again in 2022. This achievement is a result of the remarkable collaboration between our schools, businesses, and the entire community. As we set our sights on the Ulster in Bloom and Britain in Bloom 2023 competitions, I have every confidence in the continued success of Donaghadee.

During your time here in our beautiful seaside town, I hope you have the opportunity to immerse yourself in its charm and natural splendour. Donaghadee offers a wealth of experiences for visitors, from breath-taking coastal walks to delightful local shops and eateries. We take immense pride in our vibrant community and look forward to welcoming you back time and time again.

Once again, I extend a heartfelt welcome to Donaghadee, and I encourage you to join us in embracing the Bloomin' Marvellous campaign and supporting the ongoing efforts of the Donaghadee Community Development Association. Together, we can continue to make our town blossom and thrive.



Councillor Jennifer Gilmour
Mayor of Ards and North Down

Hanging Baskets – adding colour to the town centre

Local traders are encouraged to play their part in making the town centre an attractive and vibrant area. This year 48 traders participated in the scheme whereby they pay towards the cost of a tub being planted out and maintained during the period end of May – early October. A total of 80 baskets were planted out by local garden centres to our specification which included Bacopa, Surfinia, Verbena and Nemesia.



Pupils in St Anne's Primary School planted out smaller baskets for hanging from lampposts in Bridge Street. This added colour to an area of the town dominated by two derelict properties.

A team of volunteers tow a water bowser borrowed from the local Council round the various locations at 6am on Mondays and Thursdays to ensure that the displays are kept refreshed.

Window Box Project

Now in its third year, this project involves the Association providing Killard School with 220 window boxes, composts and plants. The boxes are planted out and then distributed by pupils to those town centre properties with suitable window ledges.

Aside from bringing some colour to our streets this project has been highly successful for the school and its pupils all of whom have special needs. Not only has the school made a positive contribution to the local community but the project has also represented a real learning opportunity



for the pupils. We are greatly indebted to the staff and pupils for their support in this initiative. This year's displays are made up of Lobelia, Verbena and Bacopa in blue and white combinations.

Floral Displays

The Association works closely with our volunteers and the local Council on the planning of the many and varied floral displays in the town. Displays are changed regularly throughout the year to reflect the changing seasons. More recently we have started to use displays as a means of promoting recycling. Of particular note are the following:

Hightrees Intersection – This is a very busy intersection as it is on the main entrance and exit to the town. Work here is carried out by the Rotary Club of Donaghadee, the Association and the local Council.

- The Rotary Club has four box planters which are maintained all year round and provide an attractive visual display against a banner welcoming everyone to the town. Both the planters and the banner are refreshed on a seasonal basis. The standard 'Welcome to Donaghadee' banner is changed for 'Happy Easter', 'Autumn' and 'Merry Christmas' messages at appropriate times of the year. In the winter of 2022 -23 the boxes contained hardy perennial double flower daisies *Bellis belissima* together with a pot grown feature Christmas tree in each planter complete with fairy lights. The trees were removed in January for re-use next year and the daisies redistributed. In the month before Easter they were planted with Primulas before being changed again to the summer and autumn displays of Non-Stop Begonias.

- The Association is keen to promote recycling and has two displays at this location. To emphasise the recycling/upcycling message each display carries the slogan "Don't bin it - Recycle it!"



- The display at Hightrees features a model of the life boat built using workshop off-cuts and pre used compost before being planted with blue lobelia, white alyssum, green leaf begonias and mahogany ajuga

- Continuing with the recycling/upcycling theme and, following consultation with the police, a car was supplied by a local car breaker and modified using scrap wood and positioned in the hedge with a spilling mound consisting of used bark chipping and leaf mulch, fire ash and peat free compost seemingly pouring out of the boot. The display is completed with lupins, cineraria red leaf basil, green leaf begonias, white begonias, pansies, forget me nots, white geraniums, blue lobelia and purple ground covering petunias. A banner adjoining the display reinforces road safety messages.
- Ards and North Down Borough Council maintain a bed at the side of the road. This is changed regularly throughout the year. Displays in 2023 included allium, armeniacum, camassia, crocuses, dwarf daffodils, esculenta, jetfire, muscari, sphaeracepalon thalia and tulips,

Other displays from Recycled Materials – Other displays built on the recycling/upcycling theme are located round the town. These have all been made up from scrap materials and pre-used compost:-

- At the Rugby Club entrance and at the 30mph sign on the Groomsport Road damaged wheelie bins have been modified, wrapped with brick effect off cut of fablon before being planted. The Rugby Club's bins are based on the club's colours with red petunias while the one on



Groomsport road has blue lobelia, white alyssum, green leaf begonia.

