

## **ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

2<sup>nd</sup> October 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

You are hereby invited to attend a hybrid meeting (in person and via Zoom) meeting of the Community and Wellbeing Committee of Ards and North Down Borough in the Council Chamber, 2 Church Street, Newtownards, on **Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> October commencing at 7pm.**

Yours faithfully

Susie McCullough  
Chief Executive  
Ards and North Down Borough Council

### **A G E N D A**

1. Apologies
2. Declarations of Interest

#### **Reports for Approval:**

3. Consultation response to The Public Health Act 2024 (Report attached)
4. Hardship Funding 2024/25 (Report attached)
5. Beach of Dreams Our Siren Song Update (Report attached)
6. Ards and North Down Sports Forum Grants (WG September 2024) (Report attached)

#### **Reports for Noting:**

7. North Down Coastal Path Working Group (Report attached)
8. Schools Growing Clubs Update (Report attached)
9. Hardship Funding 2024/25 (Report attached)
10. Arts & Heritage Annual Summary 2023-2024 (Report attached)
11. Summer Scheme Update 2024 (Report attached)
12. Bookstart Update (Report attached)

13. Herbicide Reduction Policy Update (Report attached)

14. Notices of Motion

14.1 Notice of Motion submitted by Alderman Smith and Councillor Wray

This Council strongly opposes the UK Government's recent Winter Fuel Payment policy change. We resolve to write to the Prime Minister, urging the Government to reverse this harmful decision, which will have a far-reaching and devastating impact on pensioner households across the UK. Furthermore, we seek assurance that, at the very least, the Pension Credit minimum income guarantee will be increased, ensuring that more low-income pensioner households, particularly those who narrowly miss out, become eligible for pension credit.

15. Any other notified Business

### **ITEMS 16-21 \*\*\*IN CONFIDENCE\*\*\***

#### **Reports for Approval:**

16. Social Supermarket Ards, Comber, Ballygowan, Killinchy and Peninsula (Report attached)

17. Supplier contract Extension Ards Blair Mayne Wellbeing and Leisure Complex (Report attached)

18. Tender for Provision of Arboricultural Services (Report attached)

19. Comber Greenway Alternative Route (Report attached)

#### **Reports for noting:**

20. Comber Greenway A21 Section Update (Report attached)

### **MEMBERSHIP OF COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE (16 MEMBERS)**

Alderman Adair	Councillor Douglas
Alderman Brooks (Chair)	Councillor Harbinson
Alderman Cummings	Councillor Hollywood
Alderman McRandal	Councillor S Irvine
Councillor Ashe	Councillor W Irvine
Councillor Boyle (Vice Chair)	Councillor Kendall
Councillor Chambers	Councillor McClean
Councillor Cochrane	Councillor Moore

Unclassified

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**ITEM 3****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	09 October 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Environmental Health, Protection and Development
Date of Report	26 September 2024
File Reference	CW174
Legislation	Public Health Act 1967/2024
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below: N/A
Subject	Consultation Response to The Public Health Act 2024
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Draft Consultation Response Appendix 2 - Suggested ammendments proposed at Septembers Council meeting

This report was originally considered by Community & Wellbeing in September. At the Council meeting in September, it was agreed to refer this matter back to the Community & Wellbeing Committee for reconsideration. The amendments suggested at Council are attached at appendix 2 for members information. The original proposed response is attached at appendix 1.

Officers can confirm that the response date has been extended to the 14 October 2024, and Council have granted delegated authority to the Community & Wellbeing Committee to approve the final response on its behalf.

**Background**

The Public Health Act (Northern Ireland) 1967 was reviewed in March 2016 by the Department of Health (DoH) to ascertain whether it is still fit for purpose. The work on scoping policy proposals that would underpin a new health protection legislative

Not Applicable

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framework for Northern Ireland was paused due to other work pressures and the Department's emergency response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

### **Current position**

In May 2022 the work on this area resumed and DoH are now consulting on proposals which will underpin a new health protection legislative framework for Northern Ireland, and which are based on the recommendations of the 2016 Review of the 1967 Act and learning from recent public health emergencies. The overarching principle of the draft Bill is to protect the population against various forms of infection and contamination including biological, chemical and radiological, in addition to infectious diseases, which is the focus of the 1967 Act.

### **The draft response**

A draft response to the consultation has been prepared by Environmental Health Northern Ireland (EHNI), a group comprising of all the heads of Environmental Health in the 11 Councils. The response, which is attached, generally welcomes the Act and the principles it is aiming to achieve. However, clarity is needed on the expectations on local government and its role in enforcing this legislation and the associated resources to do so.

Members will wish to give consideration to the proposed changes outlined at Septembers Council meeting, attached at Appendix 2.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council agrees and approves the final proposed response.

## APPENDIX

**Consultation Response Form****Introduction**

Being transparent and providing accessible information to individuals is key to the Department of Health's (DoH) commitment to building trust and confidence in our ability to process the information you share with us.

It is important therefore to note that your response, along with all other responses to this consultation, may be disclosed on request in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR).

If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential, so that this may be considered if the Department should receive a request for the information under the FOIA or EIR.

**How will your information be used and shared?**

The information you provide will be processed to generate a report, which may be used by a Health Minister to help inform decision-making on policy proposals to inform a new Public Health Bill. It will be shared only with the relevant officials within the Department of Health in order to produce the report. It is intended that the report will be completed in Autumn 2024, prior to the Bill's introduction into the Assembly legislative programme.

**How long will we keep your information?**

We will retain consultation response information until our work on the subject matter of the consultation is complete, and in line with the Department's approved Retention and Disposal Schedule [Good Management, Good Records](#).

**CONSULTEE DETAILS**

<b>Name (Optional)</b>	Ards and North Down Borough Council
<b>Organisation and job title (if applicable)</b>	

Please provide details of your postal and / or e-mail address if you wish to be advised of any outcome of the consultation.

<b>Postal Address (Optional)</b>	
<b>E-mail Address (Optional)</b>	<a href="mailto:env.health@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk">env.health@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk</a>

I am responding: as an individual   
 on the behalf of an organisation as an  (please tick a box)

<b>If replying as an individual, please indicate if you do not wish for your identity to be made public</b>	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
	(please tick a box)	

<b>Whilst not essential, it would assist the Department in analysing responses if responding on behalf of an organisation, you could provide details of who your organisation represents and, where applicable, how the views of members were assembled?</b>	These re the view of officers within the Environmental health protection and development department which have been collated in collaboration with colleagues across the other Councils. The response has been approved Council.
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Views are invited on the following questions:

**THEME 1: STRUCTURE AND PURPOSE OF THE BILL (pages 7 – 9)**

**Principles, statement of intent and objectives**

**Q1. Do you agree or disagree with the proposed statement of intent?**

Agree

Disagree

Undecided

Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer.**

The Council agree that the principle to ensure the capability to prevent, protect against, control, and provide response to public health threats is appropriate and necessary.

An explanatory would be welcomed to assist organisations who are tasked to fulfil any of the functions detailed in the Bill. This could be supported by summarising the outcomes that the Bill will deliver.

The detail of how this will be achieved in response to the wide range of potential scenarios needs to be fully understood, linkages existing legislative powers identified, and the appropriate consideration of how any additional duties or powers can be resourced and implemented. Further consultation needed when the Bill is drafted.

**All hazards approach**

**Q2. Do you agree or disagree with the definition of “infection and contamination”?**

Agree

Disagree

Undecided

Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer.**

The definition of infection and contamination proposed is any infection or contamination which presents or could present significant harm to human health.

Agree that the definition should be brought into line with other UK jurisdictions. This allows all risks to human health to be considered, managed, and controlled to protect public health.

Important to ensure any definitions and legislation will encompass emerging hazards and not be limited to infectious disease.

## THEME 2: ORGANISATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES (pages 10-14)

### Scope

**Q3. Do you agree or disagree that other existing public health legislation, i.e. environmental health legislation, sufficiently describes the functions, duties and powers of Ministers and statutory bodies needed to deal with any public health incident?**

Agree

Disagree

Undecided

Not Applicable

### **Please give reasons for your answer.**

The consultation states that the proposed bill will replicate and enhance the powers of the 1967 Act and in relation to public health investigations, the PHA will be able to authorise others to undertake specified duties. Public health legislation in other UK jurisdictions places powers and duties on local authorities which enables the relevant authorised bodies to undertake health protection functions and investigations. For example, the taking of air, water and land samples.

Local Authorities in Northern Ireland have a range of duties and powers which may be invoked to protect public health during an incident, but there are limitations to what scenarios these duties and powers may cover e.g. public health issues such as controlling some infectious diseases in day care facilities or nurseries. In addition, Local Authorities have very limited powers in response to scenarios related to chemical hazards containment and cleanup.

It is important to note that whilst Environmental Health professionals can demonstrate a range of expertise and transferrable skills across our legislative remit, other agencies such as DAERA, HSENI, NIHE, FSA also have regulatory powers or responsibilities which may be relevant in a managing a health protection incident. Health and safety enforcement is split between HSENI and District Councils by sector as laid down in the Enforcing Authority Regulations. HSENI have the same enforcement powers as Council Environmental Health Officers in the premises they have enforcement responsibility.

Councils have enforcement responsibilities under health and safety legislation relating to risks arising from work activities affecting employees and others that could be affected e.g. risk to public from legionella.

It is likely that not all future situations / scenarios will fall neatly within current legislative frameworks operated across the range of statutory stakeholders, so where PHA are "directing" in



serious situations, there also needs to be accompanying funding streams made available to execute such “directions”.

As new and novel hazards continue to emerge, it is essential that capability and capacity issues are adequately addressed and funded, not only to ensure the emerging issue is competently tackled but also to ensure the sustainability of that expertise and continued capacity to deliver the “authorised” organisation’s normal legislative remit in tandem.

In determining roles and responsibilities, it is also important to consider that local conflicts of interest may arise for local authorities in dealing with any incident on local authority premises.

Within the timeframe of the consultation and in the absence of a funded dedicated resource the Council is not in a position to authoritatively determine whether its environmental health legislation sufficiently describes the functions, duties and powers of ministers and statutory bodies needed to deal with any public health incident and would expect the Department for Health to undertake a full analysis through its legal advisers to determine such information in advance of this and any future consultation. For example, any expectations to carry out disinfection disinfestation and decontamination will require specialist advice and services as these are currently not within the remit of Councils to deliver. Indeed, it is questionable whether Councils are best placed to assist with incidents of contamination given the “All Hazards” approach which could extend to incidents where the Council have no current role, and which requires a multi-agency approach involving access to highly specialised and costly services.

Additionally, the role of the Civil Emergencies Contingencies Group and its associated structures will need to be considered in response to any threat that may occur within Northern Ireland.

Any proposal that will bring additional responsibilities and burdens on Council resources/budgets will need to be considered in the context of bringing forward these proposals and a regulatory impact assessment will be required if any additional powers are passed to Councils. A central funding arrangement should be considered for this purpose.

### **Monitoring and surveillance**

**Q4. Do you agree or disagree that there is no requirement to replicate in the Bill the provisions in the Health Security (EU Exit) Regulations 2021 in relation to monitoring and surveillance?**

**Agree**

**Disagree**

**Undecided**

**Not Applicable**

**Please give reasons for your answer.**

The Council agrees that monitoring and surveillance is an important element of protection public health and if the Department is satisfied that such powers already exist in Health Security (EU Exit) Regulations 2021, that there is no need to replicate the same legislative provisions in the Bill.

It is noted in paragraph 24 that it is proposed that provision is made to confer on PHA and other persons functions in in relation to the monitoring of public health risks.

Further information is requested on who said 'other persons' or agencies are proposed to be.

**THEME 3: PUBLIC HEALTH POWERS (page 14- 66)**

**Notification Policy**

**Q5. Do you agree or disagree with the proposed “all hazards” approach to notification?**

- Agree
- Disagree
- Undecided
- Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer.**  
 The Council agrees that notification is the first step and therefore a necessary element of the proposed “all hazards” approach and therefore it would logical that an “all hazards approach to notification is necessary to meet the objectives of the new Bill. This may have resource implications and should be considered as part of a regulatory impact assessment.

**Q6(a). Do you agree or disagree with the duties to be placed on registered medical practitioners?**

- Agree
- Disagree
- Undecided
- Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer.**  
 The Council however considers this is a matter for the relevant health / medical professionals to provide comment on the proposals.

**Q6(b). Do you agree or disagree with the types of information that registered medical practitioners must notify?**

- Agree
- Disagree
- Undecided

Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer.**  
 The Council however considers this is a matter for the relevant health / medical professionals to provide comment on the proposals.

**Q7(a) Do you agree or disagree with the duties to be placed on operators / directors of diagnostic laboratories?**

Agree

Disagree

Undecided

Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer.**

**Q7(b). Do you agree or disagree with the types of information that operators / directors of diagnostic laboratories must notify?**

Agree

Disagree

Undecided

Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer.**  
 Consideration should be given to requiring laboratories to make notifications as soon as possible and no later than 3 days which is consistent with the requirements on medical practitioners (rather than the suggested 7-day target).

Q7(c). Do you agree or disagree that legislation should place a duty on diagnostic laboratories to report negative test results?

Agree

Disagree

Undecided

Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer.**

Whilst the reporting of negative results is supported by the government's previous consultation, it could however prove to be an administrative burden during a large scale or regional outbreak, potentially diverting valuable resource.

Q7(d) Do you agree or disagree that legislation should place a duty on diagnostic laboratories to report void test results?

Agree

Disagree

Undecided

Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer.**

In the event of a test result being void, it would be helpful for relevant authorities to be made aware of this as soon as possible, so that a repeat sample can be obtained and retested, if necessary. This is not only important for any individual involved, but also for decision makers who need all necessary information in which to act / take action in the given situation.

**Offences**

**Q8(a). Do you agree or disagree that an offence may be placed on an operator / director of a diagnostic laboratory for failure to comply with the proposed duties?**

Agree

Disagree

Undecided

Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer.**

In order to avoid a dual standard for compliance, it is important that all laboratories across UK are subject to the same sanctions for failing to comply with any duties placed upon them.

**Q8(b). Do you agree or disagree that the level of fine is appropriate?**

Agree

Disagree

Undecided

Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer.**

The level of fine should be consistent across the United Kingdom

**Powers of entry and investigations**

**Q9. Do you agree or disagree with the proposed enhanced powers of entry for “authorised officers” of the PHA?**

Agree

Disagree

Undecided

Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer.**

The Council agrees that the scope of the powers of entry must be sufficient for “Authorised officers” to exercise any duty necessary to achieve compliance with the Bill and carry out any necessary function with a view to protecting public safety and health.

The Council considers that point B should not apply to commercial premises as there should be consistency with existing powers of entry available in other public health and health and safety related legislation linked to commercial premises. This should only apply for residential premises. Inclusion of the definition of a “premises” and any exemptions would be helpful.

Should the Public Health Agency decide to authorise officers outside of the PHA, then this approach should be developed in consultation with other regulators, be comprehensive but limited to those necessary.

It recommended that consideration be given to developing an accompanying Code of Practice to sit alongside powers of entry (like that of the Environmental Better Regulation Bill) to ensure the correct and consistent use of such powers. This is of particular importance as the powers referred to in the proposed legislation impinge upon human rights, liberty and property.

The consultation lacks details on who PHA intends to authorise to exercise these functions. There is potential impact on staff resources and budgets for any Department where authorised officers are in required to ‘execute any work’. This may affect ability to deliver upon their own statutory functions and services.

**Q10(a). Do you agree or disagree with the definition of “authorised officer”?**

Agree

Disagree

Undecided

Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer**

The Council agrees that the definition of 'authorised officer' to be included in the Bill will mean any person authorised by the PHA to exercise functions conferred on it under the Bill (whether the person is an officer of the Agency). This will allow organisations to have their officers authorised as necessary. The definition should also be extended to allow for "other persons" who are not necessarily employed by the statutory agencies but who are specialist or experts in a particular field of expertise to accompany authorised officers.

The legislation should include limitations on the power to authorise officers outside of the Public Health Agency. Officers outside of the agency should only be authorised where deemed necessary and where it can be demonstrated that the competency, expertise and adequate resources are available to exercise any functions conferred under this Bill. Further consultation with any proposed authorised officers / organisation is recommended.

**Q10(b). Do you agree or disagree that the Department should specify who the "authorised officers" should be in legislation?**

Agree

Disagree

Undecided

Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer**

In considering an all hazards approach it may be constrictive to confine who can be authorised within the legislative framework and therefore consideration should be given to allow flexibility in the Bill to enable the PHA to appoint authorised officers who can demonstrate their expertise and competency to assist with any emerging public health incident.

It is considered that the consultation should have specified who 'authorised officers' are to be in the legislation.

All relevant department and agencies should be specified as authorised officers e.g. HSENI, NIFRS, FSA, PSNI, NIEA. This would allow flexibility in response and enable persons with the necessary expertise and equipment to be deployed appropriately depending on the type of incident. Private contractors e.g. environmental clean-up companies should also be included.

It is suggested that the legislation should list the relevant agencies whose staff may be authorised along with the type of incident or activities they could be asked to assist with.

**Supplementary provision as to entry**



**Q11(a) Do you agree or disagree with the supplementary powers of entry for authorised officers of the PHA?**

Agree

Disagree

Undecided

Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer**

The Council agrees with the provision of supplementary powers for “authorised officers” which should be sufficient to allow officers to carry out their role with all the investigative tools that are necessary to properly assess the risks to public health and to allow them to take appropriate action to mitigate or eliminate the risk under investigation.

Further information on who will take enforcement action in relation to contraventions will be necessary.

**Q11(b). In relation to “any such person” accompanying an “authorised officer”, who do you think should be included in this category?**

**Please provide suggestions in the box below**

Given the range of hazards incorporated under the proposed Bill, it would not be possible for the Council to pre-empt the professional/technical skills or credentials of any such person. The legislation should be drafted accordingly to allow sufficient latitude for such persons to be identified and appointed in response any type of hazard defined within the scope of this Bill.

See response to 10(B). Should include Private contractors, HSENI, FSA, NIFRS, PSNI, NIEA, not just District Councils.

It is recommended that the legislation clarifies that PHA remain the lead authority, directing the incident response and that decision-making responsibilities lie with PHA.

A dedicated team with appropriate experience and expertise, akin to the HSENI major incident team, to fulfil this role may be worth considering.

**Q11(c) Do you agree or disagree with the supplementary provisions as to powers of entry?**

- Agree
- Disagree
- Undecided
- Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer**

The Council agrees with the supplementary provisions as to the powers of entry. It is further recommended that a Code of Practice be developed to sit alongside the powers of entry to ensure the correct and consistent use of such powers. This is of particular importance as the powers referred to in the proposed legislation impinge upon human rights, liberty, and property.

**Q11(d). Do you think other actions should be included?**

- Agree
- Disagree
- Undecided
- Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer**

Include any other reasonable power which is necessary for the purpose entry is authorised. Inclusion would enable action not listed, to be taken if deemed necessary and would also future proof the legislation so other actions can be taken without need to change the legislation. It may also be worth including the power to secure a scene or for it to be left undisturbed.

**Offence of Wilful Obstruction**

**Q12(a). Do you agree or disagree that an offence of wilful obstruction should be included in the Bill?**

- Agree
- Disagree
- Undecided
- Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer**

The offence of wilful obstruction should be included in the legislation to ensure acts of wilful obstruction are appropriately dealt with and to bring this legislation into parity with other regulatory provisions to address these behaviours.

Useful to consider a definition of 'wilful'. The equivalent offence in legislation is 'obstruction' not 'wilful obstruction' and this maybe more difficult to prove.

**Q12(b). If you agree, do you think the level of fine is appropriate?**

Agree

Disagree

Undecided

Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer**

The level of fine would seem commensurate with the offence taking account of the public health implications of those who chose to impede and obstruct investigation and remedial action to address public health risks.

**Enhancement of PHA Powers / Magistrates' Court Orders****Q13. Do you agree or disagree with the "requirements and restrictions" in relation to "persons" and "groups of persons"?**

Agree

Disagree

Undecided

Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer**

The Council agrees that the “requirements and restrictions” in relation to “persons” and “groups of persons” should enable adequate measures to control risk to public health in any given scenario. Members of the public and civil liberty/human rights groups should be consulted on the proposed requirements and restrictions.

Consultation lacks information on who PHA will authorise to investigate and mitigate an incident. Clarification is requested on the practicalities of enforcement and who or which agency would liaise with the courts to obtain court orders or warrants.

Any potential impact on Council resources/budgets must be subject to further consultation.

**Q14. Do you agree or disagree with the “requirements and restrictions” in relation to “related parties”?**

- Agree
- Disagree
- Undecided
- Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer**

The Council agrees that the “requirements and restrictions” in relation to “related parties” should enable adequate measures to control risk to public health in any given scenario.

**Q15. Do you agree or disagree with the “requirements and restrictions” in relation to “things”?**

- Agree
- Disagree
- Undecided
- Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer**

The Council agrees that the “requirements and restrictions” in relation to “things” should enable adequate measures to control risk to public health in any given scenario that may arise that presents a significant risk to health. The definition of ‘thing’ includes dead body/human remains should be considered with sensitivity in the description.

The Council would like to further understand what role (if any) they may have in relation to these requirements as there would be health and safety considerations and possibly a specialist services required which would not be readily available within Councils current roles, responsibilities, and resources.

Further consideration of the specific examples would be required to inform Councils understanding of the types of scenarios where a significant risk to public health is identified.

The required interventions in some cases may require specialist services that cannot be readily sourced and therefore consideration may need to be given to setting up contingency arrangements by availing expertise and services that may be already available in other jurisdictions. Further clarity will help to inform our understanding of the roles that Councils will be expected to provide.

Consideration of resources and budget associated with the introduction of this Bill is a concern for Councils and a detailed analysis of cost should be undertaken to ensure that there is no additional cost/burden to Councils. It is recommended that a central budget is held by the PHA to allow Councils to undertake any work that is necessary so that Councils' existing budgets are not adversely impacted.

Any proposal that will bring additional responsibilities and burdens on Council resources/budgets will need to be considered in the context of bringing forward these proposals and a regulatory impact assessment will be required if any additional powers are passed to Councils. A central funding arrangement should be considered for this purpose.

**Q16. Do you agree or disagree with the “requirements and restrictions” in relation to the health measures in relation to things for “related persons” and “related things” at paragraph 91?**

- Agree
- Disagree
- Undecided
- Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer**

The Council agrees that the “requirements and restrictions” in relation to health measures in relation to “related persons” and “related things” should enable adequate measures to control risk to public health in any given scenario io that may arise that presents a significant risk to health.

**Q.17 Do you agree or disagree with the “requirements and restrictions” in relation to “premises”?**

- Agree
- Disagree
- Undecided
- Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer**

The Council agrees that the “requirements and restrictions” in relation to health measures in relation to “premises” and “any place” should enable adequate measures to control risk to public health in any given scenario io that may arise that presents a significant risk to health. A definition of a premises and ay exclusions would be useful.

**Q18 Do you agree or disagree with the “requirements and restrictions” in relation to the health measures for "related premises” in relation to a “related person” and a “related thing” in paragraph 98?**

- Agree
- Disagree
- Undecided
- Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer**

The Council agrees that the “requirements and restrictions” in relation to health measures in relation to “premises” and “any place” should enable adequate measures to control risk to public health in any given scenario io that may arise that presents a significant risk to health.

**Q19. Do you agree or disagree with the additional provisions in relation to the making of the magistrates’ court orders?**

- Agree
- Disagree
- Undecided
- Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer**

The section on magistrates court orders lacks any detail on which agency/who will seek and implement such orders

**Q20. Should provision in relation to a timely explanation of interference with individual rights be included?**

- Agree
- Disagree
- Undecided
- Not Applicable

**Please enter your answer and reasons for your answer in the box below.**

Although there is a balance between protecting public health whilst also maintaining an individual's rights, every opportunity must be afforded to provide a timely and expedited right of appeal where an individual is potentially deprived of those rights.

It is also recommended that additional safeguards and support is provided to the most vulnerable in society. Additionally, where an individual or group is subject to restrictions or deprivation of freedoms, then suitable mitigations and financial support should be provided in appropriate circumstances.

**Medical examination: least invasive and least intrusive procedures.**

**Q21. Do you agree or disagree with the provisions in relation to medical examinations?**

- Agree
- Disagree
- Undecided
- Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer**

The Council however considers this is a matter for the relevant health / medical professionals to provide comment on the proposals.

**Q22. Do you agree or disagree with the list in relation to invasive procedures?**

- Agree
- Disagree
- Undecided
- Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer**  
 The Council considers this is a matter for the relevant health / medical professionals to provide comment on the proposals.

**Q23. Do you agree or disagree with the provision of magistrates' court orders in relation to premises?**

- Agree
- Disagree
- Undecided
- Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer**  
 The Council agrees with the provision of magistrates' court orders in relation to premises to ensures that the additional provision is available if access to a premises is not possible or is prevented however detail is lacking on which agency/who will implement these orders

**Q24. Do you agree or disagree with the periods for which magistrates' court orders may be in force?**

- Agree
- Disagree



Undecided

Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer**

The Council acknowledges that where there are situations where individuals pose a severe and imminent risk to public health it may be necessary to apply powers of detention, isolation, and quarantine. The use of such powers must however be used sparingly, and the legislation should reflect that whilst at the same time allowing the statutory agencies some discretion as to assessing and balancing the risk to public health against the protection of individual freedoms / human rights obligations. Consideration needs to be given on what actions will be taken should the risk remain after the 20 days expiration period.

**Q25(a). Do you agree or disagree with the proposals in relation to the making of magistrates' court orders?**

Agree

Disagree

Undecided

Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer**

The Council considers this is a matter for the relevant health / medical professionals to provide comment on the proposals however detail is lacking on which agency/who will implement these orders

**Q25(b). Do you agree or disagree with the proposals in relation to the varying and revocation of magistrates' court orders?**

Agree

Disagree

Undecided

Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer**

The Council agrees with the principle of making court orders as described however the Council considers this is a matter for the relevant health / medical professionals to provide comment on the proposals however detail is lacking on which agency/who will implement these orders

**Q26(a). Do you agree or disagree with the proposal in relation to the enforcement of magistrates' court orders?**

Agree

Disagree

Undecided

Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer**

The Council agrees with the proposals however would welcome some clarification as to who the enforcing body for this aspect of the Bill will be. As highlighted above, Council do not have medical skills or expertise to exercise these powers therefore would fall outside of the scope of Council responsibilities.

**Q26(b). Do you agree or disagree with the proposals in relation to the associated offence and fine?**

Agree

Disagree

Undecided

Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer**

Council do not have medical skills or expertise to exercise these powers therefore would fall outside of the scope of Council responsibilities.

**Supplementary provisions in respect of magistrates' court orders**

**Q27. Do you agree or disagree with the supplementary provisions, enabling the Department to make further regulations in relation to the taking of measures pursuant to a magistrates' court order?**

- Agree
- Disagree
- Undecided
- Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer**

The Council agrees the department should have the scope to make further regulations that are deemed appropriate.

Detail is lacking on which agency/who will enforce magistrates court orders and at this stage understanding what the expectations will be on Council, if any. Conferring functions on any agency or Department without agreement requires further consideration including financial reimbursement.

**Restrictions / emergency powers**

**Q28. Do you agree or disagree with the proposed “restrictions and requirements” that may be included in health protection regulations?**

- Agree
- Disagree
- Undecided
- Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer**

Council agrees with the proposed “restrictions and requirements” that may be included in health protection regulations. Any restrictions and requirements must be proportionate to risk and necessary to do so to protect the public from significant risks to health. Given the range of powers, included Councils would welcome some clarity on the roles in terms of enforcement of any proposed regulations due to the scope that has been outlined for this proposal relating to persons, things, and premises.

The Council believes that the legislation should provide for such remedial measures to apply to premises, things, and persons. Such powers will only be used where an on-going hazard is presented by such material or persons and the powers would provide the mechanism to ‘make

safe' the building or person and thereby eliminate the risk to public health. As it is likely that local councils will have a role in this, the council would emphasise the need to undertake detailed consultation and to ensure that there is no additional cost/burden for councils. Given that these provisions will apply to an "all hazards" approach, Councils will not have the necessary skills, expertise, or ready access to specialised services to deal with incidences where for example specialist decontamination services are required that cannot be readily sourced and therefore consideration may need to be given to setting up contingency arrangements by accessing and availing expertise and services that may be already available in other jurisdictions. Further clarity will help to inform our understanding of the roles that Councils will be expected to provide along with multi agency partners as highlighted in question 3, the role of the Civil Emergencies Contingencies Group and its associated structures will need to be considered in response to any threat that may occur within Northern Ireland.

Appropriate provision should be made for the carrying out of works in default and the recovery of costs where possible, however, it is important to recognize that where such costs are unlikely to be successfully recovered, Council budgets may prohibit expensive works in default. Accordingly, to ensure that works are carried out promptly and the risk to public health is addressed as a priority it is recommended that a central budgetary resource is held which can be accessed by statutory agencies as necessary to carry out such works.

Councils will have been involved in the enforcement of the emergency Health Protection Regulations brought into effect at pace during the Covid pandemic. The lessons learnt from the enquiry should be considered to inform this element of the bill.

In an emergency where legislation is being drafted there should be timely consultations with any statutory body required to enforce such special regulations to ensure that the legislation addresses the intended purpose.

### **Power to require a head teacher to provide contact details of pupils.**

**Q29(a). Do you agree or disagree with the proposals in relation to the power to keep a child out of school?**

**Agree**

**Disagree**

**Undecided**

**Not Applicable**

### **Please give reasons for your answer**

This falls outside of the scope of Council responsibilities and not a function to be conferred to other persons.

**Q29(b). Do you agree or disagree with the requirements on a head teacher to provide contact details?**

Agree

Disagree

Undecided

Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer**

This falls outside of the scope of Council responsibilities. See response to 29(a). Consideration should be given to GDPR and permissions for schools to share pupils information outside of the education system.

**Restriction of access to, or contact with, dead bodies**

**Q30(a). Do you agree or disagree with the proposals in relation to access to dead bodies?**

Agree

Disagree

Undecided

Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer**

The Council agrees with proposals in relation to restricting access and contact with dead bodies who pose a threat to the spread of infectious disease or contamination for the protection of public health.

**Q30(b). Do you agree or disagree with the proposals in relation to contact with dead bodies?**

Agree

Disagree

Undecided

Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer**

The Council agrees with proposals in relation to restricting access and contact with dead bodies who pose a threat to the spread of infectious disease or contamination for the protection of public health.

**Q30(c). Who should have the power to give notice of the restriction?**

**Please provide suggestions in the box below**

The power to give notice of the restriction will be based on medical evidence and therefore Councils would not have any role in this aspect of the proposed Bill.  
Detail is lacking on which agency/who will enforce offence of non-compliance

**Relocation of dead bodies**

**Q31(a). Do you agree or disagree with the proposals in relation to relocation of dead bodies?**

Agree

Disagree

Undecided

Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer**

Any powers conferred should be comprehensive and should allow for requirements on how the body is to be handled and ultimately treated. The Council therefore recommends that there should be powers to require precautions for handling/ preparing bodies, requiring movement to a place and arrangements for interment/disposal to prevent the risk to public health. Such requirements should be based on robust risk assessment.

**Q31(b). Who should have the responsibility to relocate or cause the dead body to be relocated?**

<b>Please provide suggestions in the box below</b>
<p>Given that such hazards are likely to be identified via interaction with medical professionals at or around the time of death it seems likely that controls should commence at that stage by the doctor or other professional such as PHA officials.</p> <p>Detail is lacking on which agency/who will enforce the failure to co-operate offence.</p>

**Limitations: regulations imposing restrictions or requirements**

**Domestic Health Protection Regulations**

**Q32(a). Do you agree or disagree with the scope of the powers to make domestic health protection regulations?**

- Agree
- Disagree
- Undecided
- Not Applicable

<b>Please give reasons for your answer</b>
See points raised in answer to question 28.

**Q32(b). Do you agree or disagree with the scope of the limitations imposing “restrictions or requirements” in relation to domestic health protection regulations?**

- Agree
- Disagree
- Undecided
- Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer**

See points raised in answer to question 28.

**International Travel Health Protection Regulations**

**Q33(a). Do you agree or disagree with the scope of the powers to make international travel health protection regulations?**

Agree

Disagree

Undecided

Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer**

The Council agrees however any regulations must be proportionate to risk and necessary to do so to protect the public from significant risks to health.

In an emergency where legislation is being drafted there should be timely consultations with any statutory body required to enforce such special regulations to ensure that the legislation addresses the intended purpose.

**Q33(b). Do you agree or disagree with the scope of the limitations imposing “restrictions or requirements” in relation to international travel health protection regulations?**

Agree

Disagree

Undecided

Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer**

The Council considers this is a matter for the relevant health / medical professionals to provide comment on the proposals.



**Q34. Do you agree or disagree with the scope of the associated offences and fines?**Agree Disagree Undecided Not Applicable **Please give reasons for your answer**

The lessons learnt from the Covid enquiry should be considered to inform this element of the bill.

Detail is lacking on which agency/who will enforce contraventions of public health regulations failure to co-operate offence. Conferring functions on any agency or Department without agreement requires further consideration including financial reimbursement.

**Powers conferred on any other Northern Ireland Department to make regulations.****Q35. Do you agree or disagree that regulation making powers should be included in the Bill enabling other NI departments to make regulations at the request of the Minister of Health?**Agree Disagree Undecided Not Applicable **Please give reasons for your answer**

Councils welcome any measures to ensure that any new regulations introduced in response to emergency measures are overseen and co-ordinated by the appropriate Ministerial Department. During the Covid pandemic, Councils were involved in the enforcement of the emergency powers and encountered many challenges in enforcing legislation that involved several government departments.

Council welcomes advance consultation with stakeholders on any new regulation, especially with those responsible for enforcement. Failure to consult and consider feedback can result in legislation that is confusing to the public/businesses, open to interpretation and unenforceable by the enforcing authority

Council also encourages that detailed guidance is developed alongside the drafting of legislation to assist in its interpretation and implementation. Such guidance should be provided promptly, ideally prior to the new regulation coming into force.

### **Review of regulations**

**Q36. Do you consider that the proposals in relation to the review of the operation of the health protection regulations are appropriate?**

Agree

Disagree

Undecided

Not Applicable

#### **Please give reasons for your answer**

Council recommends advance consultation with stakeholders on any new regulation, especially with those responsible for enforcement. Failure to consult and consider feedback can result in legislation that is confusing to the public/businesses, open to interpretation and unenforceable by the enforcing authority

Council also encourages that detailed guidance is developed alongside the drafting of legislation to assist in its interpretation and implementation. Such guidance should be provided promptly, ideally prior to the new regulation coming into force.

### **Assembly control**

**Q37. Do you consider that the proposals set out in Recommendation 3 of the Bingham report should be adopted in the new Public Health Bill?**

Agree

Disagree

Undecided

Not Applicable

#### **Please give reasons for your answer**

Council recommends advance consultation with stakeholders on any new regulation, especially with those responsible for enforcement. Failure to consult and consider feedback can result in legislation that is confusing to the public/businesses, open to interpretation and unenforceable by the enforcing authority

Council also encourages that detailed guidance is developed alongside the drafting of legislation to assist in its interpretation and implementation. Such guidance should be provided promptly, ideally prior to the new regulation coming into force.

**Q38. Do you consider that the proposals set out in Recommendation 4 of the Bingham report should be adopted in the new Public Health Bill?**

Agree

Disagree

Undecided

Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer**

**Q39. Do you consider that the proposals set out in Recommendation 5 of the Bingham report should be adopted in the new Public Health Bill?**

Agree

Disagree

Undecided

Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer**

**Q40. Do you agree or disagree that the negative procedure for making urgent international travel regulations should be retained as in Recommendation 6?**

- Agree
- Disagree
- Undecided
- Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer**

**Q41(a). Do you agree or disagree that ministers should have a statutory duty to have regard to any relevant advice produced by National Human Rights Institutions in their jurisdiction as in Recommendation 10?**

- Agree
- Disagree
- Undecided
- Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer**

**Q41(b) What other institutions could this duty be extended to?**

<b>Please provide suggestions in the box below</b>
<p>Commissioner for Older People Council would consult further Legal Services</p>

**Q42(a) Do you agree or disagree that an alternative formal system of enforcement, other than Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs), should be adopted in emergency health protection regulations?**

- Agree
- Disagree
- Undecided
- Not Applicable

<b>Please give reasons for your answer</b>
<p>The lessons learnt from the Covid enquiry should be considered to inform this element of the bill. Any alternative formal system of enforcement, other than Fixed Penalty Notices must be consistent with good practice with a graduated and proportionate approach to enforcement adopted.</p> <p>Council would query if a warning is suitable for a contravention of emergency health protection regulations, given their purpose and the risk to public health.</p> <p>There is a lack of detail on who the enforcement body would be and how decisions on the course of action to be taken would be determined.</p> <p>Recording and managing warnings issued could be problematic for any enforcement body. Regional systems will need to be put in place to enable sharing of information to avoid individual receiving multiple warnings that should have escalated to an FPN or prosecution.</p> <p>The use of warnings for a first offence may not serve as an effective deterrent. FPNs are more appropriate and may be easier to manage.</p>

**Q42(b) If so, what should this look like?**

<b>Please provide suggestions in the box below</b>
See 42 (a)

**THEME 4: PROTECTING INDIVIDUALS (Page 67-69)**

**Q43. Do you consider that appropriate safeguards and protections to individuals have been captured in the proposed Bill?**

- Agree
- Disagree
- Undecided
- Not Applicable

<b>Please give reasons for your answer</b>

## Rural Impact

The Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 places a duty on public authorities, including government departments, to have due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans and when designing and delivering public services.

**Q44. Are the actions or proposals set out in this consultation document likely to have an adverse impact on rural areas?**

Yes

Undecided

Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer.**

Council would suggest based on restrictions during covid, rural areas were adversely affected to a greater extent in respect of access to services etc.

### Equality/human rights questions

**Q45. Are you aware of any indication or evidence – qualitative or quantitative – that the actions/proposals set out in this consultation document may have an adverse impact on equality of opportunity or on good relations? If yes, please give details and comment on what you think should be added or removed to alleviate the adverse impact.**

Yes

Undecided

Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer.**

**Q46. Is there an opportunity to better promote equality of opportunity or good relations? If yes, please give details as to how.**

Yes

Undecided

Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer.**



**Q47. Are there any aspects of this policy proposal where potential human rights violations may occur?**

Yes

Undecided

Not Applicable

**Please give reasons for your answer.**

Whilst safeguards appear to have been considered in the form of appeals and review periods where restrictions and deprivation of movement are imposed, it is not possible to determine the extent, if any, of potential human rights violations until the final draft of the Bill is available for comment.

**Thank you for your comments**

Please submit your response via email or hard copy to the correspondence details below:

**Email:** [phbt@health-ni.gov.uk](mailto:phbt@health-ni.gov.uk)

**Address:** Health Protection Legislation Branch  
C/O PHD Admin Team  
Room C4.22  
Castle Buildings  
Stormont Estate  
Belfast  
Northern Ireland  
BT4 3SQ

END

## Appendix 2.

Proposed Amendments discussed at September 2024 Council meeting:

That council agrees to the completed consultation response form except in relation to the following questions:

Q13 – should be undecided given the reasons outlined in the officer’s response

Q15- should be undecided as officers are looking for further information.

Q26(a) – should be undecided as there is a request for clarity.

Q27 – undecided as lacking in detail.

Q28 – disagree due to concerns regarding impacts on the rights and freedoms of individuals

Q32a and b – disagree due to concerns regarding impacts on the rights and freedoms of individuals

Q43 – disagree as there are concerns regarding the impact on the rights and freedoms of individuals. It is Council’s view that this document should have been subject to impact assessments before consultation.

Furthermore, that the Council’s writes to the Minister should withdraw this consultation given the vagueness in the language used and the lack of impact assessment of what is proposed and expresses its concern that it contains proposals which adversely impact on the rights and freedoms of individuals which are excessive in a democratic society.

Unclassified

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**ITEM 4****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	09 October 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community and Culture
Date of Report	26 September 2024
File Reference	CW159
Legislation	The Local Government Act (NI) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Hardship Funding 2024/25
Attachments	

Ards and North Down Borough Council have an underspend of **£47,000** of Hardship Funding from the 2023/24 DfC allocated funding.

The purpose of this fund is to address hardship due to the current cost of living crisis, particularly the increase in energy and food costs. The Hardship Funding Programme was developed in recognition of the difficult financial circumstances which exist for the community.

The call for applications was launched on 9 September 2024, with a deadline of 24 September 2024 at 12 noon for grants up to a maximum of £3,000 per group/organisation. The call was advertised on Council grants webpage, Council social media, sent to all contacts on the Community Development Database and also in the Chronicle and Spectator Newspapers.

**31 applications** were received by the deadline, totalling to a value of **£92,751.00**. The application and scoring process for this funding stream has been administered

Not Applicable

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in accordance with the previous grants policy, as the new policy wasn't approved by Council until 25<sup>th</sup> September 2024.

The scoring panel consisted of the Community Development Manager, Assistant Regeneration Officer and Community Grants and Funding Co-ordinator.

The assessment panel met on 25 and 26 September 2024 to score the applications. The pass mark was agreed by the panel as 60%. 22 applications met the pass mark which equated to the total value of £64,751.00. As the successful applications are more than the overall budget of £47,000, it is recommended that the total remaining budget is proportionally allocated at 73% of the eligible awarded amount across all 22 of the successful applications, as detailed in table 1. Applications that did not reach the pass mark of 60% are detailed in table 2. There were 6 Applications that were not scored as they were deemed as ineligible.

<b>TABLE 1 - Successful Hardship Fund Breakdown - Pass mark 60%</b>				
<b>#</b>	<b>Name Of Group</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Eligible Amount</b>	<b>Amount Awarded @ 73%</b>
1	Ards Community Wellbeing Association	64%	£2,000.00	£1,460.00
2	Bangor Foodbank and Community Support	76%	£3,000.00	£2,190.00
3	Bowtown Community Development Group	80%	£3,000.00	£2,190.00
4	Carrowdore & District Community Association	68%	£3,000.00	£2,190.00
5	Clandeboyne Village Community Association	84%	£3,000.00	£2,190.00
6	Conlig Community Regeneration Group	84%	£3,000.00	£2,190.00
7	Glenward Community Development Association	96%	£3,000.00	£2,190.00
8	Hollywood Family Trust	60%	£3,000.00	£2,190.00
9	Kilcooley Women's Centre	88%	£3,000.00	£2,190.00
10	Ladybirds Childcare	92%	£3,000.00	£2,190.00
11	Millisle & District Community Association	60%	£3,000.00	£2,190.00
12	Newtownards Foodbank	60%	£3,000.00	£2,190.00
13	North Down Community Network	84%	£3,000.00	£2,190.00
14	North Down Community Works	60%	£3,000.00	£2,190.00
15	Orchardville - North Down Service	72%	£2,800.00	£2,044.00
16	Portaferry Community Collective	88%	£3,000.00	£2,190.00
17	St Marys Primary School PSG	92%	£2,951.00	£2,154.23
18	St Vincent de Paul - Portaferry	68%	£3,000.00	£2,190.00
19	West Winds Development Association	100%	£3,000.00	£2,190.00
20	Whitehill Community Association	92%	£3,000.00	£2,190.00
21	Women's Aid North Down & Ards	80%	£3,000.00	£2,190.00
22	YMCA North Down & Ards	72%	£3,000.00	£2,190.00
<b>Totals:</b>			<b>£64,751.00</b>	<b>£47,268.23</b>

Not Applicable

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**TABLE 2 - Applications that didn't meet the 60% Pass Mark**

#	Name Of Group	Score	Reason for Unsuccessful Application
23	Hollywood Community Network	28%	Didn't reach the 60% pass mark
24	St Columbas College Portaferry	56%	Didn't reach the 60% pass mark
25	The Hygiene Bank	48%	Didn't reach the 60% pass mark

**TABLE 3 - Applications not scored as deemed ineligible**

#	Name Of Group	Score	Reason for Unsuccessful Application
26	Donaghadee Community Development Association	0%	Capital equipment items not eligible
27	St Vincent de Paul - Ballyholme/Donaghadee	0%	As per guidance only 1 application per organisation
28	St Vincent de Paul - Bangor	0%	As per guidance only 1 application per organisation
29	St Vincent de Paul - Hollywood	0%	As per guidance only 1 application per organisation
30	St Vincent de Paul - Kircubbin	0%	As per guidance only 1 application per organisation
31	St Vincent de Paul - Newtownards	0%	As per guidance only 1 application per organisation

Application and guidance notes stated that only one application would be allowed per group/organisation. St Vincent de Paul NDA (SVP) submitted 6 separate applications for different areas in ANDBC. The scoring panel therefore only scored the first application to be received from SVP.

### RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council approve the 22 successful applications and award funding as detailed in table 1.

Unclassified

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**ITEM 5****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	09 October 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community and Culture
Date of Report	19 September 2024
File Reference	ART 18-10/24
Legislation	Local Government Act (NI)
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Beach of Dreams - Our Siren Song Update
Attachments	Appendix 1 Draft Programme of Activity Appendix 2 Budget Summary Appendix 3 Partners

Members will recall that an initial report on the ‘Beach of Dreams’ event was brought to Council through the Community and Wellbeing Committee in June 2024. As a reminder, it is a coastline-communities creativity and climate action programme 2024 - 2025 and UK-wide walking arts festival, 1 May–1 June 2025.

Beach of Dreams is an exploration of the UK Coastline and its environment which began in June 2024 and will culminate in a UK wide walking arts festival from 1 May to 1 June 2025. It is an opportunity for ANDBC to be a part of a spectacular international movement, that re-imagines our relationship with the coast and inspires positive climate action. Belfast-based Beat Carnival, the Northern Ireland partner in Beach of Dreams, will deliver local activity under the title ‘Our Siren Song’ including artistic commissions with communities. A budget is required in order for the Council to participate fully as follows.

Not Applicable

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A workshop programme will engage local people in creation of new artworks in response to the coastal environment and climate emergency.

The project will culminate in Our Siren Song – a festival that will take place at Millisle Beach on 17 May 2025 with smaller scale activity taking place in coastal communities Ballywalter, Ballyhalbert, Portavogie, Cloughey and Portaferry.

Community research and consultation began at the end of August with beach walks and talks at Cloughey, Ballywalter, Kearney and Millisle and a visit to Beat Carnival Centre. An information evening and consultation took place at Millisle Community Hub on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> September and was attended by representatives from the Peninsula villages, Millisle Community Association and several interested local individuals. This was the beginning a number of planned opportunities for engagement. Creatively connecting with the coastline will enable all of us to understand it better, empowering people and their communities to take care of themselves, each other, and the local environment.

The Objectives of this project are to:

- explore how we take care of the coastal environment, communities, and ourselves
- grow creative capacity in communities and support health, wellbeing, and happiness
- build stronger connections between participants, communities and with nature
- celebrate lives along our coast, life and culture that exists because of the coast activate climate awareness through shared creativity, ideas, inspiration and pledges.

The project has 3 key strands:

1: Workshops Programme - January to May 2025

The programme will be co-designed, directed and delivered with participating community groups with activity in keeping with the demographic and interests in each village. Inter-community sessions will address rural isolation and foster good relationships between villages in the borough. Access and isolation issues will be addressed throughout, including beach / coast access. Online seminars will also be provided, and all local education establishments will be engaged.

Local artists will be engaged to provide high-quality experience for participants and audiences and the programme will have an environmentally sensitive message. Workshop activities will include carnival, storytelling and song writing (Our Siren Song), exploring our cultural heritage, pennant design & creation, beach site dressing, fabric painting and natural dyeing, construction with willow and other natural materials, puppet making, carnival drumming and dance, coastal ecology and climate awareness, place names and cultural connections and video, photography and documentation.

2: Our Siren Song Festival - Tuesday 13 to Friday 16 May 2025

A series of smaller-scale community events in villages along the peninsula will take place to celebrate achievements of participating groups and build awareness and anticipation for the finale event at Millisle on 17 May 2025. These village events build their sense of importance and inclusion in the overall festival production and communities will organise walks along their sections of the coast.

Not Applicable

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Tuesday 13 May:	Portaferry - Our Siren Song evening, outdoor event. The Siren sets off to journey through the villages to the Millisle finale event.
Wednesday 14 May:	Kearney, Cloughey and Portavogie - connecting coastal walk / row, beach activities and photoshoot.
Thursday 15 May:	Ballyhalbert and Ballywalter - connecting coastal walk / row, beach dressing and performance, photoshoot.
Friday 16 May:	Millisle site preparation, willow Sirens installation and rehearsal.

### 3: Our Siren Song Festival Finale - Saturday 17 May 2025

Millisle festival site would include the beach, lagoon, field and park.

#### **Daytime Entertainment**

Including but not limited to 500 decorated pennants displayed on beach; Sand art activities; Face painting; Drum and Dance workshops; Storytelling; Sea-themed dress competition, Pennant making; Photo boards; Ecology stalls; Food vendors and traders; Beach clean; Marine touch-tank; Lagoon Mermaid and other performance entertainers.

#### **Procession**

6.30pm carnival procession through Millisle to the shore, as the Siren finishes her journey to the sea. The Siren Song will ring out, voiced by the accumulated choirs from along the peninsula. She will be accompanied by drummers, dancers and artists, showcasing skills they learnt through the workshops programme.

#### **Finale performance**

The Siren conveys her message to the gathered audience through song, music and dance. She will call out across the waves, as we send pennants and messages on their way to the next Beach of Dreams location in Scotland.

#### **Partnerships**

Beat Carnival is a Regional Partner in Beach of Dreams with 12 others from England, Scotland and Wales. The Siren Song core partners are the Council, Millisle Community Association; Ards Rural Project, Education Authority NI; Friends of the Earth NI; Climate Craic Festival; Queens University of Belfast, Sustainability, Equality & Climate Action department.

#### **Budget and Funding**

Beat Carnival's budget target for the project is £100,000. £20,000 has been achieved initially, which enables the project to get underway. An application has been submitted to the Arts Council of Northern Ireland's Rural Funding Programme and other sources of support continue to be explored.



Not Applicable

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council agree to participate in the above as described, subject to approval of the attached draft programme of activity and budget up to £40k being made available subject to the 2025/2026 rates setting process.