- Also at the 30mph sign on the Groomsport Road we have another modified cable drum featuring a lighthouse made from an old traffic cone and planted with blue lobelia, white alyssum, green leaf begonias and red leaf basil,
- At the pedestrian entrance to the Commons on Millisle Road there is another cable drum display featuring an anchor made from old used polystyrene and tank tape and planted with blue lobelia, white alyssum, red leaf basil, mahogany ajuga, green leaf begonias
- On the shorefront at the War Memorial and with the harbour as a backdrop there is a cable drum with a model of the harbour itself made from off cuts from insulation sheets and a lighthouse made from an old traffic cone. Planting consists of blue lobelia, white alyssum and red leaf basil
- Finally in acknowledgement of the positive impact of the BBC One Police drama Hope Street series filmed extensively in Donaghadee, two disused pallets and window sill capping has been used to create a Port Devine sign. (Port Devine is the fictional town on which the series is based). Planting consists of blue lobelia.



Moat Street – The little park at the top of East Street is a pleasant area with high footfall being adjacent to the Eurospar Store and a bus stop. The Council has a formal bed in this location which is used to showcase celebrations and anniversaries. In 2023 the bed celebrates the 80th anniversary of the Donaghadee Women’s Institute. This display has been made up of Dahlia Happy Days Pink, Nemesia Wisley Vanilla, Brachycome Mauve Delight. Careful planting of trees finish the setting of this very pleasant area.

The Shorefront – This is the busiest area of the town attracting both the most traffic and footfall. As a result the area has been a key focus of the town’s “In Bloom” activity. Beginning at Pinks Green playpark and stretching the half mile or so to the harbour this is a very pleasant walk where one can enjoy the bracing sea air and views across to the Scottish coast. Two 3-tiered planters have been purchased and located at the bottom of New Road and on the footpath beside the Moat Car park. The Ladies Probus Club and the Coastal Rowing Club have planted these with Petunias, Begonias and Lobelia.



A series of 17 small, more manageable, containers consisting of Petunia F1 Frenzy Grand Rapids Mixed and planted out by organisations and individuals. Some perennials have been included by organisations eg Salvia nemorosa 'Ostfriesland', Senecio 'angel wings'.

Reflecting the town's strong maritime connections, local florist Petals and Buds have created low level displays on traffic islands incorporating lobster pots, driftwood, stones with ornamental grasses, palm trees, lavender, pansies, lupin and heucheras.

Continuing on the maritime theme displays made up of 7 boats planted out by an individuals and sporting and special interest groups. These are

- On the harbour itself a boat planted by the local rugby club and containing Senecio 'angel wings', Jacobaea maritime and Mesembryanthemum
- Peninsula Triathlon Club maintain a dinghy in Copeland Plaza Car Park. It is planted with a wide variety of plants including Agapanthus 'twister', Salvias 'east friesland', Ageratum and Cineraria 'silver dust'
- At Harbour Court there is a display maintained by the Methodist Church and containing Agapanthus, Bacopa, Brachyscome multifidi and Petunias
- Donaghadee Primary School and the local Sailing Club have collaborated to use a discarded dinghy on the David Kenny Memorial Park and plant it out with Lavender, Lobelia and Petunias
- This display is accompanied by a kayak maintained by the Donaghadee Womens Institute with displays of Stipa tenuissima, Carex, Festuca glauca, Muehlenbeckia, Brachyscome multifidi and Petunias