Activity	Details	Beneficiaries	Cost
Lead Artist appointed  Community Consultation  June – end of 2024	Co-design with residents of Ards Peninsula and key partner organisations  Community meetings and coastal walks to discuss the unique heritage in the area, gather stories, and ideas of what participants would like to see in the Our Siren Song programme	50 participants 6 walks 2 events	Covered below
Project Management and new artistic works  November – May 2025	Song Creation from stories gathered in previous sessions  Willow Siren structure that will be used as a spectacle piece to bring audience to the coast	3 main artists	£15,000 commission from Partner group Kinetika  £5,000 from Beat Carnival funds
Community engagement: core workshops programme in Ards Peninsula villages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Millisle</li> <li>• Ballywalter</li> <li>• Ballyhalbert</li> <li>• Portavogie</li> <li>• Cloughey</li> <li>• Portaferry</li> </ul> and activities in other locations from North Down/Bangor and Donaghadee, to Portaferry  January – May 2025	Workshops to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Storytelling and song writing (Our Siren Song)</li> <li>- Pennant design &amp; creation, site dressing</li> <li>- Fabric painting and natural dyeing</li> <li>- Construction with willow and other natural materials</li> <li>- Puppet making, large and small scale</li> <li>- Carnival drumming</li> <li>- Carnival dance and choreography</li> <li>- Coastal ecology and climate awareness</li> <li>- Ards and Scotland: place names and cultural connections</li> <li>- Video, photography and documentation.</li> </ul>	1500 participants of all ages and backgrounds at workshops, walks and sea activities, seminars and roundtables, events production and performance at least 50 activities with community and youth groups, schools, heritage groups, choirs etc and other partners  10 artists 10 ecology and heritage facilitators	£29,000  Supported by - ACNI REAP - TNLCF Awards for All - AND Borough Council
Festival week: coastal community events	Village events – local participants showcase their work, build their sense of importance and inclusion in the overall festival production.	At least 500 audience	£6,000

<p>13<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> May 2025</p>	<p>Communities organise walks (and rowing) along their sections of the coast.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Portaferry - Our Siren Song evening, outdoor event. The Siren sets off to journey through the villages to the Millisle finale event</li> <li>- Kearney, Cloughey &amp; Portavogie - connecting coastal walk / row, beach dressing and photoshoot</li> <li>- Ballyhalbert &amp; Ballywalter - connecting coastal walk / row, beach dressing and performance, photoshoot</li> <li>- Millisle - site preparation, Siren installation and rehearsal</li> </ul>	<p>Village participants counted in 'engagement' above</p> <p>20 artists/performers and crew</p>	
<p>Finale event 17<sup>th</sup> May 2025</p> <p>Millisle Beach, Lagoon, field and park</p>	<p>(i) Afternoon fun and entertainment, e.g. 500+ Pennants displayed on beach; Sand art activities; Face painting; Drum and Dance workshops; Storytelling; Sea-themed dress competition, Pennant making; Photo boards; Ecology stalls; Food vendors and traders; Beach clean; Marine touch-tank; Lagoon Mermaid and other performance entertainers.</p> <p>(ii) Procession. 6.30pm carnival procession through Millisle to the shore, as the Siren finishes her journey to the sea. The Siren Song will ring out, voiced by the accumulated choirs from along the peninsula. She will be accompanied by drummers, dancers and artists, showcasing skills they learnt through the workshops programme.</p> <p>(iii) Finale performance. The Siren conveys her message to the gathered audience through song, music and dance. She will call out across the waves, as we send pennants and messages on their way to the next Beach of Dreams location in Scotland.</p>	<p>5,000 audience from North Down and Ards Council; neighbouring areas; other NI</p> <p>150 procession participants</p> <p>20 artists/performers</p> <p>10 Beat event crew</p> <p>100 volunteers</p>	<p>£45,000</p>
<p>Legacy</p> <p>May 2025 -&gt;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Focused pride of place: celebrate heritage, placemaking and community-building</li> <li>- Foster talent, increase communities' creative capacity and ambition: 'Carnival On The Coast'</li> <li>- Increase environmental awareness and eco-sustainability</li> <li>- Foster youth and community leadership</li> </ul>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Create employment and opportunities for freelance arts practitioners in the Borough</li><li>- Champion participation and inclusion</li><li>- Form new partnerships for longer term actions</li><li>- Space for discussion and debate, encourage the thinking needed to solve social and environmental problems</li><li>- Improve health and well-being</li><li>- Provide additional value to tourism and PR-Marketing</li></ul> <p>The project's artistic creations will be displayed in a UK tour after June 2025 and available to be seen world-wide in video and on the Beach of Dreams website.</p> <p>The Beach of Dreams project finale event will be in Dorset 20 - 21 September 2025</p>		
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## APPENDIX 2

## Budget Summary

<b>Income</b>		
Beat Carnival cash	£5,000	Secured
Beat Carnival in kind (staff, facilities and equipment, costume and floats)	£10,000	Secured true value likely to be greater
Kinetika commission - Arts Council England grant	£15,000	Secured
Arts Council of Northern Ireland – Rural Engagement Arts Programme	£10,000	Applied for
The National Lottery Community Fund – Awards for All	£20,000	Applied for
Ards and North Down Borough Council	£40,000	Unsecured
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£100,000</b>	

<b>Expenditure</b>	
Community engagement and workshops programme	£29,000
Our Siren Song Festival week	£6,000
Our Siren Song Finale event	£45,000
Project management; documentation & reporting; facilitation of new artistic creation, publicity	£20,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£100,000</b>

## Partnerships

### UK partners in Beach of Dreams

UK lead partner: Kinetika, London

12 Regional Partners

- Activate, Dorset
- Bay of Colwyn Town Council, Wales
- Beat Carnival, Northern Ireland, the Ards Peninsula, County Down coast
- Essex Book Festival
- Estuary 25, Thames Estuary
- Fife Coast and Countryside Trust, Scotland
- MSL Projects, Hastings
- Out There Arts, Great Yarmouth
- South West Coast Path, Plymouth
- Stronger Shores, South Tyneside
- T100 Festival, Thurrock
- TAPE Community Music & Film, Wales

### Our Siren Song local NI partners and potential partners:

**The NI Partners** currently are:

Ards and North Down

Ards Rural Project, Education Authority NI

Millisle Community Association

Friends of the Earth NI

Climate Craic Festival

Queens' University of Belfast, Sustainability, Equality & Climate Action dept – active citizenship, democracy and green politics

Other significant organisations that have expressed interest and support include

National Trust NI; Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful; Climate Craic Festival; Marine Historic Environment Advisor |Marine & Fisheries | NI Gov. Dept of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs; Belfast School of Art, Ulster University; BRINK! climate action platform.

Unclassified

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**ITEM 6****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	09 October 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Leisure Services
Date of Report	25 September 2024
File Reference	SD151
Legislation	Recreation and Youth Services Order (1986)
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Ards and North Down Sports Forum Grants (WG September 2024)
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Successful Coach Education Report for Approval Appendix 2 - Successful Equipment Report for Approval Appendix 3 - Successful Goldcard Report for Noting Appendix 4 - Successful Individual Travel & Accommodation Report for Noting Appendix 5 - Unsuccessful Report

Members will be aware that on the 26 August 2015, Council delegated authority to the Ards and North Down Sports Forum, in order to allow it to administer sports grants funding on behalf of the Council. £45,000 had been allocated within the 2024/2025 revenue budget for this purpose.

The Council further authorised the Forum under delegated powers to award grants of up to £250. Grants above £250 still require Council approval. In addition, the Council requested that regular updates are reported to members.

Not Applicable

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During August 2024, the Forum received a total of 22 applications: 1 Anniversary, 1 Coach Education, 1 Equipment, 7 Goldcard and 12 Individual Travel/Accommodation Grants. A summary of the **21** successful applications are detailed in the attached Successful Coach Education, Successful Equipment, Successful Goldcard and Successful Individual Travel/Accommodation Appendices.

<b>2024/25 Budget £45,000</b>	Annual Budget	Proposed Funding Awarded August 2024	Remaining Budget
Anniversary	£1,000	£0	<b>-£2,749.90</b>
Coach Education	£3,000	*£500	<b>£1,638.75</b>
Equipment	£14,000	*£999.98	<b>£2,120.74</b>
Events	£6,000	£0	<b>£1,649.46</b>
Seeding	£500	£0	<b>£500</b>
Travel and Accommodation	£14,500	*£1,790	<b>-£4,489.57</b>
Discretionary	£1,000	£0	<b>£1,000</b>
Schools/Sports Club Pathway	£5,000	£0	<b>£5,000</b>
<b>7 Goldcards Awarded in August (33 Goldcards in total during 2024/25)</b>			

\*The proposed remaining budget for Coach Education of **£1,638.75** is based on a proposed award this month of £500 and withdrawn costs of **£500**.

\*The proposed remaining budget for Equipment of **£2,120.74** is based on a proposed award this month of **£999.98**.

\*The proposed remaining budget for Travel and Accommodation of **-£4,489.57** is based on a proposed award this month of **£1,790** and withdrawn costs of **£350**.

The proposed remaining budget for 2024/25 is **£4,669.48** (90% of the 2024/25 budget spent).

Noting the high volume of grant applications thus far in 2024/25, with 90% of budget proposed for approval in the first half of the financial year, officers carried out a forecasting exercise utilising expenditure to date in 2024/25 and expenditure in the last financial year, 2023/24. Resulting from this, officers estimate if the current trend persists, it is possible that an additional sum of circa £11,000 could be required above the £45,000 budget agreed for 2024/25 to meet the expected level of applications.

It is proposed that this funding is financed from within the 24/25 leisure budgets to ensure Council continues to support the success and work of our sporting sector. The leisure team are confident that sufficient additional income to cover all predicted applications will be available at year end based on the current income figures from ABMWLC in order to fund this.

The alternative is that grants will not be available for the remainder of the year once the remaining 10% of funding is awarded. A business case will be brought forward



Not Applicable

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on next year's AND Sports Forum Grants as part of the 2025/26 rate setting process to ensure that Council continue to provide assistance to our sporting community for club development as they represent the Borough on the sporting stage.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council:

- (a) notes the attached applications for financial assistance for sporting purposes;  
and
- (b) approves the allocation of funding to facilitate all eligible requests for the remainder of the year as described in this report.

## APPENDIX 1 - SUCCESSFUL COACH EDUCATION REPORT FOR APPROVAL

NAME	COURSE	BENEFITS	FACILITATOR	DATES	REQUESTED	PROPOSED	NOTES
Bangor Barracudas Water Polo Club (1623)	Water Polo	Level 1 water polo coach €499 x 2. We are a growing club hoping to increase our membership in u9 girls, u11 girls and boys and senior men. Increasing membership will need more level one coaches are required to support our level 2 coaches and help the club to grow.	Swim Ireland	Course will start now with on-line modules and finish by 31/12/2024	€499 x 2 = €998. £844. Requested 75%, as per guidelines, £633.	£500.00	<b>All documentation provided. Recommend funding of £500, the maximum funding per Club for Coaching/Training Grants per financial year.</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>						<b>£500.00</b>	

## APPENDIX 2 - SUCCESSFUL EQUIPMENT REPORT FOR APPROVAL

NAME	TYPE	EQUIPMENT NEED	BENEFIT	COSTS	REQUESTED	PROPOSED	NOTES
North Down Hockey Club (1607)	Hockey	Training equipment. Having good quality training equipment is essential to being able to deliver high quality sessions within both our senior and youth sections. With over 400 members and 3 training nights/days per week plus matches for 9 teams and regularly hosting blitz days and friendlies for our youth we do need a large amount of training equipment to spread across the club.	Having good training equipment will benefit our club in a number of ways. It will help improve skill and performance and help players work on specific aspects of their game and become more well-rounded players. High-quality training equipment can help reduce the risk of injuries during practice sessions. Equipment such as protective gear is also essential for match play. We hope that new equipment will increase motivation and encourage members to push themselves to reach their full potential.	Fundamental - Ball baskets x2 = £80 / Practice balls x44 = £220, Costs £300. Non fundamental - 2 X Mini Goals [12 X 2] = £499.98 / 4 x Makers 15 Pack = £140 / 3 x Cones 50 Pack = £60. Costs £699.98. Total £999.98.	£999.98	£999.98	<b>All documentation provided, recommend funding £999.98</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>						<b>£999.98</b>	

## APPENDIX 3 - SUCCESSFUL GOLDCARD REPORT FOR NOTING

APPLICANT	SPORT	EVENT	DATES	GOLDCARD	REPRESENTING	PROPOSED	NOTES
Anthony McLeggan (1608)	Powerlifting	IPF World Masters / British Powerlifting Home Championship	10th October 2024 / 14th December 2024	BA - Gym, pool, health suite	Ulster / Northern Ireland / Ireland	Yes	<b>Anthony has been selected to represent Ireland. He will be competing at the World Masters Classic Powerlifting Championships in Sun City, South Africa running from 5th – 13th October 2024. British Powerlifting website shows Anthony is ranked in the top 3 in the 105kg open weight category, and a letter from British Powerlifting confirms he has been selected for this event. Goldcard recommended for 6 months until 10 March 2025.</b>
Hannah McKee (1610)	Powerlifting	IPF Commonwealth Championships, Sun City, South Africa	4-11 October 2024	ABMWLC, LDPK, CL / Gym, health suite, pool, cryo spa	Northern Ireland	Yes	<b>Hannah has been selected to represent Northern Ireland at the IPF Commonwealth Championships from 4-11 October 2024 in Sun City, South Africa. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from British Powerlifting. Goldcard recommended for 6 months until 10 March 2025.</b>

Hannah Dadley-Young (1614)	Sailing	29er Worlds and Europeans 2025	2025	Bangor Aurora and Bangor Sportsplex (Gym, Health Suite & Pool)	Northern Ireland	Yes	Hannah was awarded a Goldcard up to 29 August 2024, she has submitted a letter from the RYA NI advising she is currently sailing a 29er higher performance double-handed (Two Crew) dinghy. Recognised as an Olympic Pathway boat to the Senior 49erFX of which Ireland now has an established development programme. Hannah is a member of the Northern Ireland Performance Academy. Goldcard extension recommended for 6 months until 10 March 2025.
Kathryn Glover (1618)	Swimming	World Transplant Games, Dresden, Germany	17-24 August 2025	Comber Gym, Swimming Pool ABMWLC and Swimming Pool Bangor Aurora	Northern Ireland Seniors Masters (Transplant)	Yes	A letter from Transplant Sport NI confirms Kathryn has been selected to represent Northern Ireland at the World Transplant Games in Germany in August 2025. They are not a recognised NGB, however the Sports Forum recommended a GoldCard in October 2022, under the Discretionary Funding Category, this decision was supported by Management. Goldcard recommended until 24 August 2025.

<p>Annabel Ridout (1625)</p>	<p>Sailing</p>	<p>RS Feva UK National Championships / RS Feva World Championships / RYA Youth Championships. Dalgety Bay, Scotland / France</p>	<p>24-27th May 2025 / 26th July – 1st August 2025 / 6-7th September 2025</p>	<p>ABM, BA, QLC - gym, health suite and pool</p>	<p>Northern Ireland</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p><b>Annabel was awarded a Goldcard up to 8 September 2024, she has submitted a letter from the RYA NI advising she has been selected to represent Northern Ireland to attend the target events: RS Feva UK National Championships in Dalgety Bay, Scotland from 24-27th May 2025 / RS Feva World Championships in France from 26th July – 1st August 2025 / RYA Youth Championships from 6-7th September 2025. Goldcard extension recommended for 12 months until 8 September 2025.</b></p>
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Peter Ridout (1626)	Sailing	RS Feva UK National Championships / RS Feva World Championships / RYA Youth Championships. Dalgety Bay, Scotland / France	24-27th May 2025 / 26th July – 1st August 2025 / 6-7th September 2025	ABM, BA - gym, health suite and pool	Northern Ireland	Yes	<b>Peter was awarded a Goldcard up to 8 September 2024, she has submitted a letter from the RYA NI advising he has been selected to represent Northern Ireland to attend the target events: RS Feva UK National Championships in Dalgety Bay, Scotland from 24-27th May 2025 / RS Feva World Championships in France from 26th July – 1st August 2025 / RYA Youth Championships from 6-7th September 2025. Goldcard extension recommended for 12 months until 8 September 2025.</b>
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Emily Ridout (1627)	Sailing	RS Feva UK National Championships / RS Feva World Championships / RYA Youth Championships. Dalgety Bay, Scotland / France.	24-27th May 2025 / 26th July – 1st August 2025 / 6-7th September 2025	ABM, BA, QLC - gym, health suite and pool	Northern Ireland	Yes	<b>Emily was awarded a Goldcard until 8 September 2024, she has submitted a letter from the RYA NI advising she has been selected to represent Northern Ireland to attend the target events: RS Feva UK National Championships in Dalgety Bay, Scotland from 24-27th May 2025 / RS Feva World Championships in France from 26th July – 1st August 2025 / RYA Youth Championships from 6-7th September 2025. Goldcard extension recommended for 12 months until 8 September 2025.</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>						<b>7</b>	



## APPENDIX 4 - SUCCESSFUL INDIVIDUAL TRAVEL/ACCOMMODATION REPORT FOR NOTING

APPLICANT	SPORT	EVENT	DATES	LOCATION	REPRESENTING2	REQUESTED	PROPOSED	NOTES
Charlotte Glenn (1609)	Equestrian	JCB National Championships	9-17 August 2024	Offchurch, Bury, CV33 9AW	Ulster	£150	£150	Charlotte is competing in showjumping and eventing at the JCB National Championships in Offchurch bury from 9-17 August 2024. Selection letter provided by Pony Club. Recommend funding of £150, "subject to", a selection letter from the British Equestrian Federation or Horse Sport Ireland.
Hannah McKee (1611)	Powerlifting	IPF Commonwealth Championships	4-11 October 2024	Sun City, South Africa	Northern Ireland	£200	£200	Hannah has been selected to represent Northern Ireland at the IPF Commonwealth Championships from 4-11 October 2024 in Sun City, South Africa. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from British Powerlifting. Recommend funding of £200
Georgina Hall (1612)	Volleyball	Rising Starts FIVB Empowerment Camp	16-18 August 2024	Edinburgh, Scotland	Northern Ireland U20	£150	£150	Georgina has been selected to represent Northern Ireland U20 at the Rising Starts FIVB Empowerment Camp from 16-18 August 2024 in Edinburgh, Scotland. This has been confirmed by an email from NI Volleyball. Recommend funding of £150

Alexandra Rose Picton-Lynas (1613)	Volleyball	Rising Starts FIVB Empowerment Camp	16-18 August 2024	Edinburgh, Scotland	Northern Ireland U20	£150	£150	Alexandra has been selected to represent Northern Ireland U20 at the Rising Starts FIVB Empowerment Camp from 16-18 August 2024 in Edinburgh, Scotland. This has been confirmed by an email from NI Volleyball. Recommend funding of £150
Lucy Donnan (1615)	Equestrian	BSPS Summer champs inter country team event	20th-24th August 2024	Arena UK, Grantham, NG32 2EF	Northern Ireland	£150	£150	Lucy is competing at the BSPS Summer champs inter country team event from 20-24 August 2024. Selection letter provided by Irish Pony Society. Recommend funding of £150, "subject to" a selection letter from British Equestrian Federation or Horse Sport Ireland.
Charlotte Keers (1616)	Equestrian	Wellington International Horse Trials	24-25th August 2024	Wellington	Northern Ireland	£150	£150	Charlotte is representing Northern Ireland at the Wellington International Horse Trials from 24-25 August 2024. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from the British Equestrian Federation. Recommend funding of £150.

Eloise Keers (1617)	Equestrian	National Tournament	20-25 August 2024	Henley-in-Arden	Northern Ireland	£150	£150	Eloise is representing Northern Ireland at the National Tournament in Henley-in-Arden from 20-25 August 2024. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from the British Equestrian Federation. Recommend funding of £150.
Anna McLarnon (1619)	Weightlifting	19th International Women's Grand Prix	22-25 August 2024	Baden, Austria	Ireland	£170	£170	Anna has been selected to represent Ireland at the 19th International Women's Grand Prix from 22-25 August 2024 in Baden, Austria. This has been confirmed by a selection email from Weightlifting Ireland. Recommend funding of £170.
Claire McLarnon (1620)	Weightlifting	World Masters Championships 2024	5-14 September 2024	Finland	Ireland	£170	£170	Claire has been selected to represent Ireland at the World Masters Championships 2024 from 5-14 September 2024 in Finland. This has been confirmed by a selection email from Weightlifting Ireland. Recommend funding of £170.

Sarah Tully (1621)	Tenpin Bowling	Youth Triple Crown	21-25 August 2024	Leisureplex Blanchardstown	Northern Ireland	£100	£100	Sarah has been selected to represent Northern Ireland at the Youth Triple Crown at the Leisureplex Blanchardstown, Dublin, Ireland from 21 – 25 August. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from the Northern Ireland Tenpin Bowling Federation. Recommend funding of £100.
Sophie Tully (1622)	Tenpin Bowling	Youth Triple Crown	21-25 August 2024	Leisureplex Blanchardstown	Northern Ireland	£100	£100	Sophie has been selected to represent Northern Ireland at the Youth Triple Crown at the Leisureplex Blanchardstown, Dublin, Ireland from 21 – 25 August. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from the Northern Ireland Tenpin Bowling Federation. Recommend funding of £100.
Adam Duffield (1628)	Hockey	UK Schools Games	29 August - 1 September 2024	Loughborough University	Ulster Under 18	£150	£150	Adam has been selected to represent Ulster at under 18 level at the UK Schools Games from 29 August - 1 September 2024. This has been confirmed by an email from Ulster Hockey. Recommend funding £150.
<b>TOTALS</b>							<b>£1,790.00</b>	

## APPENDIX 5 - UNSUCCESSFUL REPORT

APPLICANT	APPLICATION	REQUEST	EVIDENCE REQUIRED	EXPLANATION
Bangor Chiefs Inline Hockey Club (1624)	ANNIVERSARY	20th Anniversary Gala Dinner at Clandeboye Golf Club on 28 September 2024. Requested £750 towards the event.	Our Anniversary Application Guidance states, "the club request for a grant should be made three months prior to the anniversary month being commemorated".	<b>Funding not recommended as grant received on 27 August 2024 for their 20th Anniversary Gala Dinner on 28 September 2024. Our guidelines state, "the club request for a grant should be made three months prior to the anniversary month being commemorated".</b>

Unclassified

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**ITEM 7****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	09 October 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Parks and Cemeteries
Date of Report	20 September 2024
File Reference	CW30
Legislation	N/A
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below: N/A
Subject	North Down Coastal Path Working Group
Attachments	Appendix Minutes of the North Down Coastal Path Working Group held on 17 July 2024

The third meeting of the North Down Coastal Path Working Group was held on 17 July 2024 and the attached minutes of that meeting were approved by the Working Group at its September meeting

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council note the attached minutes.

**DRAFT**

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**ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

A Meeting of the North Down Coastal Path Working Group of Ards and North Down Borough Council was held in Church Street, Newtownards, on Wednesday 17 July 2024 at 6:00 pm.

**PRESENT:**

**In the Chair:** Councillor McKimm

**Alderman:** Graham

**Councillors:** Creighton  
Harbinson  
Hollywood  
Irwin  
McKee

**Officers:** Director of Community and Wellbeing (G Bannister), Head of Parks & Cemeteries (S Daye), Parks and Cemeteries Development Manager (J Bettes) and Democratic Services Officer (H Loebnau)

At the beginning of the meeting the Director explained that the lift at Church Street had broken down and was in the process of being repaired. It was for that reason that the meeting was taking place in his office on the ground floor rather than the Council Chamber. He gave apologies for that.

**NOTED.**

**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Alderman McRandal and Councillors Cochrane and W Irvine.

**NOTED.**

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest notified.

**NOTED.**

The Parks and Cemeteries Development Manager (J Bettes) was introduced at the start of the meeting, and he described his role explaining that he had responsibility for the community engagement side of the future development of the Coastal Path.

Members were informed that a further member of staff Rachael Ludlow-Williams (Greenways & Community Trails Development Officer) had been appointed and had taken up her role the previous day.

**NOTED.**

### **3. MINUTES OF NORTH DOWN COASTAL PATH WORKING GROUP MEETING DATED 29 APRIL 2024**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Minutes of the North Down Coastal Path Working Group meeting dated 29 April 2024.

**AGREED, on the proposal of Councillor McKee, seconded by Councillor Creighton, that the minutes be adopted.**

### **4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXTERNAL MEMBERS OF WORKING GROUP**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that in January 2023 Elected Members agreed to withdraw the planning application for the proposed Kinnegar to Donaghadee Greenway Scheme and instead to set up a Task & Finish Working Group to address issues of connectivity, access and maintenance along the North Down Coastal Path.

In September 2023, the Council agreed a Terms of Reference that included the requirement to “invite interested groups, and those with specific expertise to be represented on the Working Group”. At the North Down Coastal Path Working Group meeting on 29 April 2024 a procedure for selecting representatives of up to five community partner organisations was agreed.

Stage 1: Open advertisement requesting applications from interested groups or organisations. The group would be required to specify the main person representing the group and two deputies.

Stage 2 - Proposed Assessment Process: a written application process with Chairperson and Council Officers putting a recommendation to the Working Group with successful groups invited to the September 2024 meeting.

Advertising of Community Partners took place between the period 13 June to 10 July 2024 in local newspapers, social media and council website. In addition, all information was also posted on the North Down Coastal Path website: [www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/ndcp](http://www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/ndcp), including minutes and agenda of previous meetings.



Six applications were received, and an evaluation of the applications took place on 16th July 2024 at Bangor City Hall. The evaluation was carried out by the Chairperson of the North Down Coastal Path Working Group, the Director of Community & Wellbeing, the Head of Parks & Cemeteries & the Parks & Cemeteries Development Manager. The results of the evaluation were below:

Group	Total	Rank
For Another Path	40	1
Friends of Columbanus	39	2
Greenspaces Group	36	3
AND Cycle Campaign Group	36	3
Bangor Chamber of Commerce Group	30	5
Boom Studios Group	29	6

RECOMMENDED that the above is noted and that the recommendations for External Members of North Down Coastal Path Working Group are that the following five groups, being the top five scoring, are invited to attend meetings of the North Down Coastal Path Working Group for a period of 12 months starting in September 2024.

- For Another Path
- Friends of Columbanus
- Greenspaces Group
- AND Cycle Campaign Group
- Bangor Chamber of Commerce Group

The Head of Parks and Cemeteries outlined the report and the process taken to reach the above recommendation of appointing the top five scoring groups. Those groups would be invited to be represented at the September meeting of the North Down Coastal Path Working Group. Others would also be invited to represent the views of the city of Bangor and the towns of Holywood and Donaghadee.

Councillor Harbinson asked to make an alternative recommendation which was to include all six of the applicants, particularly since Boom had failed to reach the target by only one point. He wondered if that suggestion could be accommodated, and if Boom added to the list and his proposal was seconded by Councillor Hollywood.

Alderman Graham had no particular objection to Councillor Harbinson's proposal but thought that through the development process gaps may be exposed and that there might be a desire to add further interest groups at a later stage. However, if there remained six then there would be no difficulty in his mind.

The Chair was in agreement with the addition of Boom thinking that it was in the spirit of inclusiveness. Councillor Hollywood wondered how many would be expected from each interest group and it was thought that there would be a key

representative with a deputy from each. The Head of Parks and Cemeteries advised that the group could comprise more community members than Elected Members and he encouraged their full participation in future meetings.

In finishing Members were in general agreement with the amendment but Alderman Graham stated that he was reluctant to change what had been discussed previously in relation to a maximum of 5 partners and asked to be recorded as against.

**AGREED, on the proposal of Councillor Harbinson, seconded by Councillor Hollywood, that all six applicants be invited to participate on the North Down Coastal Path Working group.**

## **5. FUTURE WORKS ON THE COASTAL PATH**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that Members would be aware that the North Down Coastal Path Working Group had a budget of £150,000 per annum, further to the agreement that Officers would progress the 2024/5 budget, the deliver areas breakdown was as below:

- £80,000 (Path Repairs and Surveys)
- £45,000 (Machinery Maintenance)
- £25,000 (Signage, Promotion and Engagement)

Discussion around the 2025/6 budget can be progressed in the September meeting of the Working Group, in time for the budget setting process.

RECOMMENDED that the above report is noted.

The Head of Parks and Cemeteries outlined the annual budget of £150k to Members and the guide on how the amounts would be spent and planned for in the 2024/25 budget. £80k was budgeted for path repairs and surveys and that could also include planning applications where appropriate. New, more environmentally sustainable methods of weed control were also being considered for use on the path and those were built into the budget.

Councillor McKee referred to the land surveys which were being carried out over the summer months. The Head of Parks and Cemeteries confirmed that there was work planned but the budget outlined was flexible with environmental surveys required before some work could be started.

Alderman Graham saw no problem with chemicals being used particularly if those were still legal and he cautioned unnecessary expense for what he considered to be ideological reasons. It was noted however that there was a present proposal to ban those chemicals and the Head of Parks and Cemeteries said that there was not one answer and a collection of options was being considered for effective non-chemical weed control.

Countering the Alderman's view Councillor Crieghton said that it was clear that the Council needed to support biodiversity.

The Chair (Councillor McKimm) referred to the funds of £80k for path repairs and surveys and wondered if the Assets and Property Services also had a budget for those areas. It was confirmed that Parks, Cleansing and Assets and Property has budgets for council owned areas of the path and that was in addition to the £150k that had been set aside in this report for the Coastal Path. The Council could only maintain the parts of the path that it owned but could assist other landowners who might find their areas difficult to manage, if appropriate legal agreements could be made.

The Chair recognised the diversity of opinion on how the environment was managed and hoped that it would be protected. He also explained that this report was only a general introduction, and that Members should not be pre-emptive. The Director added that much of the preparatory work was being undertaken presently.

**AGREED, on the proposal of Councillor McKee, seconded by Councillor Harbinson that the recommendation be adopted.**

## **6. APP - GIS MAP OF COASTAL PATH DEMO**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: GIS link: [North Down Coastal Path Viewer \(ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk\)](https://ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk)

Members showed a keen interest in the map on the Councils GIS platform which was shown indicating the areas of the path which were owned by the Council. The Head of Parks and Cemeteries highlighted that the Council owned only a percentage of the the Coastal Path. The Director added that Members could view the link only at organisational level on the Council network. Business Technology could provide further help on that if necessary.

**AGREED, on the proposal of Councillor Hollywood, seconded by Councillor McKee to note.**

## **7. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS**

There were no items of Any Other Notified Business.

## **8. FUTURE MEETINGS & SITE VISITS**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that the following meetings had been scheduled for the North Down Coastal Path Working Group in 2025:

- 6 January
- 31 March
- 30 June

All above meetings had been scheduled for 6pm to 9pm at the Council Chamber, Church Street Offices, Newtownards.

At present no site visits had been scheduled and Members were asked to consider if this would be something Members would consider useful.

RECOMMENDED the above report is noted.

The Head of Parks and Cemeteries explained that the dates were being set and would be helpful in advising the community groups of future dates of the Working Group.

When the Chair asked Members if anything had come to them during the meeting Alderman Graham thought that the map that had been shown of the area around the path showed the complexity of the challenges which would be faced.

The Head of Parks and Cemeteries explained the surveys that were taking place and much of that work had already been carried out. The Director added that the first task was to identify all areas that may need attention no matter who owned the lands or what the requirement was, and then to prioritise which should be actioned first. At some stage it would not be impossible to consider areas of land that would benefit from being taken over by the Council, but Council should ensure that land that it is responsible for are satisfactory first.

**AGREED, on the proposal of Councillor McKee, seconded by Councillor Irwin that the recommendation be adopted.**

## **9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING (30 SEPTEMBER 2024)**

Members were in agreement with the proposed date and the option of holding further Working Group meetings in Newtownards.

**AGREED.**

### **CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting terminated at 6.42 pm.

# ITEM 8

## Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	09 October 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Parks and Cemeteries
Date of Report	26 September 2024
File Reference	PCA111
Legislation	n/a
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Schools Growing Clubs Update
Attachments	

### Background

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Council on the Schools Growing Clubs 2024/2025, the recent developments in the program, including the selection process, its potential contributions to the curriculum, and the positive impact it will have on students' growth. School's Growing Clubs is an initiative aimed at enhancing the educational experience, health, and wellbeing of children in the Borough.

### Selection Process and Participants

Primary schools across the Borough were once again offered the opportunity to apply to join the initiative and Council received a total of eleven applications from various schools that expressed interest in becoming a Growing Club. As per the agreed process, a selection panel comprised of Parks and Cemeteries Officers evaluated the applications and chose the most suitable schools to participate. After thorough review and consideration, the panel selected four schools to be part of the program.

The selection criteria included factors such as the school's commitment to sustainability and environmental education, the availability of space and existing

Not Applicable

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infrastructure for gardening activities, the engagement level of teachers, PTA, and the potential for community involvement. The panel's objective assessment ensured a fair and transparent selection process, resulting in the choice of schools that were best aligned with the goals of the Growing Club initiative.

The four new schools selected were:

- Kircubbin Integrated Primary School
- Alexander Dixon Primary School, Ballygowan
- Killard Primary School, Donaghadee
- St Patricks Primary School, Holywood

The Development Officer (Engagement) will continue to support schools from the 2023/2024 cohort below:

- Towerview PS, Bangor
- Andrews Memorial PS, Comber
- Loughries PS, Newtownards
- Holywood PS, Holywood
- St Patricks PS, Portaferry
- St Marys PS, Kircubbin

### **Contributions to Curriculum and Development**

The School's Growing Club has immense potential to enrich our children's learning experiences and holistic development. By integrating gardening and horticultural activities into the curriculum, students will gain hands-on knowledge about plant life cycles, nutrition, ecology, and sustainability.

Furthermore, the Growing Club offers an avenue for interdisciplinary learning, connecting subjects such as science, mathematics, and even art. Students will be encouraged to observe, measure, and analyse various aspects of plant growth, fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills. In addition, the club will promote teamwork, responsibility, and a sense of accomplishment as students work together to tend to the garden and observe the fruits of their labour.

### **Health and Well-being Impact**

Engaging in gardening activities has been proven to have positive effects on mental and physical well-being. The act of nurturing plants and being in nature can reduce stress, improve mood, and enhance concentration. The pupils will have the opportunity to disconnect from screens and engage in a more active and hands-on form of recreation, fostering a healthier lifestyle. Children will also have the chance to learn where their food comes from and appreciate the process of growing your own food and how they can contribute to sustainable food production in their communities for the future.

### **Community Engagement and Education**

The Growing Club will not only benefit the students directly involved but will also extend its impact to the broader community. As the garden flourishes, it can serve as a hub for workshops, events, and educational sessions, involving parents, community members, and other schools. This will promote a sense of unity and shared

Not Applicable

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responsibility for environmental stewardship, further strengthening the ties between the school and the community.

In conclusion, the School's Growing Club is a valuable addition to our educational offerings, with the potential to enhance the curriculum and promote health and well-being. We are excited about the positive impact this initiative will have on the children and the community at large. Your continued support is instrumental in ensuring the success of this endeavour.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council note the above and continue to support the Schools Growing Club initiative.

Unclassified

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**ITEM 9****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	09 October 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community and Culture
Date of Report	16 September 2024
File Reference	CW159
Legislation	The Local Government Act (NI) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below: Not Applicable
Subject	Hardship Funding 2024-2025
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Hardship Funding Response

At the Council meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> August 2024 it was agreed that this Council writes to the Department for Communities to highlight our disappointment at their failure to provide Hardship Funding this year. Furthermore, that this Council asks The Department for Communities to commit to use funding in future monitoring rounds to provide hardship funding in 2024-2025. A letter was sent to this effect on 17<sup>th</sup> September. 2024,

A response dated 24<sup>th</sup> September 2024 has been received from Colum Boyle, Permanent Secretary of Department for Communities stating that due to the financial constraints on the Department's budget the Department is currently unable to provide any hardship funding for 2024-2025, and due to the continuing uncertainty in funding, it would not be possible to consider a recurrent funding model at this time.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council notes the report.





Department for  
**Communities**  
www.communities-ni.gov.uk

An Roinn  
**Pobal**

Department for  
**Commonities**

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From: Colum Boyle  
Permanent Secretary

Level 9  
Causeway Exchange  
1-7 Bedford Street  
BELFAST  
BT2 7EG

Telephone: 028 90 823301  
E-mail: [Colum.Boyle@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:Colum.Boyle@communities-ni.gov.uk)  
Our Ref: PSC 0296.24  
Date: 24 September 2024

Ms Susie McCullough  
Chief Executive  
Ards and North Down Borough Council  
City Hall  
The Castle  
BANGOR  
BT20 4BT

Via email: [Susie.McCullough@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk](mailto:Susie.McCullough@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk)

Dear Susie

## **HARDSHIP FUNDING 2024/25**

Thank you for your correspondence of 17<sup>th</sup> September 2024 requesting that this Department considers Hardship Funding for 2024/25.

The funding available for this Department was set within the context of a constrained financial position for 2024/25, and the overall Departmental budget position was considered against competing priorities.



Due to the financial constraints on the Department's budget the Department is currently unable to provide any hardship funding for 2024/25, and due to the continuing uncertainty in funding, it would not be possible to consider a recurrent funding model at this time.

Yours sincerely,

**Colum Boyle**  
**Permanent Secretary**

Unclassified

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**ITEM 10****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	09 October 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community and Culture
Date of Report	17 September 2024
File Reference	ART/MUS 03/23-24
Legislation	The Local Government Act (NI) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below: N/A
Subject	Arts and Heritage Annual Summary 2023-2024
Attachments	Appendix 1- Arts and Heritage Annual Summary 2023-2024

The Arts and Heritage Service has prepared an Annual Summary for 2023-2024 that offers a comprehensive overview of all the activity that took place and highlights key successes throughout the year.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council notes this report.



# Ards and North Down Borough Council



## Arts AND Heritage Annual Summary

### April 2023-March 2024

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## **ARDS ARTS CENTRE AND ARTS SERVICE OVERVIEW**

Ards and North Down Borough Council's Arts Service commenced the 2023/24 financial year with an operating budget of **£512,100** to include all programmes, arts festivals, grant aid, staff, and the provision of Ards Arts Centre.

This was the first operating year not to be impacted by restrictions to service delivery as a result of the Covid-19 Pandemic. All social distancing measures and reduced capacities in venues had been lifted in 2022.

2023/24 saw a return to pre-Covid levels of engagement in events and classes though a change in audience behaviour across the arts sector has been observed. Audiences are not booking as far in advance for events and ticket sales are slower than pre-2020. Although events and classes are still selling out or with high attendance, the sales are coming in later. Audiences have less disposable income and are being more choosy about what they book.

### **Impact on Staff**

The year saw continuing challenges for the staff both personally and professionally with a number of short and two long-term absences amongst the team. There were no significant changes to staffing, however the Arts Centre Coordinator post remains a secondment cover (vacant since June 2022) and it is intended that this post be permanently filled in the autumn of 2024.

The Corporate Communications support for Arts and Heritage will become a Full-Time post from April 2024 with the service gaining an additional ½ day of support that is welcomed.

### **Impact on Budgets/Rates Setting**

In early autumn 2023 the process of estimating budgets for 2024/25 commenced with some very challenging decisions to be made in order to keep the Council's annual rate at a manageable increase.

With a new Director in place the process for submitting budgets changed and presentations were made. Arts festivals and all arts and heritage grants were subject to scrutiny presentations in order to secure funding. Gratefully 100% of the budget was secured during a challenging rate setting process.

The process made planning for the Guitar Festival particularly difficult as it takes place so early in the financial year in April and therefore programming must be completed before budgets are finalised.

## KEY STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 2023/24

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### Arts and Disability Working Group – Established October 2020

From October 2020 to September 2023 the Arts and Disability Working Group had spent considerable time regularly meeting and addressing key issues and priorities relating to base line data and accessibility and support for artists with a disability. There was consultation with the University of Atypical and focus groups with artists with disabilities.

The information gathered and developments implemented were valuable and the focus has remained on programming and development.

However, with key members of the working group no longer on the current Arts and Heritage panel and discussion with remaining members, it was felt that it would be more productive to update at the full council meeting as the working group objectives has been addressed. This can be reviewed annually.

### AND Arts Network

Following a comprehensive review of Creative Peninsula that concluded in 2022, the decision was made to establish AND Arts Network. The consultation process concluded that the Creative Peninsula Festival and the membership linked together as one, is restricting the potential of what the Arts Service can achieve for the Borough as a whole, and the creatives who live here.

It was agreed that the Arts Service would create a new arts collaboration or community with a new name; **AND Arts Network** to include ALL arts, not just visual art and can grow to encompass all creative industries. Creative Peninsula would no longer be seen as a 'closed shop' or elitist. AND Arts Network will help the arts service to have a comprehensive understanding/knowledge of the individual practitioners and arts genres working within our Borough. With that knowledge, be able to communicate effectively and support through the development of skills events, networking and opportunities.

Recruitment commenced in early 2023 for the new AND Arts Network with 86 signing up in the first tranche recruiting artists and makers. A second tranche recruited writers/poets etc and a third musicians and those working in the performing arts. 115 members have now signed up

2 networking events have taken place in August 2023 and March 2024. The first was a facilitated session with Sharon Adams of Herding Fish Consultancy who led a session on reviving your creativity and participants also made screen prints with artist Lucy Turner.

In March 2024 artists across the borough registered on the Arts Network, were invited to an event in North Down Museum for a networking social. The group of about 20 people were mostly made up of writers and visual artists. There was an opportunity to talk about your work on an individual or in front of everyone. Three local writers read

some of their work and talked about their writing journey. Sketchbooks were passed around which attendees made their mark in. One of the writers set a task to the group to spark a short writing activity. Some participated. Most were there to meet likeminded people. Quite a number of the group came on their own and were interested in attending for social and artistic support.

Those signed up to the Network receive a monthly e-bulletin with any opportunities available through ANDBC and sharing opportunities received from other organisations. Throughout 2024/25 we will continue to boost membership and facilitate 3 networking events per annum.

## EVENTS

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### **Expecting by c21 Theatre Company**

This play explored experiences unique to d/Deaf and hearing couples in series of interweaving monologues and duologues in both English and sign language. It was created as part of Northern Ireland's inaugural Deaf Arts Festival at The MAC, Belfast. There was a lot of publicity around this show, however, it still proved difficult to sell with only 17 tickets sold a few days before the event. Rather than cancelling the performance the decision was made to offer complimentary tickets to Bangor Drama Club the Arts and Heritage Panel, and arts centre staff. This increased the overall attendance to 38 which was enough to feel comfortable in the theatre. The performance was incredible and all that attended seemed to be both moved and inspired by it. It also proved to be a great opportunity to highlight disability through our creative programme and to engage with new audience from the d/Deaf community.

Audience Feedback:

*'It was one of the best pieces of theatre I've ever experienced'*

*'Projection as a visual and animation as a storytelling device were fantastic'*

*'Beautiful use of BSL - Thank you to the organisers'*

*'Having the interpreter on stage was great. No need to choose whether to watch the her and miss out on the show or watch show and not understand'*

*'Best show I've ever seen. I understood everything. So inclusive and moving'*

*'Give me (hearing) a real insight into the deaf world'*



### **Coronation Craft Day**

The Arts and Heritage service was tasked with programming a series of activity to mark the HRH King Charles' coronation in May 2023.

The Coronation Craft Demonstration Day took place in Bangor Walled Garden on the 13 May and was a great success. The weather was very favorable and there was a steady flow of visitors enjoying the demonstrations and giving lots of very positive feedback throughout the day.

Music was provided by Junior Afrifa, Brendan Popplestone and Paddy Anderson.

Total visitor numbers were between 300 – 350.

Demonstrators:

Owen Crawford – Wood Carving

Rosemary McCartney – Spinning

Debbie McCann – Dorset Button Making

Craig Sands – Wood Turning

Jacquie Brachi – Calligraphy

Sharon Regan – Pottery

Claire Dunwoody – Macrame

Lough Neagh Boating Heritage - Boat Building

Lough Neagh Boating Heritage – Net making

### **Walled Garden Theatre**

Heartbreak Productions presented five outdoor theatre shows in Bangor Castle Walled Garden from 4-6 July. The first four shows of David Walliams, Bad Dad were sold out and received fantastic feedback from the audience.

MacHamLear was scheduled to be performed on the evening of 6 July. The performers arrived, set up and did their sound check. The wind was so strong and affecting the huge trees surrounding the Walled Garden that it was impossible to hear the performers. After much discussion and a lot of detailed weather forecast consultation, the difficult decision was taken to cancel the show as the weather was due to get worse with even stronger winds during the performance time.

<b>Tickets sold</b>	<b>795</b>
<b>Total ticket sales</b>	<b>£6,360</b>

### **Little Miss Muffat by Centre Stage Theatre Company**

Our annual festive show returned to the Queen's Hall in December on Saturday 9 December with a matinee performance of Little Miss Muffet. A total public audience of 245 attended to enjoy the festive event. The evening performance was unfortunately cancelled due to low numbers. A school's performance also took place in the Queens Hall on Monday 11 December with 250 pupils attending from St Finian's, Towerview & St Malachy's Primary Schools. They all met Santa and seemed to really enjoy their visit.

### Arts Night at The Museum

Arts Night at the Museum took place on Friday 22 March and was an exciting and busy event with a record 450 people attending in 2 hours.

There was a large queue to start the night and the buzz continued until 8pm. The museum was packed with activity in nearly every gallery and cafe. Highlights including the potter's wheel, screen printing, jewellery stamping, Viking makeup, intaglio print, sketching and window painting. The cafe was buzzing with a great atmosphere with live music and self-guided tabletop activities.

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## MUSIC

The Friday Night Live series continued in 2023/24 proving as popular as ever. There was no concert in April due to the later delivery of Ards International Guitar Festival.

The series has proven popular with pre-Covid levels of sales returning. Pre-sales remain high with a regular returning audience, but sales were disappointing for October's event with Rory Nellis, it was an enjoyable show on the night.

- 19 May **Broken String Band** (68/75)
- 26 June **Taylor Lally**
- 29 September **Matt McGinn** (sold out 75)
- 20 October **Rory Nellis** (37/75)
- 17 November **Ciara O'Neill** (66/75)
- 8 December **Anthony Toner** (sold out at 75)
- 26 January 24 **Roving Out** (67/75 to date)
- 23 February **Celebrating Irish Rock** (sold out at 75)
- 22 March **The High Lonesome** (sold out at 75)

The **Music in the Chamber series** of music events which had historically taken place once a month throughout the year with the exception of the summer months.

This music series had been established due to minimal music offering outside of local acts in Bangor as there was no local arts centre.

With the opening of the Courthouse as a music venue offering regular weekly gigs of varying types of music; and finding that tickets were increasingly harder to sell especially if there were similar events on in the Courthouse and sometimes free. The decision was taken to reduce the number of concerts in the MIC to one per Culture guide and try to offer something that the Courthouse may not programme.

- 24 November **The Maxwell Quartet** (100/100)
- 14 December **Christmas Night at the Movies** (100/100)

- 23 June **Ulster Orchestra in Bangor Abbey (225/250)**

An additional Music event took place in June 2023 to celebrate Ulster Scots culture. Willie Drennan's **Journey of the Ulster Muse** featured an ensemble cast of singers, dancers, storytellers and musicians. The evening highlighted how music was shared through the migration of people and their instruments. Sales for this event were particularly challenging and several complimentary/reduced price tickets were offered. Although the audience seemed to enjoy the event, the AHM felt it could have been more polished in execution. 66 attended which was disappointing.

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## FESTIVALS

### ARDS INTERNATIONAL GUITAR FESTIVAL 19-23 APRIL

The Guitar Festival returned 5 days of guitar-based events including an exhibition, children's concert, guitar clinics, free lunchtime concerts plus the usual guitar action at the Ivy Bar and Queen's Hall. Due to the limited lead in time due to the budgetary concerns/rate strike and Easter falling in early April, the decision was made to push the festival back by a few weeks to maximise planning and promotion time.

The festival opened with two film themed events at the Web Theatre celebrating comedy classics with Paul McMordie and Neil O'Briain and Cinema Paradiso with the fantastic Aquarelle Guitar Quartet. Many visitors had not been to the Web Theatre before.

Some highlights from smaller events included an evening of Jazz guitar with Jim Mullen at Ards Arts Centre, Kyle Riley's 'Little Folk on the Road' gig for under 7's and an afternoon of bluegrass with Cup O'Joe who always sell-out. The festival favourite Sunday Brunch with Ralph McLean covered the making of Fleetwood Mac's *Rumours* album and an exhibition of festival photographs from the last decade taken by Michael Barbour and Julie-Ann Roquette accompanied the festival.

Friday night saw the best of the up-and-coming all-female guitarists from Europe who were impressed to find a female technician providing lighting and sound support from ACK Productions! An evening of acoustic percussive playing was enjoyed by all.

Belfast based blues player Dom Martin headlined Saturday night as a 3-piece band and sold-out weeks in advance. It was a fantastic show with great feedback from customers. Dom was supported by the Texan Troubadour Rodney Branigan who played 2 guitars simultaneously.

By far one of the highlights of this year's event was the talk and Q&A with George and Aaron Lowden hosted by Ralph McLean. George took a retrospective look over his career and introduced son Aaron who is starting to take more of a leading role in the family business. We were delighted that artist Colin Davidson was willing to loan us his portrait of George that was a beautiful backdrop to the event. George was

presented with the Lifetime Achievement Award for his services to the guitar industry, the first time the award has been made to a non-performer.

The festival closed on Sunday at the Ivy Bar with stand-out performances by Matthew Malcolm who took to the stage at short notice to cover for Ben Cutler who was taken ill, and Rodney Branigan who was a firm favourite with the audience.

The atmosphere and energy around the festival was really positive this year with lots of happy customers and participating artists who were very complimentary on the delivery of the festival. Lots of familiar faces returned and Dom Martin brought many new faces. Overall attendance at nearly all events was excellent and the atmosphere was upbeat and celebratory. Media coverage for the festival was excellent with Jeff Robinson PR providing tailored support with the help of our Corporate Comms team covering local media and online advertising.

<b>Events delivered</b>	<b>20</b>		
<b>Tickets sold</b>	<b>1,135</b>	<b>85% of all tickets sold</b>	<b>(903 in 2022)</b>
<b>Total ticket sales</b>	<b>£10,403.39</b>	<b>+ £435 in T shirt sales</b>	<b>(£6,607 in 2022)</b>

### **Audience Comments**

*'Thought it was best ever, Ards Arts Centre is impressive, Festival staff very welcoming'*

*'really well organised over a variety of great locations around the town. Please keep it in Newtownards!!'*

*'It was just brilliant never heard of it before but will definitely be back'*

*'Congratulations to the whole team who ran another fantastic festival. It's a highlight of my calendar and a really unique festival across Northern Ireland.'*

*'I am glad Newtownards continues to feature Guitar musicians- a speciality to be proud of in North Down.'*

*'Have only recently moved to the area and so happy to have an event like this in our locality. Already looking forward to next year.'*

### **Performer Comments:**

*'It was a pleasure traveling to Ards. One can definitely tell you guys are incredibly experienced running this festival. I wish every concert was going so smoothly!'*

Judith Beckedorf

*'Thank you! It was great fun as always. You and your team make it one of the easiest gigs I ever do. The audience were class and I've had some really nice feedback'*

Kyle Riley

*'What an amazing festival this was! I very much enjoyed it'*

Karlijn Langendijk

*'We had a great time and credit to you and everyone involved for making it happen. I know there has been lot of work in the background so you must be pleased that everything went so well. We have thoroughly enjoyed our time back at the festival' Aquarelle Guitar Quartet*

## CREATIVE PENINSULA AUGUST 2023

The 22<sup>nd</sup> Creative Peninsula Festival took place in August with a number of changes implemented this year as a result of the review of the event.

The application process was opened up to the new AND Arts Network to apply to and the events and exhibitions were curated from these applications. As a result new participants were included this year. The decision was also made to focus our efforts on events in our own venues with just a carefully curated number of external events.

A significant change was to the previous Craft in the Square event which became a Twilight Market in Conway Square from 4pm-9pm. This didn't suit everyone, but a sufficient number of artists and makers preferred the slot and anecdotally said it was the best trade that they had experienced. A bar and small number of food vendors were included. This presented additional challenges but overall was a positive introduction and changed the vibe of the event. The plan is to build on this element next year. Ards Arts Centre was open with makers and demonstrators in every room, visitors could take part in drop-in activity or watch artists demonstrating.

Just under **1,500** visited the Twilight Market and Arts Night.

**3 Exhibitions** were held at Ards Arts Centre, North Down Museum and Ards VIC. For the first time a theme (*Inspired by.....*) was introduced along with prizes and a judging Panel comprising representatives from NMNI, Craft NI and the Arts Council NI. Prizes were awarded to Alison Hanvey, Elain Burke and Anna Smyth with a special commendation for Hannah Magill.

### Artist in Residence

Another addition to the 2023 festival was an Artist-In-Residence slot that saw the Sunburst gallery used as a studio space throughout the month of August. Twins Maria and Anna Horvathova made great use of the space, giving visitors an insight into their practice and producing lots of work throughout the month.

### Workshops

6 workshops were planned, all went ahead and 5 of the workshops sold out with a total of 48 attendees. A number of workshops also took place at the artist's own studios.

Two bespoke events were created at external venues. The first was at the Echlinville Distillery - **The Linen Thread** was a linen based experience featuring Echlinville's Weaver's Dry Gin and a talk, workshop and demo. It proved very popular and was sold out at 40, even though it was our highest priced experience.

**The Bangor Art Tour and Tipple** was delivered in partnership with Seacourt Print Workshop and Boom Studios and participants embarked on a walking tour from North Down Museum to two of our thriving local artist studios in Bangor. An activity and refreshments were provided at each venue and feedback was excellent. 29/30 places were booked.

The **Open Studio** series again struggled this year despite targeted marketing. These will be reviewed in advance of 2024. Likewise, the Professional

Development numbers were low and are under review as artists and makers are generally limited with availability in August.

**38** separate events took place with over **7,000** attendees

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### **CREATIVE PENINSULA CHRISTMAS CRAFT FAYRE**

The first weekend of December saw the return of the annual Creative Peninsula Christmas Fayre for the first time since the Covid-19 Pandemic.

In 2020 no activity took place and in 2021 and 22 a Pop-Up Shop was facilitated instead. Although this proved popular the staff resources required made it too resource heavy to be viable.

**19** artists and makers took stalls, and we welcomed **1,855** visitors over two days with the addition of festive music and gift wrapping it was an atmospheric start to the festive season.