- In a new feature this year, and in an effort to encourage younger children, the Association has made up a display based around the Edward Lear poem “The Owl and the Pussycat.” This contains *Calamagrostis x acutiflora* ‘Karl Foerster’, *Panicum* ‘Northwind’, *Achillea* ‘Lilac Beauty’, *Carex testacea*, *Campanula*, *Vinca*, Lavender, *Geranium* ‘Rozanne’, *Salvia* ‘sensation’, *Iberis* ‘Masterpiece’, *Arenaria montana* Avalanche and *Agapanthus* ‘Charlotte’
- A second “fun” canoe on this site has a fisherman and is maintained by an individual. This display contains *Calamagrostis x acutiflora* ‘Karl Foerster’, *Panicum* ‘Northwind’, *Achillea* ‘Lilac Beauty’, *Carex testacea*, *Vinca*, Lavender, *Geranium* ‘Rozanne’, *Salvia* ‘sensation’, *Iberis* ‘Masterpiece’, *Arenaria montana* Avalanche, *Agapanthus* ‘Charlotte’ and *Violas*
- Abbeyfield & Wesley, a sheltered housing scheme on the shorefront, take a keen interest in the town’s In Bloom programme. This year we were able to supply 4 barrier



baskets for their front railings and these have been planted out by residents with New Guinea impatiens, Osteospermums, Pelargoniums, Fuchsias, Ajuga, and pansies. The frontage display is enhanced further with three half-moon baskets fixed to the wall and filled with mixed lobelia.



The Commons – This area was acquired by the Council in the 1920's and is a 16-acre semi-cultivated open space located on the southern edge of Donaghadee and offering pleasant walks, a motorhome service point and a range of activities (putting green, bowls, tennis courts, outdoor gym and an adventure playground). Entrances to the area are located at either end. The northerly entrance consists of grassland and an area of wildflowers while the southerly area is more formal with beds planted by the Council. The Bowling Club has played its part with some attractive planting amongst the seating round the green.



Other Displays – Elsewhere opportunities have been taken to have displays to brighten areas. For example



Upcycled cable drums at Barnhill and Millisle Road



Wildflower planting by the Council at the Moat Car Park.

- Wildflower planting in the small bed adjacent to the slipway by the year round swimming group “Chunky Dunkers”
- Killaughey Road corner an attractive display of Cosmos planted by the Council

Crommelin Wood

The Association has been restoring an historic woodland area in the heart of Donaghadee since 2017. Total spend to date is of the order of £40k paid for mainly by grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Co-op Community Fund and Live Here, Love Here. Up until this year work focussed on defining paths, litter clearance, erecting interpretive boards, some replanting with native species and the construction of a platform into the wetland. This area is used extensively by local people and has become a valuable outdoor learning experience for local schools. In March of this year eight community groups, three local schools and 20 volunteers were involved in the planting a mixture of beech, birch, alder and hawthorn in a new tree nursery.

This nursery will be used to bring trees along which can eventually be used to replace those trees which need to be removed on account of damage or disease. When a tree is removed from the nursery area it will be replaced with a new sapling. This means that the nursery is continually replenished and becomes a “living” environmental project. In May the ground at the entrance to the wood was prepared by volunteers to allow



for the sowing of wildflower seeds and these were subsequently sown by a group of four volunteers.

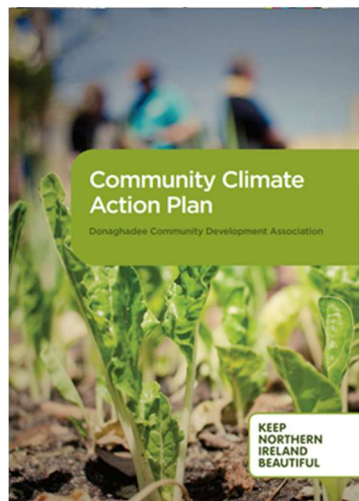
Environmental Responsibility

Climate change poses a significant threat to the planet. Being a seaside town, Donaghadee is particularly vulnerable, as evidenced by storm damage and flooding. The Association recognises and accepts that addressing climate change is the responsibility of everyone and not just the government, and as individuals we need to make every effort to live more sustainably, minimise our environmental footprint and use resources responsibly.

Climate Action Plan

In 2022 the Association worked with Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful to produce a Climate Action Plan for Donaghadee. The Plan sets out a framework for further work which is now being taken forward through a period of public consultation. Key Actions in the plan are

- Continuing the In Bloom work and build the volunteer base
- Continuing work in Crommelin Wood in particular preserving the wetland;
- Investigating the possibility of a community garden and/or allotments
- Reducing Single use plastic



A grant of just under £10,000 from National Lottery Awards for All will enable DCDA to take forward an ambitious programme of work linked to climate change. This includes raising awareness, organising talks and workshops and work to develop the next phase of our Climate Action Plan.