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### **ASPECTS IRISH LITERATURE FESTIVAL 27 SEPTEMBER - 7 OCTOBER 2023**

Programme delivered events covering poetry, fiction, crime, history, book launches, music, sports, politics, journalism and storytelling.

Twenty-three events were organised plus an exhibition in the library –

There were many highlights of the festival including sold out events from Mary Peters talking about her memoir, Bill Whelan talking about his memoir and then treating us to a live performance of Riverdance to Frank Gaffikin's Human Paradox. It was a festival which covered many genres and points of interest.

The festival was proud to be part of the second residency project between Ireland and Galicia. The AROD Poetry Bursary 2022: The Tyrone Guthrie Centre and Residencia Literaria 1963. The poet Xavier Quiapo read his work alongside Keith Payne and musician Su Garrido Pombo. It was a very special night for all those who attended.

**Events: 23**

**Total audience: 1,171 (919 in 2022)**

**Ticket Sales: £8,752 (£6,610 in 2022)**

## THE ENCHANTED HOUSE OF PUPPETRY 29 AND 30 OCTOBER 2023

The Enchanted House of Puppetry made a welcome return to Ards Arts Centre in Newtownards at Halloween when the historical building was once again transformed into a puppet wonderland! No ghosts or ghouls, just incredible performances and workshops to inspire the imaginations of both young and old alike.

Presented by Ards Puppet Festival, the two-day event featured an eclectic mix of scheduled performances, free puppet shows and workshops and plenty of madcap puppet shenanigans!

One of the programme highlights was Snug and Grub Catch a Bug by Garlic Theatre on their first visit to Ards. This funny organic tale combined clowning and a host of colourful puppets. Garlic Theatre also performed a beautifully crafted performance of puppetry and mime in The Bag that went Boo!

Clydebuilt Puppet Theatre returned with a selection of beautiful puppet stories and offered audiences the opportunity to have a go at puppet manipulation with some of their incredible puppets from around the world.

Noisy brought their fabulous shows Plain Bob and the ever popular De Silva Marionette Circus Troup. The Noughty One, was an installation by Noisy Oyster which fused puppetry, automata, and robotics with 3D printing to explore our relationship with technology and the mercurial nature of the human world.

The Puppet Labyrinth was also back after proving extremely popular in 2022, with visitors taking a weelie wylie wander through the magical meandering puppet labyrinth to find the naughtiest troll in all of Ards, Aloisious Ginderbalm.

The Enchanted House of Puppetry was also delighted to celebrate the Puppets in your Place, funded through the Arts Council of Northern Ireland's Rural Arts Engagement Programme. Cre8 Theatre Company had been working with groups from Holywood, Comber, Donaghadee and Portaferry to create this puppet spectacular. The community performance at the Queens Hall encompassed large scale puppets, music and dance to celebrate these four communities.

Finally, the puppet workshops led by Bernice Anderson, Shauna McGowan and Judith Moore were perfectly pitched for young audiences with kids going back time and again throughout the day to make another puppet, and the ever-hilarious Flea Circus kept audiences thoroughly entertained.

Total footfall is difficult to verify due to the sensor issues on the Sunday however a reasonable estimate would be 700 each day. An increase of 200 each day from the previous year.

Most of the activities on the day were free, however some scheduled performances had a small charge of £4 or £2.

A total number of 501 tickets were sold for the ticketed performances creating an income of £1,866, an increase of over £700 from 2022.

**Audience Comments:**

*'All the staff and people involved could not have been more helpful and welcoming. Really lovely well organised event. Well done to all involved!'*

*'The Bag who went Boo and Plain Bob were wonderful to watch. We loved participating in puppets in your place.'*

*'The whole experience was superb, and loved how the events staff all joined in. We spent two full days at the shows!'*

*'The flea circus and labyrinth children and adults would do both again a great laugh and full of fun. Plain Bob and the Labyrinth were amazing, funny, imaginative shows with lots of audience participation. Enjoyed by all the kids and us oldies!'*

*'Very entertaining and the kids were able to make puppets afterwards which they also loved. Great community activity to put on for ards (live in Bangor but was good to come over and then spend money in the local shops/coffee shops).'*

**YOUNG ASPECTS FESTIVAL 1-3 MARCH 2024**

As part of Aspects Festival, it was decided to separate the children's events for their own weekend of activity at a different part of the year. As a pilot a weekend of writing events was programmed for March to tie in around World Book Day. The reason for this development is to try and raise the profile and impact as these events sometimes get lost in the main body of the festival. September is also a difficult time to get schools involved as they need the information well before they break in June. In addition, it helps to keep momentum and communication for Aspects Festival throughout the year and keep the audience engaged.

Highlights included big wave surfer Al Mennie talking about his writing and books, creative writing workshops with Colleen Ringland, a creative nature writing walk with Maggie Doyle, forest storytelling and campfire cooking with Nature Rangers at Clandeboye and cosy bedtime stories in Bangor Castle with Marianne McShane for the little ones. The feedback was very positive from participants.

A total of 166 people participated in Young Aspects, plus 96 schoolchildren at a piloted schools event.



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## EXHIBITIONS

The Arts Centre hosted 21 exhibitions from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

### GEORGIAN GALLERY

**The Space Between** **23 Feb – 6 Apr**  
**A Solo Exhibition by Lisa Ballard**

This exhibition is an exploration into the processes Ballard uses in her landscape painting, exploring those processes of abstraction, processes that serve to represent the blurred memories we have of places and allows the artist to create a new 'unreal' landscape.

**Encore: An Exhibition for Ards International Guitar Festival** **14 Apr – 29 Apr**  
**Michael Barbour and Julianne Rouquette**

As part of Ards International Guitar Festival, we take a look back at some of the highlights from the Festival over recent years, featuring a curated selection of photographs by festival photographers Michael Barbour and Julianne Roquette

**The Process of Coming to Pieces** **5 May– 27 May**  
**A Solo Exhibition by Meadhbh McIlgorm**

Meadhbh McIlgorm is an Irish artist who tells stories through objects, installation and imagery. Her practice takes a material-centered approach to ephemeral phenomena, intangible concepts, and liminal states. She is interested in the traces of process, experience and time as recorded via materials.

**Merciful, Savage** **2 June – 1 July**  
**A joint exhibition by Karen Daye-Hutchinson and Enda Kenny**

This ambitious exhibition, by Karen Daye-Hutchinson and Enda Kenny, explores the relationships between human and animal evolution, extinction and change; exploring the interaction of human beings and the natural world.

**Next Generation** **7 July – 21 July**  
**An exhibition by GCSE and A Level Students**

A selection of the finest work being created by talented GCSE, AS and A Level students from the Ards and North Down Borough.

**Creative Peninsula** **27 Jul – 24 Aug**

This exhibition features unique pieces of art and craftwork in a variety of mediums, specially selected for display in Ards Arts Centre and created in our Borough. This exhibition is a celebration of the exclusivity and quality of the artwork produced by local artists and makers and a fantastic opportunity to purchase a beautiful piece of art.

**Through Others Eyes** **31 Aug – 23 Sep**

**A solo exhibition by Lauren Ciara McCullough**

Lauren Ciara McCullough, a recent graduate of MFA Fine Art at Ulster University, is inspired by her surroundings. Her work aims to convey the very being of nature through the presentation of landscape as abstraction.

**SHADOWS ON THE WALL** **28 Sept – 24 Oct**

**A solo exhibition by Daniel Coleman**

Daniel Coleman will present new paintings that explore place and the personal. Using memory and time, he will examine the significance of the everyday. His work is steeped in symbolism and meaning, in relation to his rural Irish upbringing.

**In Search for the Past** **3 Nov – 28 Nov**

**A joint exhibition by Maria and Anna Horvathova**

Having graduated with an MFA from Belfast School of Art in 2023, Maria and Anna have been developing their practices in painting, installation and lens based experimental discipline. Both explore the ideas of home, identity and memory.

**The Collection** **7 Dec – 27 Jan**

**An exhibition of curated works from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland Collection**

The Arts Council NI's collection aims to raise awareness of and interest in the contemporary visual arts from Northern Ireland, encourage the commissioning and purchase of work, as well as providing patronage to artists.

An artist Talk took place on Wednesday 17 January 2024 facilitated by Dr Suzanne Lyle, Head of Visual Arts at ACNI. **30** people signed up but only 16 arrived on the evening which was disappointing as the talk was excellent.

**Internal Space** **1 Feb – 24 Feb**

**A joint exhibition by Ned Jackson Smyth and Helen Bradbury**

Visual Artists Ned Jackson Smyth (sculptor) and Helen Bradbury (painter) have come together in this exhibition to share some of their work created over the past year which links their personal thinking and perspective in response to the external physical world.

**The Nature of Things** **29 Feb – 29 Mar**

**A joint exhibition by Eleanor Wheeler and Anushiya Sundaralingam**

This exhibition, encompasses themes each artist has been exploring, together and separately, in their work and are constantly revisiting and refining in the continuing development of their arts practices.

SUNBURST GALLERY**Mornings in G Major** **30 Mar – 29 Apr**  
**A Solo Exhibition by Kayla Martel**

Listen to the morning in these spirited and lively oil paintings by Wicklow based artist, Kayla Martell. All scenes are painted from life and embrace Kayla's love of dynamic, layered brushwork. The exhibition explores a variety of morning scenes.

**Amissa Umbra** **5 May– 27 May**  
**A Solo Exhibition by Richard Coghlan**

Cork based artist Richard Coghlan's priority is always to create imagery that has a deep and deliberate existence. It is curiosity which drives the creative need to explore the unfolding story, where not knowing the outcome is often the very reason for doing. Coghlan's current working practice uses medium format analogue photography taken with a 1935 Box Brownie camera.

**The Form is Emptiness** **2 June – 1 July**  
**A Solo Exhibition by Fang Zhao**

Zhao's practice as a ceramicist seeks to communicate international ideals through sculpture and functional pottery.

**Next Generation** **7 July – 21 July**  
**An exhibition by GCSE and A Level Students**

A selection of the finest work being created by talented GCSE, AS and A Level students from the Ards and North Down Borough.

**slow still life** **31 Aug – 23 Sep**  
**A solo exhibition by Savannah Dodd**

An exhibition of photographs and anothotype photograms by Savannah Dodd. Since 2020, Savannah Dodd's photographic practice has transitioned away from the digital toward ecological analogue methods. Influenced by the process of naturalising as an Irish citizen, her recent work explores ideas of place, belonging and connection to the land.

**Ikebana** **28 Sept – 24 Oct**  
**Japanese Floral Art by Mary Pearson**

Mary Pearson, ceramic and ikebana artist, creates work inspired by nature that is an exploration of symbiosis, geomorphism and biomorphism. She has explored the sculptural qualities of plant material through the art of contemporary and abstract ikebana.

**Curious Carnival** **3 Nov – 28 Nov**  
**A Solo exhibition by Anna Donovan**

Ceramics artist, Anna Donovan uses clay to tell stories through figurative sculptures. This curious exhibition featured ceramic and mixed media sculptures playing with imagery inspired by a variety of mythological creatures combined with familiar carnival and circus tropes.

**London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games Posters** **7 Dec – 27 Jan**  
**Part of the ‘The Collection’, a specially curated exhibition of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland’s Collection.**

In 2012, twelve leading contemporary UK artists were commissioned by London 2012 to create the official posters for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The commissioned artists were Fiona Banner, Michael Craig-Martin, Martin Creed, Tracey Emin, Anthea Hamilton, Howard Hodgkin, Gary Hume, Sarah Morris, Chris O’fill, Bridget Riley, Bob and Roberta Smith and Rachel Whiteread.

**Real Lives: The Art of Living with Dementia** **1 Feb – 24 Feb**  
**A community exhibition by Dementia NI**

Curated by Dementia NI, Northern Ireland’s leading charity for people in the early to middle stages of dementia, this exhibition features thought-provoking photography and patchwork quilts created by Dementia NI members, all of whom live with a diagnosis of dementia.

**The Searchers** **29 Feb – 26 Mar**  
**A solo exhibition by Paul van Reid**

Paul Van Reid is a Belfast based artist who has work published with Tangerine Press, Dig with it magazine and shown in QSS and The Engine Room galleries. Reid’s paintings explore ideas around themes of power, desire, belief, mortality and consciousness.

**ForM SCULPTURE EXHIBITION**

In 2023 ForM Sculpture Exhibition showcased an eclectic mix of the weird and wonderful, small and large but always intriguing. The garden is always the star, but the sculptures create another dimension and experience, bringing a different audience to this space. It is a wonderful partnership between Arts and Parks and one that we hope will continue for many years to come.

The Exhibition takes place at the Walled Garden during the month of June. The ForM information and map was available via QR code as well as available at both entrances to the exhibition.

An independent panel of three arts professionals spent time making the difficult decision of choosing the recipients for the prizes.

Prizes awarded were:

- 
- 1<sup>st</sup> Place: Brendan Jamison
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Place: Alison Hanvey
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Place: Sandra Robinson
  - Highly Commended – Kate O’Neill and Rosalind Lowry
- 

It is estimated that approximately 3,000 people visited and engaged with the exhibition during the month.

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## CREATIVE CLASSES & WORKSHOPS

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### One-Day Workshops – Spring 23

25 April	Mixing Skin Tones with Sandra Robinson	12/12
20 May	Watercolour Florals with Trisha Campbell	14/14
24 June	Silver Bracelets with Diane Lyness	10/10

### Children's workshops

20 June	Bug Drawing with Adele Pound	20/20
7 August	Kev F Comic Art Masterclass	58/60

### May - August 2023

A 6-week spring/summer term commenced May with **10** classes running including the return of ceramics and oil painting. A total of **141** participants enrolled.

All classes have returned to full capacity and 8 of the 10 classes were fully booked.

### August 2023 Creative Peninsula Workshops:

- Make a Paper Bird Decoration with Adele Pound 8/8
- Linoprinting with Rosie Ennis 8/8
- Create a Seashore Sculptural Vase with Ellen Cunningham 7/10
- Wirework Jewellery with Morag Chambers 10/10
- 1:1 Throwing on the Potters Wheel with Tracey Johnston – 5/5
- Silver Necklace/earrings with Diane Lyness 10/10

### September- December 2023

The decision was taken to return to a pre-Covid 10 week term as both the class participants and tutors were ready to return to their previous schedule. The exception was the ceramics class that ran as two x 4 week terms so that we could run a Christmas specific term.

The term commenced in September with 14 classes programmed, 1 class was cancelled due to low numbers (Creative Writing). The term ran with **13** classes (9 of which were fully booked) total number of attendees at **164** of 188 available places.

### One Day Workshops – Autumn 23

- 14 October Botanical Printing with Ruth Osborne 8/8
- 21 October Silver Stacking Rings with Diane Lyness 10/10
- 11 Nov Wild Watercolours with Trish Campbell 12/12

### January – April 2024

A 9-week term commenced in January with 13 classes programmed, 1 class was cancelled due to low numbers (Observational Oil Painting). The term ran with **12** classes total number of attendees at **150** of 180 available places.

### One-Day Workshops – Spring 24

A 2<sup>nd</sup> watercolour workshop added due to first selling out and a large waiting list.

- |          |  |       |
|----------|--|-------|
| • 10 Feb | Spring into Watercolour with Trish Campbell    | 14/14 |
| • 24 Feb | Watercolour with Trish Campbell                | 14/14 |
| • 16 Mar | Silver Link Bracelet with Diane Lyness         | 10/10 |
| • 13 Apr | Floral Still Life Painting Pandora Butterfield | 12/14 |

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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A number of Professional Development events took place specifically aimed at artists and makers in the borough. Those in August/September were delivered as part of Creative Peninsula. January's events were facilitated in-house by Officers to help applicants to our grants and bursaries. These proved very popular and we saw an increase in the quality of applications as a result:

- |                    |   |    |
|--------------------|---|----|
| • 21 June 2023     | Finance for Creative Practices          | 13 |
| • 22 August 2023   | Branding for Artists and Makers         | 7  |
| • 29 August 2023   | Optimise Website for Sales and Search   | 8  |
| • 31 August 2023   | AND Arts Network Social                 | 22 |
| • 5 September 2023 | Social Media Strategies                 | 8  |
| • 11 January 2024  | Arts Bursary Event                      | 17 |
| • 16 January 2024  | Make your application stand out         | 24 |
| • 12 February 2024 | Online arts funding information session | 16 |
| • 22 March 2024    | AND Arts Network Social                 | 20 |

### Aspects Festival Club

As part of Aspects 2022 a Festival Club was programmed to encourage those whose work wouldn't fit into the poetry slam arena but who were writing at home and looking for a way to get a response from peers and to read their work, sometimes for the first time. It was a success and since then more have been scheduled throughout the year.

On Wednesday 16 February, 20 people came to the Imperial Bar to share their writing in either poetry or prose form around the theme of memory. It was an eclectic offering and what ensued was a relaxed group, many of whom had come on their own, who gained support, conversation and a genuine speaking from the heart. Most shared and a few came to lend their support and listen. These sessions have been very supportive of new writing and writers.

## COUNCIL ASSISTANCE/PARTNERSHIP

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### **BICENTENARY OF THE DEATH OF VISCOUNT CASTLEREAGH**

The Arts and Heritage Manager (AHM) and Museum Manager (MM) have been heavily involved in the Council's plans to mark the Bicentenary of the death of from Viscount Castlereagh. The AHM has Chaired the Council's Working Group that was established in October 2021 and a series of events took place throughout 2022/23 financial year

#### **Blue Plaque**

The Ulster History Circle has approved the siting of a Blue Plaque in Newtownards to acknowledge the time Castlereagh spent in the town as a child.

Ards and North Down Borough Council approved the siting of the Blue Plaque on the Town Hall Arts Centre at their meeting in July 2022 but due to delays in the planning permission and availability of special guests the unveiling was postponed.

The Blue Plaque was finally unveiled in a ceremony on Wednesday 19 April 2023 by Lady Rose and Peter Lauritzen with a reception that followed in the Londonderry Room.

#### **TT2028**

The Arts and Heritage Manager (AHM) alongside the Events Manager is involved in plans for a large event to mark the centenary of the Ards TT in 2028. A working group has been established and early planning is underway for what is hoped to be a weekend of celebrations similar to the Goodwood Revival. A commemoration for those that lost their lives on the course will also take place.

### **PORTICO PARTNERSHIP**

Through a Service Level Agreement Ards and North Down Borough Council Arts Service were able to support Portico with the cost of programming a number of Events to support their audience development.

On 17 July a children's talent Show took place in association with Portaferry Gala, this was a free event with an attendance of 195. The Arts and Heritage Panel was on the judging panel and thoroughly enjoyed the event that was hosted by the fabulous **Lady Portia Di Monte!**

**Lady Portia** continued the fun into the evening with a packed house of 190 for her Dragaoke which had the audience singing and dancing in the aisles!

**The Scott Brothers Duo** performed a lovely family show with the live score of The Nutcracker on organ and piano with screened animations - sales were 61

On 8 December **Lady Portia Di Monte** returned for Christmas Dragaoke, sales were disappointing at 56 but a great time was had by those in attendance.

On 2 February singer songwriter **Anthony Toner** performed to an audience of 98. Anthony has a loyal local following who always look forward to his visits.

On 1 April a family audience enjoyed the return antics of RTEjr's Joe Daly with **Joe's Magic Show**. It was a lively show featuring comedy, mind-boggling magic and snow - the adults loved it as much as the kids! 241 attended demonstrating that there's a desire for this style of show.

This Service Level Agreement is a legacy of the 2017 ACNI 'Challenge Fund' programme that both parties are keen to see continue. The partnership provides ANDBC with outreach opportunities in Portaferry and to support a valued arts organisation in the Borough and Portico with the support to programme more challenging work or music/theatre that will attract a new/different demographic.

## COMMUNITY ARTS DEVELOPMENT

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### **ACNI Arts for Older People Funding Programme**

AND Age Friendly Arts and Crafts Workshop Programme - £8,600

A series of specially tailored workshops were offered to older people's groups, residential homes and folds within the Ards and North Down Borough. The arts and crafts workshops loosely addressed the theme of friendship both through the medium of the art and through the very act of participation in the creative activity. The information for these workshops was sent out through community channels and a total of 14 groups availed of this opportunity. The programme will run until 31 October 2023.

The funding is also supporting the Cuan Craic Drama Group to develop their workshops and to create two performance pieces throughout the year. A total of 13 people registered with Cuan Craic which continues to meet on a Tuesday afternoon in Maxwell's Courtyard and is facilitated by Jenny Long, one of Northern Ireland's most experienced and talented theatre practitioners. Their first performance took place on the 22 May in Redburn Community Centre, to Holywood Over 55 group. It was very well received.

A 2<sup>nd</sup> performance took place on 24 October at Portico and was the culmination of a lot of time and effort by Jenny and the participants of Cuan Craic. A 65-minute performance of sketches and poems titled '*Ageing Disgracefully*' was performed to an invited audience of approximately 60 attendees from Portavogie, Ballywalter, Cloughey and Ballyhalbert who were brought together by Peninsula Healthy Living and North Down Rural Community Network. Ards Arts Centre provided transport and refreshments as part of the project and the audience thoroughly enjoyed their day out!

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### **ACNI Rural Engagement Arts programme - £10,000**

Puppets in Your Place was a largescale puppet workshop programme that has been developed in partnership with Cre8 Theatre and funded by the Arts Council for Northern Ireland REAP funding.



The project engaged with the individual communities of Donaghadee, Portaferry, Comber, and Holywood through a series of intergenerational reminiscence, puppet sculpturing, puppeteering, movement and music workshops.

This project proved difficult to get engagement for with a number of workshops planned and then postponed in early summer. The project picked up again in the autumn and a finale theatre piece was delivered at the Queen's Hall on Sunday 29 October as part of the Puppet Festival with 65 in attendance. A positive and fun experience for all involved.

### **Health and Wellbeing**

The Community Arts Development Officer (CADO) continues to sit on the Councils Health and Wellbeing Council Working Group and has organised a variety of creative workshops specifically for staff of AND Council. The idea behind the creative workshops is to offer staff the opportunity to participate in a mindful activity, to learn a new skill and to have pride in their creative abilities. All ways to develop better mental health. A very positive initiative from council which has clear benefits to staff wellbeing.

### **Summer Schemes**

- Ards Arts Centre Summer Scheme 14 to 18 August 2024
- Donaghadee Arts Summer Scheme 31 July to 4 August 2024

Both schemes were fully booked at 20 children attending each scheme.

The Ards Summer scheme took place in the Arts Centre from 10am – 4pm every day for a week. It involved arts and crafts with Trisha McNally, drama with Sarah Lyle from Cre8 Theatre and pottery with Ellen Cunningham. The young people did a short performance for their parents at the end of the week and had several arts and pottery pieces to take home. The feedback from the parents and children was excellent.

The Donaghadee scheme which focuses on arts and crafts took place in Donaghadee Community Centre from 9.30 – 1pm each day for a week. The artist facilitator was Bernice Anderson who worked with the young people to create some beautiful and imaginative pieces of work.

## ARTS GRANTS AND BURSARIES

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### **Multi Annual Arts Grants (awarded in 2022 for the years 2022-23 and 2023-24) Total £28,000.**

The Multi-Annual Arts Fund is designed to enable constituted arts groups from the Borough to enhance existing or undertake new larger scale arts initiatives over a two-year period.

#### **Core Funded**

Friends of Portaferry Presbyterian Church (Portico)	£4,700
Seacourt Print Workshop	£4,700
Boom, Inc.	£4,700
Bangor Drama Club	£4,700

#### **Festival Funded**

Bangor Drama Festival	£3,400
Hollywood Music Festival	£3,400
Bangor international Choral Festival	£2,400

There are two types of multi-annual grants - core and festival. Core funding is for organisations who have salaries and running costs throughout the year delivering arts programming year-round. Festival funding is for arts organisations who deliver an arts festival and generally run through volunteers and don't finance an office or venue year-round.

### **Arts Project Fund, Total £11,000**

The Arts Project Fund is open to arts, community and special interest groups throughout the Ards and North Down Borough area who wish to enhance existing and undertake new community arts activities. Grants of up to £1,000 are available.

A wide range of applications were received from across the Borough mainly focusing on visual arts and drama activities.

A budget of £11,000 was available for the project funding stream for 2023-24. In two rounds, a total of 20 applications were made to the project grant totaling £19,509 requested in funding.

The successful applicants:

- Portico
- Bangor & North Down Camera Club
- Rotary Club of North Down
- AMH New Horizons
- AMH Promote
- Portaferry Community Services
- Kilmood Art Club

- Kilcooley Women's Centre Unit
- Donaghadee Community Development Ass
- Bangor Speech Festival
- Valhalla Street Theatre
- Holywood Shared Town

### **Youth Arts Training Grant, Total £2,000**

A total of £2,000 was available in 2023/24 for young people living in the Borough (under 25), who wish to undertake short-term or one-off youth arts training or development opportunity. A maximum grant of £250 per applicant was available under the Youth Arts Training Grant.

7 applications were received and successful.

### **Individual Artist Grant: Total £2,750**

The Artistic Development Scheme is to support Individual artists who are living in the Borough for up to a maximum grant of £250 to support the cost of specific training or artistic residencies, to enhance their skills and develop their practice.

Over two rounds of this funding stream, 15 applications were received with 13 of them being successful.

### **Arts Bursaries, Total £2,350**

The Council offers three creative bursaries: The Tyrone Guthrie Centre, (Co. Monaghan); Ballinglen Arts Foundation, (Co. Mayo) and the John Hewitt Summer School, (Co. Armagh). These unique bursaries give an artist an opportunity to focus on a specific project of development in their work and further their artistic practice.

Applicants were asked to clearly demonstrate their experience and how they would use the bursary to further their professional practice.

### **Ballinglen Arts Foundation Bursary**

Two-week bursary was awarded to Kerrie Hanna – a visual artist.

### **Tyrone Guthrie Bursary**

8 applications were received for the Tyrone Guthrie Centre.

The panel recommended a one-week bursary to each of the following artists:

- Myra Zepf, writer
- Bethany Ashley, poet and multi-disciplinary artist
- Clara Kerr, choreographer/dancer
- Richard Clements, actor/play-writer

Bethany Ashley, was the third recipient of the bursary made available to support an artist with a disability. The award was created in memory of Chris Ledger through the developments of the Arts and Disability Working Group.

### **John Hewitt Summer School Bursary**

Judith Fox was awarded the bursary to attend the John Hewitt Summer School 2023.

## BRITISH COUNCIL FINNISH EXCHANGE

The AHM secured £4,000 from the British Council under their *Architecture and Design Biennales and Festivals Grants*. The grant covers a two-way exchange between Creative Peninsula textile/linen artist Ruth Osborne and textile/linen artist Pirjo Seddiki representing the Taidesuunnistus Festival of Design in Tampere, Finland

The first stage of the exchange took place in April 2023 with Ruth travelling on 18 April to Tampere to facilitate workshops and an open studio demonstration. Ruth had a fantastic time and was met by a representative of the British Council who said she was a wonderful ambassador for Creative Peninsula and the Borough. She was generously hosted by Sirpa Morsky.

Pirjo and Sirpa both made a return visit in August to take part in Creative Peninsula staying between 24 July-13 August. They were hosted by textile artist Jane McCann at her house and studio in Donaghadee.

A Finland Exchange talk took place at Jane's on 2 August and an exchange exhibition took place at Ards VIC between 2-12 August where works in progress could be viewed and collaborative pieces produced as part of the exchange by both the artists and hosts. A selection of these pieces has been sent to Finland for exhibition in Tampere in October.

Pirjo also delivered a fascinating artist talk on predicting colour trends as part of the opening night of Creative Peninsula.

An exhibition will take place as part of Creative Peninsula 2024 to highlight the connections created and the progress made 1-year on.

## MEDIA AND ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

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The Arts and Heritage Service continues to benefit from a strong social media presence on Facebook 5,910 followers on Culture AND/2,425 on the Guitar Festival) and Instagram (2,628 followers). The Culture channels have collectively increased their following by 1,180 on the previous year. We also continue to be active on X (formerly Twitter) with 618 for the Guitar Festival and 1,181 for Aspects.

From 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, the ANDculture website received 33K unique users and 154K views. The home page had 28.7K page views, the What's On section received 8.9K page views.

### MAILING LIST

The ANDculture mailing list (combined Arts and Heritage list) currently has over 2.8K subscribers. A 'What's On' email is sent out to subscribers once a month detailing all activity coming up across the Arts and Heritage service.

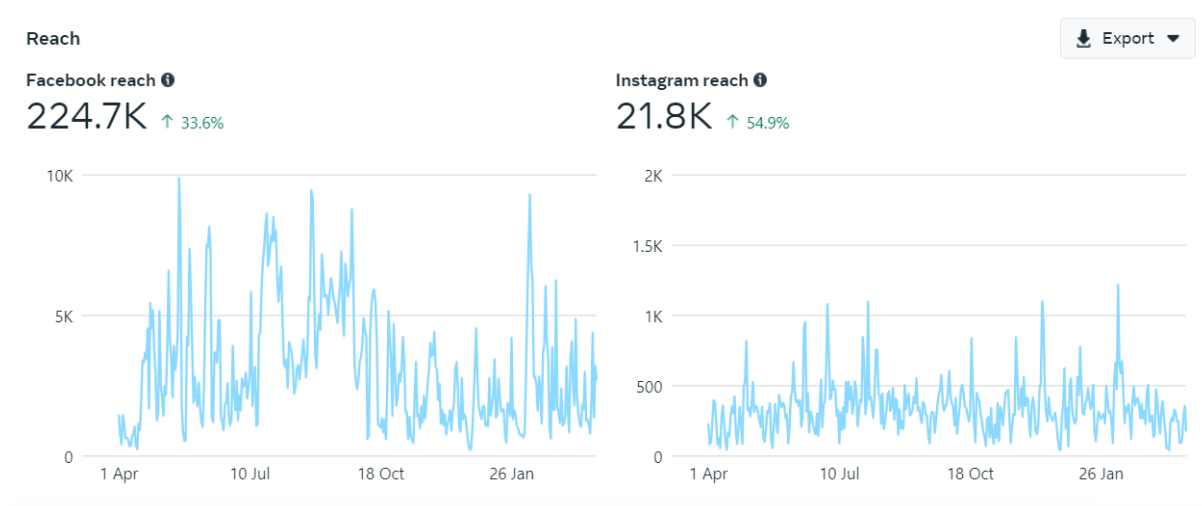
### Summary of Top Performing Posts on Culture Facebook by Reach:

The top performing organic posts in 2023/24 for Arts were:

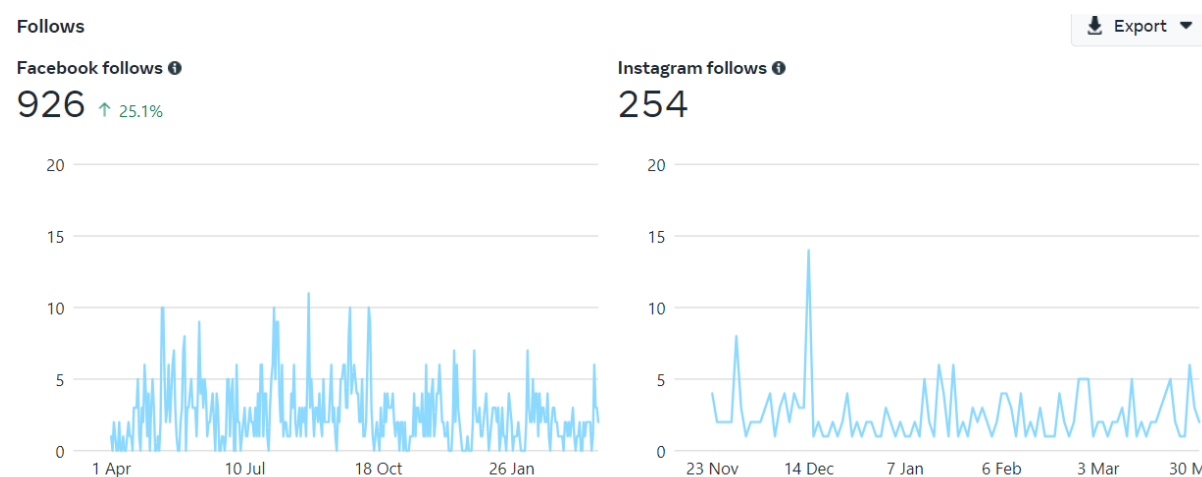
- Bangor’s Ghost Aspects Festival: 14.6K
- Craft in the Garden Event: 8.9K
- ForM Exhibition Save the Date: 8.6K
- Launch of the Summer Arts and Heritage Programme: 8.4K
- Cr8 Theatre Puppet Workshops: 7.9K
- Arts Bursaries Open for Applications: 6.3K

In this time, period Digital Paid-For Advertising Campaigns were also in place for Guitar Festival, Creative Peninsula and Aspects Festival which would have increased reach across the Culture channels.

### Facebook and Instagram Reach 1 April 23 – 31 March 24



### Culture Ards and North Down Facebook and Instagram New Likes and Follows:



### Culture Ards and North Down Page and Profile Visits:

Visits

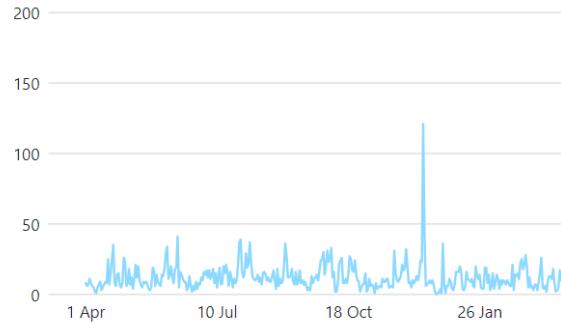
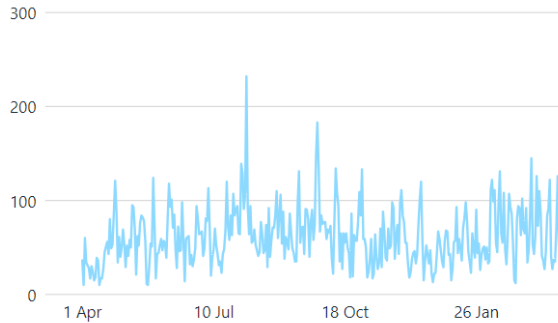
Export

Facebook visits

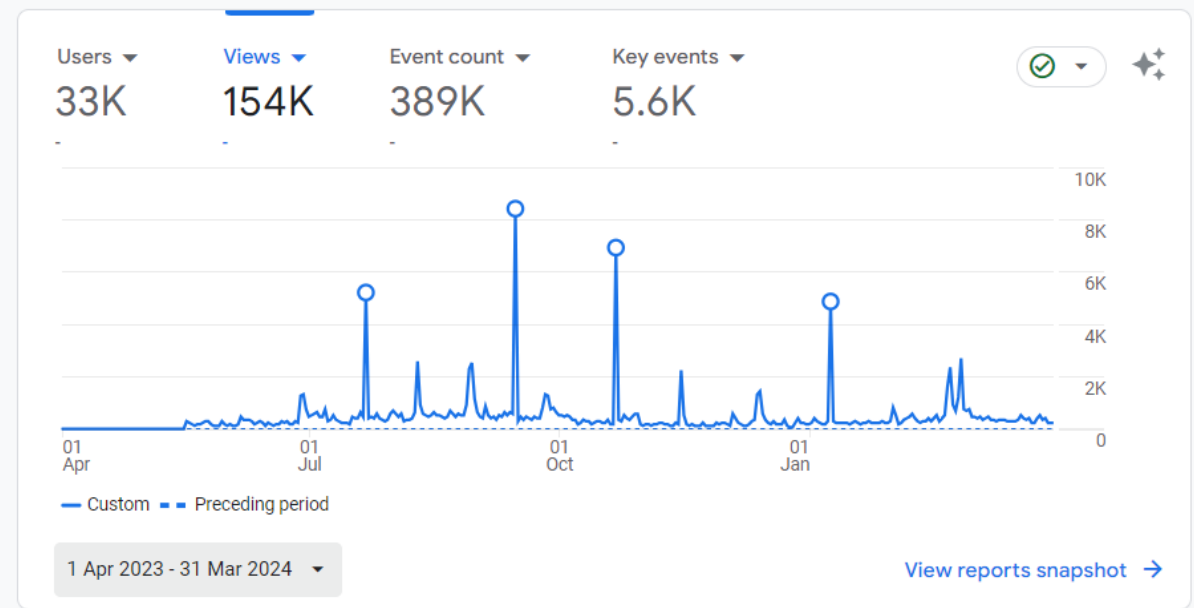
22.5K ↑ 130%

Instagram profile visits

4.5K ↑ 117.4%



### ANDCulture Website Stats 1 April 2023– 31 March 2024 (Google Analytics):



## NORTH DOWN MUSEUM AND HERITAGE SERVICE OVERVIEW

Ards and North Down Borough Council's North Down Museum and Heritage Service is responsible for exhibitions, education and outreach programmes, grant aid, collections care and the provision of North Down Museum, as well as partnership work with Council and Government departments and local communities/heritage interest groups to protect, preserve and share our Borough's rich history.

The annual operating budget for 2023/24 was **£283,600**.

## NORTH DOWN MUSEUM VISITOR FIGURES

This year the museum has seen a steady increase in visitor numbers from last year, reaching **66,832 visitors** in the 2023-24 period.

## STAFF, VOLUNTEERS & WORK EXPERIENCE

Staffing levels remained the same with the continued absence of the Museum Assistant being covered by an agency worker in the 2023-24 period. The secondment of the museum assistant is due to end in November 2024.

A business case was made to increase the part time Education and Outreach Officer to fulltime in the next financial year (2024-25). This was due to an increase in demand for schools programming and to facilitate the expansion of the education outreach programme. This bid was successful and our Education and Outreach Officer will be fulltime from April 2024.

The museum's two dedicated volunteers continued to work on documenting the museum's large image collection and researching 18th Century Bangor history.

The museum provided a work experience placement for a secondary school student.

## VISITOR DATA COLLECTION

A new survey was designed and put in place in April 2023 to record data about our visitors and their experience. This is available in paper form in the museum and also online in a citizen space system, this QR code links located throughout the museum.

This supplies the museum with data regarding our visitors to assess our current programming and inform future planning and programming.

For the 23-24 period, data collected from the survey highlighted some of the demographics of a portion of our visitors. Of our adult visitors the largest age groups falls into the 65+ age group, making up 23.7% of our visitors. The second largest group with 22% is 35-44 age group. 60% of our visitors in the period described themselves as female and 36.5% as male.

The majority of our visitors are from the borough, with 40% of our visitors from NI. However 31% of visitors came from outside of the UK and Ireland suggesting that the museum is a popular attraction for tourists. Countries in the 'other' category include South Africa, Ghana, Philippines, Canada, Australia, Russia, Taiwan, Indonesia, China, Venezuela, Brazil, South Korea and Pakistan (see table below).

Age Group	Percentage
16-24	10.58%
25-34	14.11%
35-44	21.91%
45-54	12.09%
55-64	63%
65+	23.68%

Gender	Percentage
Male	36.52%
Female	60.2%
Non-binary	0.76%
Not answered	1.51%

Location of Visitor	Percentage
Ards and North Down	25.19%
Elsewhere in Northern Ireland	15.62%
Republic of Ireland	5.54%
United Kingdom	22.17%
Europe	8.56%
USA	9.32%
Other	13.60%

Rating Experience	Percentage
Excellent	94.21%
Good	5.54%
Average	0.25%
Poor	0.00%



The last section of the survey revealed that 94.21% of visitors rated the experience at the museum as excellent with no responses rating the museum as poor. The section relating to where the visitor has heard about the museum needs to be reworked as 70% of responses fell into the 'other' category.

The comments left were overwhelmingly positive with the friendliness of the staff, quality of exhibitions and child-friendly initiatives most commonly cited in the positive comments.

## AQUISITIONS

The museum continued to accept a range of new items into the collection in 2023-24 in accordance with the Museums Collection Development Policy.

## ACCREDITATION

The accreditation return assessment was completed by June 2023 and assessed by the Northern Ireland Museum Council. The assessment returned the recommendation for the retention of full accredited status for the museum. The Arts Council of England agreed with this recommendation and the museum received their award of full accreditation on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

Accreditation provides museums in the UK with a clear set of Nationally agreed standards to work towards. Achieving Accreditation builds public trust and funders' confidence in how museums manage collections for the community, and how they manage public resources. Accreditation status enhances a museums' presence and reputation and in turn bolsters the reputation of the council.

The accreditation board requires a museum to provide appropriate governance and management and to have a high standard in the management of their collections, including its documentation, conservation and interpretation.

Benefits for the council in maintaining an accredited museum:

1. If we did not have an accredited museum we would be the only local authority in NI not to have one.
2. access to funding, many funding streams are only open to accredited museums.
3. access to loans, accredited museums can only loan to other accredited museums. Without this, the museum would lose many key loans that make up our permanent gallery displays. It would also mean that we would not be able to secure loans for any future temporary exhibitions.
4. Maintaining accreditation will send a sign to the community and other institutions that our council values the history and heritage of the community that we serve.
5. Public trust, our community lends and donates to the museum because they trust the museum has high standards and that objects will be secure and appropriately cared for when in our building.

## COLLECTIONS

While the accreditation was retained, audits have taken place to assess the weaknesses in existing collection management and conservation and to address the recommendations made by the accreditation board. The main issues identified were the conditions in the stores, the gaps in documentation and labelling, the need for new security and collection management procedures. Lastly, to address to inadequate storage and packaging of the collection. In addition, the Percy French donation needed to be assessed and inventoried in advance of accessioning and adequate materials purchased. Collections work needs to be considered a priority and addressed and the lack of a collections focused post in the museum is hampering this process. However, some improvements have been made in 2023-24, they are summarised below.

1. Environmental Conditions- The environmental readings needed to be stabilised in the stores and in the Bronze Age gallery. New dehumidifiers were purchased and placed into the areas in need. Heat is amended to reflect data in weekly readings. Better recording of pest management is now also in place. This has significantly improved the readings in the affected areas.
2. Training – Staff have received training in new donation documentation and security. Agency worker has received additional training in collections care (handling, packaging, environmental data and security).
3. Costume collection identified as most in need of improvement in labelling, documentation, packaging and storage. The Jordan Collection was identified to be in need of labelling and conservation cleaning and packaging. Work began in addressing this and the costume collection has new storage and conservation packaging and labelling. Cleaning, labelling and boxing of Jordan collection where necessary has begun. Plans are also in place to address the archaeological collection in 2024
4. Percy French Collection- conservation needs identified and improved where needed, full accessioning to take place over summer 2024.
5. New security procedures in place, particularly in the store are in place to improve the security of the collection.
6. An audit of the art collection in the stores and in the Cityhall are due to take place in spring/summer 2024.
7. Installation of blinds in the Praegar gallery to reduce light levels in the gallery and the galleries adjoining it.

## EXHIBITION PROGRAMME

The museum continues to provide a rolling programme of exhibitions in our temporary exhibition spaces. During the course of this year each gallery space was assessed for function and use. It was identified that each space would benefit from having a unique identity, targeted to more effectively achieve key aims and to make the best use of each space. The children's trails will be updated with exhibitions change to allow for interaction with temporary areas. This new identity will be fully employed throughout 2024-25.

### LONG GALLERY

The Long Gallery will now focus on historic and art exhibition primarily created by museum staff with a strong focus on displaying the museum's collection in alignment with accessibility policies outlined in the museums accreditation policies. Six exhibitions and a pop up shop were held in the long gallery.

#### **'Remember me is all I ask'... A Celebration of Percy French**

**9 March-1 May 2023**

This exhibition uncovers the charm and talent of the singer, songwriter, performer and artist Percy French. Explore French's life through his artwork and music, as well as his travels around the world entertaining children, adults and even soldiers during the First World War. French's work touched the lives of many, and this exhibition pays tribute to the warm and gentle man whose spirit and genius brought entertainment, laughter and fun to all those who knew him.

#### **Bangor Horticultural Society Centenary**

**4 May-30 July 2023**

This exhibition celebrates 100 years of the Bangor Horticultural society, one of the oldest horticultural societies in Ireland. It charts the fascinating history of the horticultural movement in Bangor from its founding, illustrious patrons and extravagant two day annual shows, through the war years into its exciting plans for the future. This is a must for horticultural enthusiasts and for those who want to learn more about how to get involved with gardening in their community.

#### **Creative Peninsula**

**2 August– 24 September**

This exhibition is part of the annual Creative Peninsula festival, a thriving event featuring exhibitions, workshops, demonstrations and much more. It celebrates and showcases the wealth of artistic talent that the borough of Ards and North Down has to offer.

North Down Museum has curated a display of unique pieces of art and craftwork which exemplify the high quality and range of skills that our local artists and makers create. It is a fantastic opportunity to support our creative industries and to purchase a beautiful original artwork.

### **Aspects Artwork**

#### **26 September-Sunday 30 September**

An exhibition of past Aspects posters were displayed in the long gallery and the room was seated and used to deliver events for the Aspect festival.

### **Strangford Horse and other tales**

#### **3 October-19 November 2023**

In his oil paintings, Xander conjures the mysterious, the poetic and the fantastic. The landscape in which the artist grew up often features as the backdrop to quite incongruous dramas involving exotic animals and mysterious topiary. Dark themes are not absent, as distant reminiscences of tales told, childhood misconceptions and the insights of age romp together in a clear sunlit land. A fine art graduate (University of Ulster) the artist has exhibited extensively in Belfast, Dublin, London and Hamburg, and is now working with Gormley's Fine Art Gallery Belfast.

### **Made in AND: Pop-Up Christmas Shop**

#### **Long, Praeger & Community Gallery**

#### **22 November 2023 – 7 January 2024**

The galleries of the museum are filled with beautiful hand-made products from local artists and makers. The perfect place to get that special gift and support your local crafters.

### **Hidden History – A look at the new archaeological discoveries in our borough.**

#### **1 January – 7 April**

Our borough has a vast and fascinating history spanning thousands of years of human occupation. Every year archaeologists unearth new and exciting secrets of our past, making new discoveries which help us to understand the lives of our ancestors.

This exhibition explores these new archaeological discoveries, how they are made and the people who make them. Exploring the story of our borough from the earliest human settlers, and how these communities developed and expanded over the centuries.

## **COMMUNITY GALLERY**

The Community Gallery is open to local groups and individuals who wish to display their exhibitions in the museum. Through an application process, each group has a set period for their display. The museum works alongside these individuals/groups to curate the content. This year seven exhibitions and a pop-up shop were held in the community gallery.

### **Rescued and Re-purposed : Reuben Sheridan & Les Sharpe**

**21 February -2 April 2023**

Honouring the natural beauty within the elements of wood and metal, Reuben Sheridan rescues old materials and crafts them together in a new way, breathing new life into the discarded. Les Sharpe uses a wide variety of media, found and donated objects, combined with organic materials and more traditional media to create what might be referred to as otherworldly, futuristic landscapes seen from an imaginary drone. While at first, the idea of pairing the work of these two creatives, so different in style and approach, might appear unlikely, they do in fact complement each other in so many ways. Both are keen to see materials that might normally be consigned to landfill being reused and repurposed. This is a direct, positive response to today's throwaway society and reflects the pure joy of upcycling and repurposing the unwanted into something desirable and useful.

### **Linen & Lace**

**4 April-21 May 2023**

During the 19th and 20th centuries high quality linen and lace produced in Ulster was much sought after and sold around the world. In Newtownards the linen, lacemaking and embroidery industries were a popular source of employment for those living in and around the town, most especially for women who could complete much of the work in the home.

In this exhibition Ards Historical Society will explore the role Newtownards played in the Ulster textile industries and display some of the many delicate and intricate items collected by its members and their families over the years.

### **Tourism Experiences**

**23 May-2 July 2023**

ANDBC Tourism have created an exciting programme of tourism 'experiences'.

This initiative supports local businesses in developing and piloting new visitor experiences which allow the public to engage in unique opportunities with a place and its people. Come along to and see what fun opportunities and adventures are on offer in your area.

### **From Coast to Country by Bangor Art Club**

**4 July-13 August 2023**

Bangor Art Club has approximately 45 members of all ages. They paint in a wide variety of mediums. This exhibition reflected the beauty and diversity of the local area through the medium of paint, pastels and pens. Each artist exhibits their own interpretation of our plant and animal wildlife as well as acting as a commentary on the aspects of our society that are important to them.

### **Pastel Society of Ireland**

**15 August-1 October 2023**

The artists participating in the exhibition are breathing new life into the centuries-old medium of pastels, producing a diverse range of fresh, innovative and sometime challenging works. The themes covered are familiar and relevant to all of us and touch on family, community, love, nature, the environment, the temporal and the permanent. The artists are members of the Pastel Society of Ireland, which brings together pastel artists from across the whole of the island of Ireland to promote the use of this medium.

### **Peninsula Painters**

**3 October-19 November 2023**

Taking an interest in art is almost always accompanied by a deeper appreciation of one's surroundings. There develops an energy and enthusiasm for, and an awareness of the changing seasons. The artist strives to capture movement and expression in a few strokes. This exhibition brought together work using various mediums, some pieces influenced by the old masters, some by Chinese style painters, some favour the fine detail in pencil, pen and ink. Indeed, this exhibition was a window on the world... through the artists eyes.

### **Made in AND: Pop-Up Christmas Shop**

**Long, Praeger & Community Gallery**

**22 November 2023 – 7 January 2024**

The galleries of the museum are filled with beautiful hand-made products from local artists and makers. The perfect place to get that special gift and support your local crafters.

### **Princess Victoria Disaster**

**16 January – 17 March 2024**

Early in the morning of 31<sup>st</sup> January 1953, the *MV Princess Victoria* left Stranraer enroute to Larne. Shortly after leaving the shelter of Loch Ryan, the ferryboat encountered heavy seas which crashed over the ship and forced open the stern doors. Despite the lower decks being flooded, she continued on for a number of hours before finally sinking off the coast of Co. Down with a loss of 135 souls. Of the 44 survivors, 33 were rescued by the crew of the *Sir Samuel Kelly* lifeboat and taken to Donaghadee.

In collaboration with Donaghadee Heritage Preservation Company Ltd., this exhibition will recount the terrible events of that day, remembering the passengers and crew of the Princess Victoria, and those who came to their rescue.

### **Bangor Shop Fronts Then and Now**

**20 March – 9 June 2024**

Between 2020-2022, North Down and Ards U3A participated in a UK-wide U3A research project looking at changes to local high streets during the Covid epidemic. The members recorded and photographed Bangor shop fronts in Abbey -, Main -, Bridge - and High Street then revisited the same streets 18 months' later, noting changes that took place in the interval.

Sourcing images from the Museum's extensive photographic collection, this exhibition will expand the original project by one hundred years, and explore which goods and services were on offer to Bangor's savvy shoppers from the early 1900s to today.

### **CAFE GALLERY**

During lockdown the museum installed new cases and a hanging system in order to provide a new temporary gallery space. This space is best used to display artworks exclusively from 2024. The exhibitions can be from both professional and amateur artists and offers them the opportunity for sales in a busy part of the museum. This opportunity is externally advertised and assessed by a panel against a set of criteria. Consideration is given to the content of the other galleries to ensure diversity of themes and topics.

### **Lacrosse**

**28 March-30 April 2023**

The game of lacrosse was made popular in Ireland by Ards Lacrosse Club, the first Lacrosse club to be formed in Ireland in 1872. Collated by members of Ards Historical Society and local historian Robin Masefield, this exhibition will highlight the rise of Lacrosse in the late 19th century; local players and visiting teams; and Ards being unbeatable over three seasons, winning both major trophies - the Irish Championship Flag and the Irish Challenge Shield.

### **QUB Cabinet of Curiosities**

**3 May-4 June 2023**

This exhibition is curated by students from the history department of Queen's, University, Belfast. Working together, they have selected objects from the museum's stores and explored their history and significance. They sought inspiration from the concept of the 'cabinet of curiosities', a term first used in the sixteenth century to describe private collections of unrelated and 'curious' objects displayed privately to

one's friends. This eclectic mix of objects offers an opportunity to view rarely seen items from the museums unique collection.

### **My North Down Coastal Path**

**18 July-27 August 2023**

Martyn Boyd is a Bangor resident and retired professional photographer. He has over 40 years of experience behind his lenses. His exhibition showcased his interpretations of the beauty of the light, land, sea and weather along the Coastal Path, a treasure to behold.

### **Ballybarnes Woodcarvers**

**30 August-8 October 2023**

This exhibition by Gordon McConnell & Brian Orr, offers those who love wood a chance to see a wide variety of beautiful finely carved wooden objects. The exhibition captured the many fascinating styles of carving in a range of different woods. From abstract to decorative, from realistic to quirky, there was something for everyone to appreciate and enjoy.