The Association will also contribute views on public consultation where it feels there is a climate change dimension eg changes to concessionary bus passes forcing more cars on the road and the consultation on the NI Carbon Budget initiated by the Department of Environment, Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

Sea Change project

The Association made a successful bid to Live Here Love Here of just over £15k for equipment to run this project. Live Here Love Here is a partnership between the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, 10 local Councils, NI Housing Executive and Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful (KNIB). With the grant DCDA was able to purchase the litter picking stations, water testing kits, digital microscopes, nets and buckets, specimen trays, magnifying glasses, hi-vi waistcoats and gloves.

Each school has been allocated a specific area of coastline in Donaghadee and an attractive litter picking station has been installed at each. On each visit to the beach, pupils gather and analyse litter according to type, size and weight. They also collect water samples for analysis using water testing kits and digital microscopes. Their findings are recorded and will be compared over time against previous analyses and the records of the other schools. It is hoped that the project will run for several years. The project is not confined to schools and the

community is encouraged to play their part as well, especially during periods of school holidays.

In addition to the positive impact on the environment, the project offers real educational opportunities. Practical outdoor activities are an important element in the Northern Ireland Curriculum but sometimes these activities are not possible due to limited school funds. However, Live Here Love Here funding has made it possible for our four schools in Donaghadee to work together collaboratively to plan an outdoor learning project with a strong environmental focus. We anticipate that this hands-on learning experience will encourage our local children to be much more aware of the importance of their local environment.

Wildflowers

Wildflowers are a key part of the natural ecosystem, supporting biodiversity and bringing colour to the town. Working in close collaboration with the Council, the Association has created more wild spaces where insects and plants can flourish. Areas which have been sown are:-

- The entrance to Crommelin Wood
- The Commons
- The Moat
- The bed at the slipway
- The Community Centre and
- The War Memorial

Promoting Insect Life

A bug hotel provides shelter and nesting sites for beneficial insects such as pollinators, predators and decomposers. It helps to increase local insect populations, particularly of those species that are important for pollination or pest control. Strand Homes, the company building the housing development at Hightrees has worked with Donaghadee Primary School and Killard School to create Bug Hotels.



Environmentally Themed Art

Derelict properties, security railings, blank walls and service boxes such as those used by BT, PowerNI and NI Water all detract from the streetscape. Following consultation and agreement with the owners, the Association has initiated a programme of work over the summer involving:-

- a) A team of volunteers are creating a floral themed display of crochet on the railings at the dinghy park,
- b) a local artist, Sharon Regan is painting NI Water and BT boxes with local wildlife and endangered species; and,
- c) the wall at the car park of the community centre will have several decorated boards fixed to it.

Community Involvement

All of this would not be possible without the active involvement of the community and the support received from Ards and North Down Borough Council. It is estimated that over 100 individuals are involved, either as part of a club or as an individual – quite clearly the displays would not be on the current scale without the support of the local community through:-

- Planting out containers,
- Participating in the hanging basket scheme (Traders)
- Planting out Window Boxes (Killard School)
- Making Bug Hotels (Strand Homes, Donaghadee PS and Killard School)
- Looking after their own gardens
- Contributing advice and suggestions at public meetings
- Participating in the litter pick and tidying parties
- Volunteering for the watering team

What is most pleasing is the extent to which participation spans all age ranges across the community – children in local schools right up to and including groups of senior citizens

Over the past five years we have seen Donaghadee in Bloom grow steadily not only in terms of the quality and quantity of displays but also in the increasing number of volunteers involved. This is a very welcome trend and one which we want to build on. It is satisfying to see our efforts recognised by awards but the important thing is that our community feels good about their town, has pride in it and engages positively and actively in making it even better.



DONAGHADEE

THE BEACON ON THE COAST

This booklet was printed by Donaghadee Community Development Association with support from Ards and North Down Borough Council.

The Association, a recognised charity, was established in 2011 and seeks to make Donaghadee a better place in which to live, work or visit. We believe that this is best achieved through a continuous programme of measures to improve and enhance the local environment and at the same time engaging in activities to promote civic pride and bolster community spirit.