### **NI Embroidery Guild : Together again**

**10 October-19 November 2023**

NI Embroidery Guild's 40th anniversary exhibition was cancelled in 2020 due to Covid and the bunting made for the occasion packed away. Each piece of bunting represents a Guild member and celebrates the eclectic interests and wide-ranging skills of the individual, while the bunting as a whole celebrates the spirit of the Guild as a collaborative, creative community. The Guild meets on the 3rd Saturday of each month at Cultra and they extend a warm invitation to visitors and new members to join them to explore, learn, create and stitch.

### **Terry Aston's Bangor**

**22 November 2023– 7 January 2024**

From 1969 to 2000 Terry taught at the University of Ulster. His background and training were not as a fine artist but as a graphic designer and illustrator. This exhibition of his prints is centred around several favourite, local buildings and cityscapes. Available to purchase.

### **Ards Art Club**

**9 January – 25 February 2024**

The Ards Art Club was formed over 20 years ago and has approximately 40 members. The club is active with weekly Wednesday morning meetings in Groomsport Boat House and monthly demonstrations by local professional artists in the Arts Centre in Newtownards.

Members work in a wide variety of mediums and gather together to celebrate their individuality, diversity and vibrant artistic paintings within the club. They paint together for companionship, support and friendly advice.



The club is always keen to support new and budding artists.

### **Round My Way**

**27 February –21 April 2024**

Round My Way, Photography Exhibition by Nigel Snell

Nigel Snell is a Bangor based Wildlife and Nature photographer with a particular interest in Birds. He is often seen in the locality of the North Down shoreline where a significant number of his images are made. This is not to say that Nigel is confined to Ards and North Down, he will also work throughout the Island of Ireland and occasionally further afield, whilst trying to minimise his carbon footprint.

Round My Way, includes images made by Nigel close to home in North Down. The different types of environments, shoreline, woods and even townscapes provide many opportunities to capture images of a wide number of species including some visitors to Ireland. Always being true to the animal or bird being portrayed, Nigel likes to think with a more creative mindset, showing the environment a little more than just a portrait of the subject, adding a Fine Art feel to the images.

### **PRAEGER GALLERY**

The Praegar gallery has been used for small exhibitions and is being trialled as an area to highlight and promote artists and crafters of the borough. The 'Artists Showcase' is designed to educate visitors on the history of the artform in question and the processes involved to create this work. The idea is to promote local artists and crafts people of the borough but also inform the general public of the skill and intricacy involved in creating these works.

### **Terry Aston Exhibition**

**January – 23 April 2023**

From 1969 to 2000 Terry taught at the University of Ulster. His background and training were not as a fine artist but as a graphic designer and illustrator. This exhibition of his prints is centred around several favourite, local buildings and cityscapes.

The powerhouse at the centre of his work is his impressive collection of sketch books- each one has 80 pages or more. His continual drawing practice has been used to put images to the poetry and prose he has written over many years.

### **History In the Making: The Coronation of King Charles III**

**25 April-30 July 2023**

To mark the crowning of the 62<sup>nd</sup> Monarch, King Charles III, North Down Museum will host an exhibition to honour the first Coronation to be held in Great Britain in 70 years. This momentous occasion provides an excellent opportunity to showcase the museum's fascinating objects with Royal associations. An array of paintings,

photographs and memorabilia from past Coronations and Royal visits to the borough will be on display to evoke a sense of celebration for this extraordinary event.

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### **Auspicious Symbols**

#### **Exploring the hidden meanings in Decorative Chinese Art**

**5 Sept- 19 November**

China has a rich cultural heritage with a vast history spanning thousands of years. The use of symbolism is intrinsic to Chinese culture and influences its art and the practice of gift giving. The use of symbols in art is more than just an attractive embellishment, the symbols and motifs that appear on Chinese decorative arts often represent hidden meanings that communicate a desire for success and good fortune. Through looking at a diverse range of objects from North Down Museum's Sir John Newell Jordan collection, the exhibition will explore a variety of these.

### **Made in AND: Pop-Up Christmas Shop**

#### **Long, Praeger & Community Gallery**

**22 November 2023 – 7 January 2024**

The galleries of the museum are filled with beautiful hand-made products from local artists and makers. The perfect place to get that special gift and support your local crafters.

### **Holocaust Memorial Day**

**27 January**

In partnership with the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, the museum is playing 'The last train' documenting the story of a survivor of the Holocaust.

### **Artist Showcase**

**29 January –7 May 2024**

Our community in Ards and North Down has a wealth of creative talent. Many of these artists, crafts people and makers use traditional techniques to create their handmade pieces. Our artist showcase will feature a series of artists, makers and craft people who contribute to keeping our traditional heritage skills alive. The first artist to be featured is Alison Hanvey.

symbols and their hidden meaning.

### **TOURING EXHIBITION**

The museum worked with Armagh County Museum to curate a travelling exhibition on Percy French as part of the promotion of the collection since the museum took ownership of the collection in early 2023. The exhibition was very successful and ran from March-July 2024.

## Made in AND: Pop-Up Christmas Shop

The Museum's four temporary galleries hosted the Made in AND: Pop-Up Christmas Shop, featuring beautiful hand-made products from 29 local artists and makers. Once again, this unique shopping experience proved popular with visitors to the Museum and netted **£ 8,091.40** in sale of artist work.

## MARKETING & DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

The Culture Facebook and Instagram channels continued to grow and gain followers. By March 2024 the Culture Facebook page had gained 926 new followers, bringing its total followers to 5,901 and Instagram increased to 2,628 followers.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Museum Facebook posts have performed very well over the past year.

The best performing Museum/Heritage Facebook posts of 23/24 are (by organic reach):

North Down Museum Receiving Ulster Archeological Journals: 7.9K

Princess Victoria Disaster Exhibition: 6.7K

The Bees Are Back at North Down Museum: 6.6K

Not So Scary Halloween: 6.5K

Museum August Exhibitions: 6.2K

North Down Museum Shopfront Exhibition Launch: 5.4K

## WEBSITE

The ANDCulture.org.uk website has once again been an essential platform for promoting all the Museum's events and exhibitions. The site has also been important for promoting and sharing grants information and general information on the museum and visitor experience.

The website received a total of 33K unique users and 154K views in this time period.

## SURVEYS

North Down Museum's new Visitor Experience Survey received 397 responses in its first year in operation. The data was collected through face-to-face interviews carried out by front of house staff and also through scanning QR codes placed around the building. The feedback received was overwhelmingly positive and will prove useful to inform future programming.

## MAILING LIST

The ANDculture mailing list (combined Arts and Heritage list) currently has over 2.8K subscribers. A 'What's On' email is sent out to subscribers once a month detailing all activity coming up across the Arts and Heritage service.

## CLASSES & WORKSHOPS

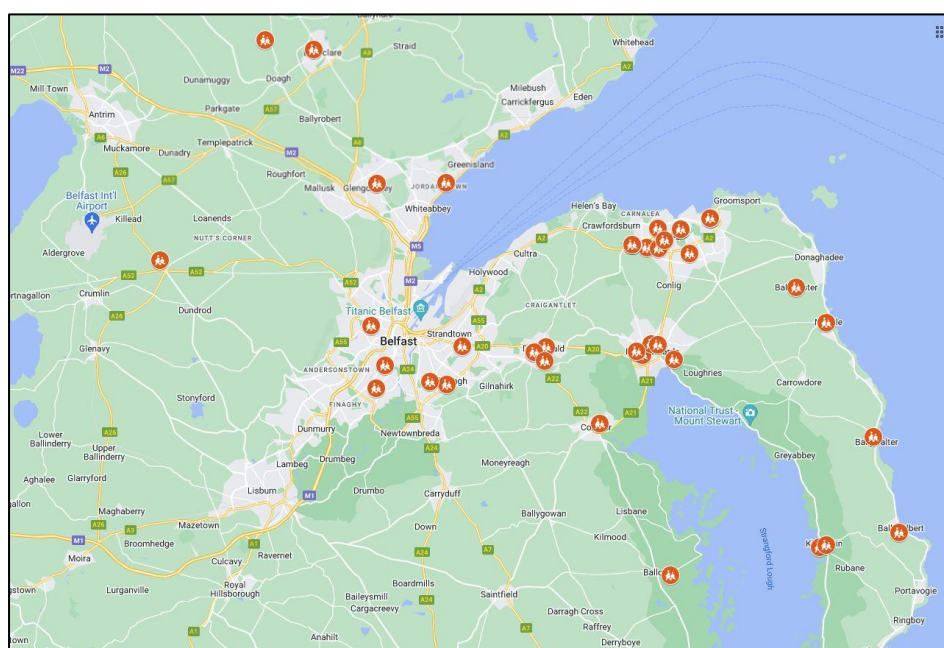
The museum ran a wreath making course which was fully booked, attracted 8 participants.

## EDUCATION PROGRAMME

### School Visits

The museum continued to receive schools throughout 2023/24 for the Vikings programme. We hosted **46 visits from 36 schools** with a total of **1,745 pupils and staff/parents attending**. In addition to this, we hosted **72 pupils and staff/parents** from Bangor Central IPS who helped us with the pilot of our Early Christian programme.

Schools from across the borough and outside of the borough visited with us. This map shows the spread of schools that visited us in 2023/24:



Our programmes have continued to be popular this year and feedback has been extremely positive with school staff commenting on the reasons they enjoy our programme:

- interaction with living history characters
- although there is a focus on knowledge, there is also a focus on skills (analysis, inference, deduction etc.)
- the programme is full and fast-paced: pupils are contained, constantly active and the visit is well-organised.

Feedback shows that 100% of school staff would book with us again.

### Coronation Education Programme

A digital education programme for schools on the coronation that was to include colouring and craft activities, a letter writing task and an inter-generational element was created. 3 packs were produced, 1 pack per stage for Early Years/Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1, and Key Stage 2. These packs were sent electronically to 50 pre-schools and all 52 primary schools within the borough.

The packs contained an interactive PowerPoint on the life of King Charles III, what to expect at a coronation ceremony, the use of Roman numerals, the coronation logo and the national flowers, a letter-writing task to tell the king about their endeavours to care for the environment, research on kings and queens throughout history, a homework task to interview an elderly relative on newsworthy events over the past 70 years, photos of royal visits to the borough and a mapping exercise to plan a royal visit to the borough for the new king and queen, alongside colouring and craft activities.

Also included in the packs was a borough-wide competition to design a 'Good Luck' card for King Charles to wish him well on his reign.

There were **169 downloads** of the education packs, and **507 entries** were received for the coronation competition.

The Mayor of Ards and North Down selected the final winners of the competition – 1 winner from each stage. The 3 children from Donaghadee PS, Clandeboye PS and Newtownards Model PS met with the Mayor and had juice and treats in the Mayor's parlour. Their final designs were produced onto card and these cards were posted to Buckingham Palace. The winning children also received a £25 book token and their class was given a £150 book token.

Schools who took part in the coronation competition:

Ballyholme PS	Ballyvester PS	Bangor Central IPS
Castle Gardens Preschool	Clandeboye PS	Donaghadee PS
Grey Abbey PS	Kircubbin IPS	Kirkistown PS
Newtownards Model PS	Towerview PS	Victoria PS (Newtownards)

### **New initiative**

SEND-friendly Sensory Packs were launched in October 2023. These packs contain items to support a calm and enjoyable experience at the museum for anyone with additional needs. The packs contain ear defenders, fidget toys, an animal puppet and a 'journey board' with magnetic gallery cards for individuals to plan their journey through the museum, therefore reducing anxiety and providing a focus. Adult ear defenders are also available. 8 Sensory Packs are available in 4 different colours and all items inside are linked to the colour of the pack, therefore encouraging repeat visitors to try out a different pack each time.

The sensory packs have been well-received by parents of children with additional needs. Most parents who have commented have stated that they have brought their own items with them but appreciate that there are bags available should they need them. The majority of parents who have used the bags have stated that the ear defenders, fidget toys and puppets are particularly useful.

### Not-So-Scary Halloween

We hosted our first Not-So-Scary Halloween events for children since pre-COVID. Three events were held which included a storytelling session, led by Karen Edwards of the Armstrong Storytelling Trust, followed by a craft session led by our Education Officer. Event one was for children aged 3-5, event two for children aged 6-8, and event three for children aged 9-11.

Unfortunately, we sold only a few tickets for our 9-11 event so this had to be cancelled. In total, **55 children** and their parents attended the two Halloween events and received prizes for best costume. Feedback was very positive and many families made a day of it as they were able to use the Family Space for additional Halloween-themed fun at the museum.

Plans are in place for next Halloween to include all ages in each event which will allow family groups to attend the same event.

### Playful Museums Festival

The museum was successful in gaining a £500 grant from Northern Ireland Museums Council to put on an event for under 5s as part of the annual Playful Museums Festival. With this grant, we organised 4 x 1-hour events for local nurseries.

The event, entitled 'Bear Hugs', focused on the Neill's teddy bears. The children learnt about Bangor's much-loved teddy bears then created their own clay teddy bear magnets to take home. The sessions were facilitated by Clayful Minds who provide therapeutic clay modelling workshops.

**79 children and 19 adults attended** the events. Links with the nursery practitioners have now been established which will lead to further early years' workshops.

### Outreach Programmes

The museum piloted a new programme of workshops for adults with additional learning needs. Working with the Elderly Learning Disability Service at Bayview Centre in Bangor, our Education Officer visited once every 4 weeks to deliver a history workshop. These workshops focused on the history of the local area over a series of 8 sessions:

<b>1)</b> Stone Age to Iron Age	<b>2)</b> Early Christian Era	<b>3)</b> The Vikings	<b>4)</b> The Plantation
<b>5)</b> The Victorians	<b>6)</b> First World War	<b>7)</b> Second World War	<b>8)</b> The 1950s

The workshops begin with a PowerPoint presentation containing only visuals and are pitched appropriately for the intellectual level of the clients. As this is an 8-part series, presentations are able to be adapted as we get to know the clients' abilities. Each workshop includes the chance to dress up and handle items where possible. A craft activity linked to the topic completes each session so that each participant has something to take home. Booklets with colouring activities and wordsearches (also linked to the topic) are given to each client to help consolidate what they have learnt. Feedback given at the end of the pilot:

"The quality of the presentation was excellent, very suitable for the level of the group's understanding. The interaction with the group was brilliant and the communication was simple and clear. The craft activities were excellent, very well thought out and planned, and each person's individual needs were catered for. The group really looked forward to the visits, learning interesting facts about history and taking crafts home.



## TALKS, TOURS & EVENTS

	Number	Participants		
Tours	14	389		
Talks by staff	10	228		
Events	13	2,707		
Workshops	1	8		

## FUNDED PROJECTS

### HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT FUND 2023-24

In conjunction with Parks & Cemeteries and Biodiversity teams, the Museum applied to Dept. of Communities Historic Environment Fund to carry out conservation work and new interpretation at two historically important Council-owned graveyards in Slans and Ardkeen townlands. Schools outreach was also included in this project. Notification was received December 2023 that the application was successful. Work began in February 2024 and will continue into summer 2024. The value of this grant is £10,000.

### NIMC

The museum was successful in our bid for £500 funding towards the annual playful museums. Unfortunately, NIMC have experienced funding cuts and this was the only grant available this year.

## COUNCIL ASSISTANCE

Museum staff provide assistance and information to Councillors as well as other sections and departments of the Council. This included information, images, and historical context for several projects during the year.

## ENQUIRIES

Collection and history based enquiries have increased in this period with approximately **260 enquiries** resolved. These requests include advice, historic information, supervised access to collection and help with research. Requests came from organisations, academic researchers, individuals, local community groups and students. All required action and some required a substantial percentage of staff time.

## PARTNERSHIPS

### Sir Samuel Kelly Lifeboat

Museum staff continued to work closely with the Donaghadee Heritage Preservation Company to care for the Sir Samuel Kelly Lifeboat. Conservation of the boat has advanced significantly. Work externally is almost complete and work is due to begin soon on the engine room. The group were successful in their HLF bid, receiving

£90,000 to advance the exhibition centre, improve outreach and exhibits and to employ a part-time member of staff. The council is acting as a partner in this project and has offered advice and guidance to the group. This has involved advice from museum staff on schools programming, outreach, shop merchandising, exhibitions and collecting feedback/survey data. Interpretation panels were designed and paid for by the council to use in their exhibition room.

## HERITAGE

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### Heritage Cluster Update

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#### JUNE 6, PORTAFERRY MARKET HOUSE

Guest speakers were James Lavery, Engagement Officer for National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) and Celia Spouncer, Causeway Coast Maritime Heritage Group (CCMHG).

James spoke to the Cluster about recent changes to NLHF funding, types of projects they fund, amount of funding available, things to consider when planning your project, completing the application form, and turnaround times.

Celia talked about the boat-building projects undertaken by CCMHG, which included a 36ft currach, *St Comcille*, which has completed 7000 miles since construction and sailed as far as Portugal as part of a former PEACE project. CCMHG offer sailing training to participating members, undertake oral history as well as boat-building and are part of the wider Madil Tradition Boat Archive project.

Following these talks, the groups provided updates on their activities since the last meeting and future plans.

#### September 11, North Down Museum

Guest speaker was Corporate Marketing Assistant (Arts and Heritage) Stacy Eakin who spoke to the members on the topic of 'Focus on Social Media – how to make best use of your online presence'. Stacy's talk was well received, and notes have been circulated to the members. This was followed by an activity update by each representative and then a discussion on provision of tours to visitors. Discover Groomsport provided an update on their new tour map and programme of tours which launched over the summer; Friends of the Abbey (Greyabbey) spoke of the good working relationship with cruise ships, ambassador training and new volunteers; and Friends of Columbanus Bangor spoke of their recent Bangor Abbey tour to a group from Brittany.

#### November 28, Livingstone Centre, Killinchy

The guest speaker was Fiona Bell, CEO of Thrive, who is currently leading the Re:Model evaluation programme and has been working with the Heritage Development Officer. Fiona spoke about the programme and following this led a conservation on issues faced by the cluster members which included membership, engagement with volunteers, funding, social media and the overall sustainability of the



societies/groups. This discussion was greatly appreciated by the members and has led to Fiona being contacted by members regarding evaluation for their own society. The meeting was concluded by a tour of the Livingstone Centre kindly given by member David Kirk.

## **QR Codes**

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A Notice of Motion brought to Council agreed -

“That officers bring back a report with a view to widening the Council's use of digital technology (in particular QR codes) to promote and provide information about statues, built heritage and monuments in the Council's ownership and care as well as points of interest throughout the borough.”

The HDO commenced this task with studying three sites: Comber Square, Conway Square and the War Memorial at Ward Park. The HO met with members of Comber Historical Society, Ards Historical Society, Bangor Historical Society and North Down and Ards U3A to discuss existing interpretation at these sites and provision of new /extra information through use of QR codes. In addition, a new page has been created on the AND Culture website dedicated to Council-owned statues and monuments within the Borough and contains information relating to the three sites mentioned above.

A wider audit of the Council's heritage assets will follow and once the scope of the project is identified, to include research requirements, the preparation of content, the cost of placing QR codes on appropriate buildings and associated planning application costs, (required to place QR codes on listed buildings/monuments) a further report on the project timetable and costs will be brought to Committee for consideration.

## **Outreach, Partnership & Collaboration**

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### **April – May 2023**

Ulster Historical Foundation, Donaghadee Historical Society, Donaghadee Heritage Preservation Company, Portaferry and Strangford Trust, Bangor Historical Society, Ards Historical Society, Holywood U3A, and North Down & Ards U3A.

The HDO individually met with the above-mentioned groups to provide advice and discuss potential for future projects and exhibitions. Meeting with the Ulster Historical Foundation proved fruitful as they expressed a wish to join the Heritage Cluster.

### **Tullyboard Windmill**

The Arts and Heritage Manager and HDO met with representatives Portaferry Community Collective regarding potential for improvement works at Tullyboard Windmill, Portaferry.

**Portaferry Regeneration Sub-Committee**

The HDO attended sub-committee meetings in February - April 2024 with representatives from Portaferry Community Collective, Portaferry Regeneration Ltd, PORTICO, Upper Ards Historical Society, Portaferry and Strangford Trust and Portaferry Sailing Club regarding a potential heritage event in September to coincide with European Heritage Open Days.

The Museum has offered to co-produce a 1798 exhibition with Upper Ards Historical Society and Portaferry & Strangford Trust in time for the event.

**Coronation Traditional Craft Event 13 May 2023**

The HDO and Arts Development Officer organised an outdoor event in Bangor's Walled Garden in celebration of King Charles' coronation. A total of nine demonstrators showcased their skills in the traditional crafts of Macrame, spinning, Dorset button making, wood turning, wood carving, pottery, calligraphy and boat making. Three musical acts played throughout the three-hour event which was attended by approximately 300-350 visitors.

**Strangford Lough And Lecale Aonb 2023-24**

The HDO attended the quarterly officers meeting (ANDBC and NMDDC) to discuss projects and works taking place within the AONB and potential for new collaboration.

**Columban Way And Four Corners Project**

APRIL & MAY 2023

The HDO meetings led by Tourism and Outdoor Recreations NI relating to the Columban Way and the Four Corners project.

**DIGITAL ARCHIVE**

MAY 2023

The HDO provided a catch-up session for the seven groups involved in the Digital Archive.

**The Sensational Museum**

The Heritage Development and Education & Outreach officers attended a one-day workshop focusing on accessibility in museum, January 2024. The workshop was hosted Northern Ireland Museum Councils and members of The Sensational Museum, a £1M project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). Led by the University of Leicester, this interdisciplinary project will 'design and create sensory interventions that are accessible to all – using what we know about disability to change how museums work for everyone'.

The NDM officers were invited to participate in the workshop and highlight existing outreach to elderly and dementia groups, and children and adults with special educational need.

## Heritage Grants

2023-24

Thirteen groups applied to the Heritage Grant, of which, 12 were successful and the total grant money was assigned to the grantee. Two of the groups were unable to complete their projects resulting in a £500 underspend.

A legacy of Boom Studios project, *Heritage Sketch Book*, is that they will exhibit the beautifully compiled sketch books in the Museum's Community Gallery in summer 2024.

Table 1 Heritage Grant Projects 2023-24

ORGANISATION	PROJECT TITLE	AWARDED	SPENT
Portaferry and Strangford Trust	Maritime Heritage - Past and Future	500.00	500.00
Ards Historical Society	Renewal of Website Domain and Purchase of Consumables for Laser Printer	500.00	500.00
Discover Groomsport Auld Bangor Historical and Cultural Society	Groomsport History Tour and Self-Guided Tour	500.00	500.00
Portavogie Cultural and Heritage Society	We Forget: Shared History from the Somme and Beyond	250.00	500.00
Friends of Columbanus Bangor	Booklet publication	250.00	500.00
Inspiring Yarns	Pilgrim Badges	250.00	500.00
Boom Studios	Learn to Spin	250.00	0.0
Donaghadee Historical Society	Bangor Seafront Heritage Sketch Walks	500.00	500.00
Upper Ards Historical Society	Reminiscences of growing up in or visiting Donaghadee	500.00	0.0
Donaghadee Heritage Preservation Company	Journal 47 of UAHS	500.00	500.00
Portaferry Sailing Club	History and use of Donaghadee harbour	500.00	500.00
	Maritime and Gilpin Memoirs Portaferry	500.00	500.00
<b>Totals 2023/24</b>		<b>5000.00</b>	<b>4500.00</b>

### Ulster Scots Talks Grant 2023-24

Ten groups have availed of the grant for this year and talks took place between October 2023 and March 2024.

ORGANISATION	Title of Talk	COST
Ards Historical Society	<i>The Montgomerys</i>	130
Auld Bangor History and Cultural Society	<i>James Hamilton and Plantation of Bangor</i>	70
Bangor Social & Learning Group	<i>The Ulster Scots - John Dunlap, Ulysses S Grant, Stephen Foster, Sam Houston, and Edgar Allen Poe</i>	53.5
Bangor Historical Society	<i>Captain Jack Crawford the Poet Scout</i>	80
Family History in North Down & Ards	<i>Ulster Scots in America</i>	80
Donaghadee Historical Society	<i>Hamilton &amp; Montgomery</i>	110
Ballywalter & District Historical Society	<i>Ulster Scots In America including Davy Crockett</i>	125
Upper Ards Historical Society	<i>The Men who made Portaferry</i>	104
Portavogie Cultural and Heritage Society	<i>Burns Supper event</i>	110
Comber Historical Society	<i>Narnia in East Belfast: The Birthplace of C.S. Lewis</i>	
<b>Total spend 2023-24</b>		<b>999.25</b>

### Historic Environment Fund 2023-24

In conjunction with Parks & Cemeteries and Biodiversity teams, the Museum applied to Dept. of Communities Historic Environment Fund to carry out conservation work and new interpretation at two historically important Council-owned graveyards in Slans and Ardkeen townlands. Notification was received December 2023 that the application was successful.

Following discussion with HED in January regarding the Programme of Works for the two sites, vegetation clearance began in February 2024. Works at Slans included repair to the boundary wall of the graveyard. Further damage to the exterior face of the wall was noted during these works and following negotiation of the funding budget, HED allowed for this new repair to be included in the project.

A schools outreach programme developed as part of the project will be offered to local schools in May/June 2024.

## CORONATION PROGRAMME

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The museum put together a programme to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III in May 2023. The museum staff created fun coronation activities for the weekend including 'king for a day' coronation crown craft packs, get your picture taken with the king opportunity and craft, colouring experiences and dress up for children. 140 craft packs were taken by children to create their own crowns.

In addition, the coronation exhibition was launched on 24 April and the museum education officer created an education programme which was sent out to schools. A heritage craft event day (joint with Arts team) was programmed for the walled garden in Bangor in conjunction with the 'Learn to grow' two day event with the Bangor Horticultural Society.

## SALE OF ARTISTS WORK 2023-24

The Museum has been able to sell on behalf of Artists who exhibit with us. Last year the museum was able to create sales of £13,752.80 of local artists work.

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<b>Gallery</b>	<b>Total Sales</b>
Shop Space	£1,094.40
Community Gallery	£2,415.00
Long Gallery	£470.00
Café	£1,682.00
Long, Community & Praegar	£8,091.40
<b>Total</b>	<b>£13,752.80</b>

## APPENDIX 1 ARTS SERVICE STATISTICS

### Visitors/attendees to Arts Service

<b>2021-22</b>	19,775	The Arts Centre opened on 29 May 2021 with a reduced programme and social distancing remained for the rest of the 21/22 year.
<b>2022-23</b>	38,036	
<b>2023-24</b>	38,329	

### Music Events\*

	No. of Events	Attendance
<b>2021-22</b>	11	468
<b>2022-23</b>	13	859
<b>2023-24</b>	13	1015

\*Excludes festivals

### Performing Arts\*

	No. of Events	Attendance
<b>2021-22</b>	5	548
<b>2022-23</b>	12	1,859
<b>2023-24</b>	8	1,328

\*Excludes festivals

**None of the Arts Festivals took place in 2020. Creative Peninsula and Aspects were delivered at reduced capacity due to social distancing in 2021**

### Festivals

<b>Guitar Festival</b>	Total Attendance	Tickets Sold	Box Office	Events
<b>2022</b>	1,150	903	£6,607*	19
<b>2023</b>	1,635	1,135	£10,403	20

\*Ivy Bar & Ards Arts Centre still at 60% capacity social distancing

<b>Creative Peninsula</b>	Event Attendance	Exhibition Attendance	Tickets Sold	Box Office	Events
<b>2021</b>	1,508	726*	54	£1,455	22
<b>2022</b>	1,550	2,079	89	£1,023	38
<b>2023</b>	1,650	5,378	182	£3,111	38

Aspects Festival	Total Attendance	Exhibition Attendance	Tickets Sold	Box Office	Events
2021	478	n/a	512	£4,180	13
2022	919	350	886	£6,610	25
2023	1,171	350	1,133	£8,752	23

Puppet Festival	Total Attendance	Tickets Sold	Box Office	Events
2022	1,000+	610	£1,107	2 Day Event
2023	1,400+	501	£1,866	2 Day Event

Young Aspects	Total Attendance	Tickets Sold	Box Office	Events
2024	262	166	£884.92	10

Visual Arts Programme\*

	No. of Exhibitions	Attendance
2021-22	15	-
2022-23	19	12,005
2023-24	21	Currently unavailable

\*Excludes ForM sculpture exhibition

ForM Sculpture Exhibition

	Attendance
2021-22	1,400+
2022-23	3,000
2023-24	3,000+

Artists Talks

	No. Delivered	Adult Attendance
2021-22	1	35
2022-23	5	271
2023-24	2	42

Arts Education Programme\*

	Creative Courses Delivered	Attendance
2021-22	75	622
2022-23	66	788
2023-24	51**	619

\*includes festival educational workshops/ForM

\*\* return to a 10 week term so overall less individual classes offered

Youth Arts Schemes

<b>2021-22</b>	Did Not Take Place	0
<b>2022-23</b>	1-week Ards Arts Centre 1-week Donaghadee	20 in each week
<b>2023-24</b>	1-week Ards Arts Centre 1-week Donaghadee	20 in each week

Professional Development Programme

	No. Delivered	Attendance
<b>2021-22</b>	5	22
<b>2022-23</b>	1	6
<b>2023-24</b>	7	93

AND Arts Networking Events (Est August 2023)

	No. Delivered	Attendance
<b>2021-22</b>	0	0
<b>2022-23</b>	0	0
<b>2023-24</b>	2	42



## Appendix 2 Heritage Service Statistics

### General Visitors to North Down Museum

2021-22	46,474	
2022-23	63,328	
2023-24	66,832	

### Redevelopment

2021-22		Sensor lighting in upstairs galleries, accessible toilet and courtyard Rethatched Monk's cell
2022-23		Praegar gallery fitted with blinds to allow for control of light conditions.
2023-24		Extension of hanging system into community gallery. Development of 'Belle' character for children's programming

### Exhibitions- Long Gallery

2021-22	7
2022-23	8
2023-24	7

### Exhibitions- Community Gallery

2021-22	6
2022-23	6
2023-24	8

### Exhibitions- Praeger Gallery

2021-22	4
2022-23	4
2023-24	6

### Exhibitions- Café

2021-22	8
2022-3	10
2023-24	8

**Exhibitions- Travelling**

2021-22	3	
2022-23	1	
2023-24	1	

**Exhibitions- community exhibitions at external locations**

2022-23	0	
2023-24	3	Princess Victoria Disaster- Sir Samuel Kelly Centre Lace with Ards Historical Society- Newtownards Library Ards Lacrosse- Londonderry Leisure Centre

**Exhibitions- Loans**

2021-22	1	Portrait of NI: Neither an Elegy nor a Manifesto, Golden Thread Gallery, Belfast- 2 artworks by Praeger and Craig
2022-23	2	Percy French Jordan as part of Reimagine, Remake, Replay
2023-24	1	Cavan County Museum

**Events**

Event	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Xmas market/shop	5,729	-	
Vegetarian Night @ the Museum	50	-	-
Total events		4 events to 842 people	13 events to 2,707 people

**Online Engagement**

Event	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Social media	83,391 Facebook 7,045 Instagram	-	Facebook page had gained 926 new followers
Website	'Visit Us' page c. 2,000 visits	Each quarter averaged 7000 unique visitors and 30,000 page views	33K unique users and 154K views

**Classes & Workshops**

	Number	No. attendees
2021-22	1 RRR photography	12
2022-23	1 (two cancelled, low numbers)	8

2023-24	1	8
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**School visits**

	No of Schools	No of Pupils/Staff
2021-22	0 schools	
2022-23	31 visits from 25 schools	1,119 pupils and 137 staff/parents attending.
2023-24	46 visits from 36 schools	1,817 pupils and staff/parents attending

**Talks**

By Museum Staff	No. talks	No. attendees
2021-22	13	357
2022-23	14	369
2023-24	10	228

**Tours**

Museum Tours	No. tours	No. visitors
2021-22	13	251
2021-23	9	256
2023-24	14	389

**Heritage Grants**

2020-21 (£2.5k to award)	£2,499.99 awarded	£2,499.99 spent
2022-23	£5,000 awarded	£4,579 spent.
2023-24	£5,000 awarded	£4,500

## APPENDIX 3

### Arts and Heritage Panel Membership 2023-24

**Chair** Cllr Pete Wray (Sept 2023 – Sept 2024)  
**Vice-Chair** Catherine Charley (Sept 2023 – Sept 2024)

**Chair** Shauna McGowan (Sept 2022 – Sept 2023)  
**Vice-Chair** Cllr Ray McKimm (Sept 2022 – June 2023)

### Elected Members April 2023 – June 2023

Ald Robert Gibson  
 Cllr. Colin Kennedy  
 Cllr. Ray McKimm  
 Cllr Karen Douglas  
 Cllr. Richard Smart  
 Cllr Alex Harbinson (replacing Cllr Karen Douglas)

### Elected Members June 2023 – April 2024

Cllr Janice MacArthur  
 Cllr Pete Wray  
 Cllr. Colin Kennedy  
 Cllr. Richard Smart  
 Cllr Alex Harbinson (replacing Cllr Karen Douglas)

In line with the Arts and Heritage Panel Constitution; each Panel member can serve for a period of 4 years in line with the Council's term of office. All current members were required to stand down in June 2023 to be re-elected in line with the new term of Council. Recruitment for members took place during July and August of 2023 and a new Panel was elected at the AGM in September 2023 for a term of up to 4 years. Existing members were welcome to reapply.

### Voluntary Members April 2023 – June 2024

Museum/Heritage	Dr Verity Peet
Museum/Heritage	Robin Masefield
Museum/Heritage	Billy Carlile
Visual Arts/Crafts	Sharon Regan

Visual Arts/Crafts	Craig Jefferson
Visual Arts/Crafts	Shauna McGowan
Literature	Hanna Slattne
Literature	Catherine Charley
Performance	Martin McDowell
Performance	Brendan McGoran
Community Arts	Dympna Curran
Community Arts	Fo Cullen

### **Voluntary Members September 2023 – April 2024**

Museum/Heritage	Dr Verity Peet
Museum/Heritage	Billy Carlisle
Museum/Heritage	Stuart Alexander
Museum/Heritage	Linda Wilson
Visual Arts/Crafts	Pandora Butterfield
Visual Arts/Crafts	Jane McCann
Visual Arts/Crafts	Anna Smyth
Literature	Catherine Charley
Performance	Eve Williams
Performance	Gregory Fox
Community Arts	Dympna Curran
Community Arts	Marcus Hunter-Neill

Unclassified

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**ITEM 11****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	09 October 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community and Culture
Date of Report	16 September 2024
File Reference	CDV34B
Legislation	The Local Government Act (NI) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Summer Scheme Update 2024
Attachments	Appendix Map Showing Distribution of Participants

**Background**

In 2024 the Council led summer schemes were delivered by the Community Development Team in the following locations across a 2-week period:

- Alderman George Green Community Centre
- Ballygowan Village Hall
- Bowtown Estate: Movilla Abbey Church Buildings
- Donaghadee Community Centre
- Portavogie Community Centre
- Redburn Community Centre
- Westwind's Community Centre

At 6 of these locations, there were 48 places provided per week, with one smaller centre (Westwind's) having 32 places available per week. This is a total of 640 places over two weeks.

Not Applicable

Three Community Led Summer Schemes were delivered by Community Partners in the following areas:

- Bangor, Kilcooley Community Centre – Kilcooley Women’s Centre
- Millisle, Millisle Community Hub - Millisle Youth Forum
- Portaferry, Steel Dickson Avenue - Ballyphilip Youth Club

Kilcooley Women’s Centre attracted additional funding which allowed them to deliver across 4 weeks. They provided 65 places per week, which is a total of 260 places over 4 weeks.

Millisle Youth Forum provided 34 places for Seniors in week one and 60 places for Juniors (2 groups of 30 children at 2.5 days for each group) in week 2. They provided a total of 94 places over two weeks.

Ballyphilip Youth Club provided 53 places in week one for Juniors and 34 places in week two for Seniors. They provided a total of 87 places over two weeks.

**Table 1**

<b>Council Led locations per week</b>	<b>Number of children 2023</b>	<b>Number of children 2024</b>
Ards/Bowtown	24	48
Ards/Westwinds	24	32
Ballygowan	24	48
Bangor/George Green	48	48
Holywood/Redburn	48	48
Portavogie	48	48
Donaghadee	48	48
<b>Total Per Week</b>	264	320
<b>Total number for the full scheme (2 weeks)</b>	528	640

<b>Community Partner location Per week</b>	<b>Number of children 2023</b>	<b>Number of children 2024</b>
Kilcooley x 4 weeks	52	65 x four weeks
Millisle x 2 weeks	29	60 x week one, 34 x week two
Portaferry x 2 weeks	40	53 x week one 34 x week two
<b>Total Per Week</b>	121	Week one = 178 Week two = 133 Week three = 65 Week four = 65
		<b>441</b>

<b>Total Number of places in the 2024 summer schemes</b>	<b>1081</b>
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Not Applicable

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**Council Led Schemes:** Numbers increased this year due to the Covid restrictions being totally withdrawn and allowing maximum capacity for staff: child ratios. The only exception to this was the Westwind's location, due to the smaller floor space available within the centre. Demand for Summer Scheme remains high, even with increased numbers across the board. Overall, increased staff enabled teams to return to a more manageable breakdown of age groups and a higher quality play product in each centre's bespoke programme. This had an increase of 112 places.

**Community Partner Led Schemes:** There was also an increase of 199 places across all community partner led schemes. Kilcooley accounted for 130 of these places as they secured funding from another source.

Capacity is the crucial factor for both Council and Community led schemes. Good Practice dictates that all should meet minimum adult:child ratios when working with children (**1 adult to 8 children**). Council employs agency staff for the two-week duration delivering all 7 schemes at the same time. Council staff compliment increased this year to ensure the higher number of spaces available, however, this placed a strain on the budget.

Capacity for Community Led Partner colleagues is even more difficult, as they rely entirely on volunteer power to ensure delivery. This is a crucial baseline for each Partner organisation and determines how many children each can register. Demand remains high every year. Both Council and Community Partner Led Summer Schemes do their utmost, within both budgetary and people power constraints, to meet these demands.

### **Enrolment Process**

An online registration process was maintained this year. The verification process for proof of address and Free School Meals (FSM) for concession rate worked well, for those who produced their documents. For those parents/guardians who did not, the Community Development Team had to collect this information, which was very time consuming. Not all the information was made available before the scheme started, which resulted in Summer Scheme staff collecting it on the first day. The Community Development are considering options to streamline this process.

### **Staffing**

The Council Led Schemes employed 56 agency staff. This represents an increase of 11 staff, providing an enhanced adult:child ratios and enabled us to provide more child places.

### **Summer Scheme Promotion**

Registration for both Council and Community Partner schemes was advertised through Council's website, Council Facebook and sent out to Community Development Database.

### **Programme delivery**

Programme delivered diverse activities. Dividing children into 2 age groups and devising programmes reflecting their age, stage of development and ability to engage with play activities. Part of the rationale is to sustain the Borough's economy by utilising as many venues as possible. Understandably there are certain activities



Not Applicable

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children love, and which are outside the Borough. Council destinations were: North Down Museum, Killinchy Play Park/MUGA, Ards Blair Mayne Wellbeing & Leisure Centre, Exploris, Seapark, Groomsport Beach and Cockle Row, Millisle Beach, and Portavogie Beach. Summer Scheme also visited Airtastic, Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, Mount Stewart, Ark Farm, Happytown, Sir Samuel Kelly Lifeboat and Castle Espie. Visits beyond the Borough included W5 and Indianna Land. The onsite programme is equally exciting, with facilitators and artists visiting children at community centre settings. These included: First Aid by Red Cross, Multi Sports Joe, Claire Leathem Music Bloom, Ulster Scots drummers and dancers, Eastwell Farm Alpacas, Puppet Show and Clayfull Minds.

This year summer schemes offered every child a breakfast in partnership with **The Warehouse** in Newtownards and **Bangor Foodbank Community Support**, who provided cereals, bread, fruit and yoghurts. This worked well and was a good support and help to tackle Holiday Hunger.

### **Cross Council Working**

Community Development work closely with colleagues across Council to deliver some educational input, which we ensure is different and more fun than school content. This helps inform future adult citizens of their responsibilities and embed good habits early.

Cross Council partners included:

- Community Safety
- Community Arts
- Heritage Education
- Recycling
- Leisure
- Good Relations
- Community Halls

Summer Scheme programming relies heavily on colleagues to provide “free” activities to enhance the programme. Inflation and cost of living increases shrinks the summer scheme budget, which although it has remained the same for several years, in real terms means the programme similarly reduces year on year.

### **Volunteering**

This year 3 young volunteers supported Summer Scheme at Bowtown, which provided an excellent opportunity for young people to get involved with their community, learn new skills and build confidence.

### **Evaluations**

#### **Children’s Evaluation.**

The children’s evaluations were conducted daily. This involved asking children about their views on activities, programme, breakfast offering and their ideas for the future. Although entirely qualitative data was collected, most children enjoyed the activities.

### **Table 3**

Not Applicable

Question	Yes	No
Did you have fun?	88%	11%
Were the activities good?	81%	19%
Did you like breakfast?	74.5%	25.5%
Did you make new friends?	70.5%	29.5%

Where there were any deviations or negative comments it was generally linked to one of several “uncontrollable”: “it was too rainy”, “I was very tired walking around so much”.

**Parent/Guardian’s Evaluation**

There was a high response rate of 49% from parent/guardian’s evaluation. Areas reviewed included: registration process, new location suggestions for Summer Scheme delivery, programme content, programme improvements, staff/volunteer rating, communication, value for money and further suggestions.

**How did you find the online registration?**

**Table 4**

Option	Total	Percent
Very Easy	67	40.85%
Easy	22	13.41%
Moderate	33	20.12%
Difficult	22	13.41%
Very Difficult	20	12.20%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

In terms of programme improvement, 84.76% said no improvement was necessary. Suggestions offered tended to be more of an organisational or structural nature, which will be considered going forward. Those who said there was room for improvement offered the following suggestions.

**Table 5**

Only permit one week per child to ensure everyone gets a chance.	Would pay extra for hot meal at lunchtime.
Good value for money.	Registration - very frustrating online – crash/lose place feels like potluck, go back to face to face.
No show caretaker led to working parents being late for work. Co-ordinator did not let parents know what was going on/given assurances.	Better prep with better comms between those running the scheme and those who organize it. Go back to face to face – perhaps at the weekend when less pressure on parents to get online. Stressful when site crashed.
More variety RNL trip was boring but liked making the craft boat.	Registration process, daily check in very slow.
Very good value for money.	Trips to places families find expensive to go to – Exploris, Airtastic, Belfast Zoo, cinema, rather than Bangor Museum, football pitch.

Not Applicable

My work very strict with flexi – making it from 9.30-2.30 would be great.	Readable timetables 4 other P/G's I asked couldn't read them either. Pics of staff and their roles.
Somebody checked my docs which were emailed about 6 times.	Great scheme but years ago we had one age in one centre and another age group at a different one in Holywood.
My children were very hungry at 1pm lunch slot- break with fruit and drink would be great. Felt A&Cs were a bit young for my daughter at WW. Overall, first week better than second in WW.	More places or run the entire summer.
Bus was late on last day; parents didn't know what was happening.	First day very disorganized – I had had problem with my child with severe allergies, which was concerning, but later rectified.
Disorganised last day.	Things went missing and never turned up again.
More people need to realise how hard it is looking after other people's kids, especially teenagers, need more help for communities doing this.	

New locations suggested for Summer Scheme delivery included locations are listed in **Table 6**.

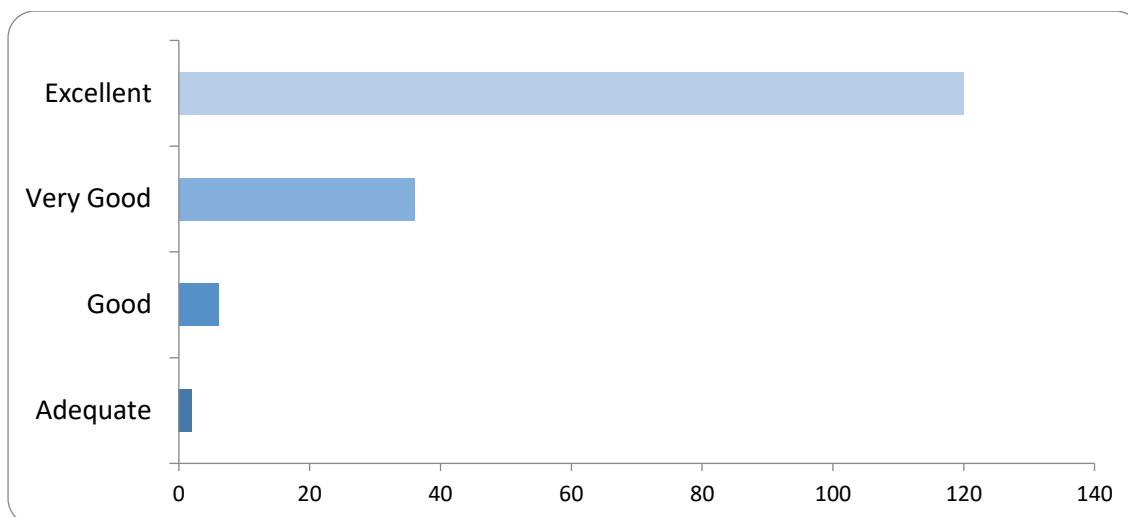
**Table 6**

Glen Estate	2	Groomspoint	1
Portaferry	4	Central Bangor/Conlig/Skip/Ballyholme/Ballycrochan	9
Cloughey	2	Ballywalter	3
Kircubbin	5	Millisle	1
Comber/Killinchy/Lisbane	5	SAINTFIELD*	1
Carrowdore	3	Seahill	1
Loughries	1	Newtownards town	1
KILLYLEAGH*	1	Ballyhalbert	1
All Villages	1	Rotate Portaferry and Portavogie	1
GLENGORMLEY*	1		

\*Highlighted areas suggested are not in Borough

**How do you rate the Summer Scheme programme content?  
Programme content**

Not Applicable



**Community Partner Evaluation**

Community Partner Evaluation was conducted as a group exercise. A range of areas were reviewed: recruitment, training, venues & equipment, programme and programme delivery, food offering and evaluation.

**Recruitment** is crucial and provides the baseline from which Community Partners devise the numbers of child places they can provide. Community Partners rely solely on Volunteer support for this role. There were no issues this year, they met their adult: child ratios, however having a casual list of volunteers available as a backup remains difficult to achieve.

**Volunteers**

It is essential to recognise the value volunteers bring to the delivery of community partners contribution. Without their time and energy there would be no summer scheme in Kilcooley, Millisle and Portaferry. Using the minimum number of volunteers required across these three schemes (25) and calculating the National Minimum Wage of £11per hour over 10 days it equates to a value of £16,500. It is important to recognise the contribution of volunteers through an event, certificates of achievement, volunteer expenses.

**Venues and equipment:** Millisle and Portaferry use their own premises which makes it more cost effective.

**Programme and delivery:** programme content was well received by children and Parents/ guardians alike. Maintaining an interesting and engaging programme from year to year is a challenge, inevitably impacted by increasing year on year increased costs of admission and transport.

**Food offering:** food offering to meet Holiday Hunger was well received and much needed. This is, in principle, what Partners wish to continue to offer, however, cost is the major factor in whether they can do this in the future.

**Evaluation:** Partners used the same processes as Council led schemes and with similar outcomes – children enjoyed the activities and want to come back,

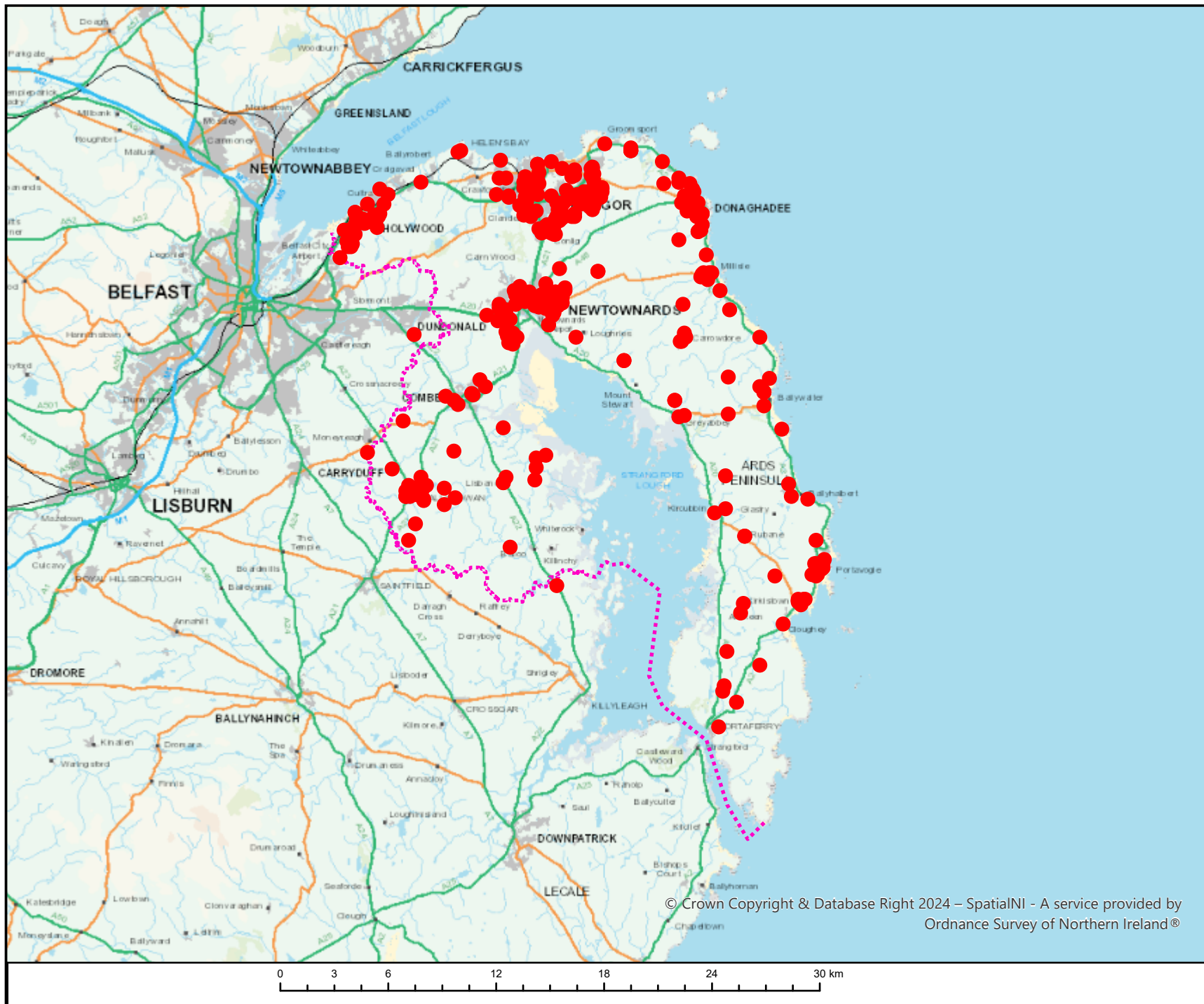
Not Applicable

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parents/guardians have very high expectations regarding programme content and do not understand cost implications. Varying rates of response from parents/guardians.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council notes this report.



- 2024 Summer Scheme Address Location
- ⋯ ANDBC Borough Boundary

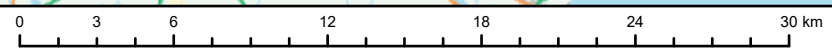


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Unclassified

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**ITEM 12****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	09 October 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community and Culture
Date of Report	23 September 2024
File Reference	CW 167
Legislation	The Local Government Act (NI) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below: N/A
Subject	Bookstart Update
Attachments	None

At the Council meeting in March 2024 Council agreed to fund Bookstart for every newborn in the Borough in 2024/2025 and agreed to include an additional £7,000 funding to the Community Development budget for 2024/2025.

The initiative was managed by the Community Development section and the books issued via the Registration section. Approximately 120 books are being issued per month and the full stock of books will be allocated by end of March 2025.

Staff approached Bookstart for pricing for next year to include in the 2025/2026 budget estimates and were informed that the Bookstart baby packs will now be given out universally via Health Visitors to all new parents, including those in the Borough, during their initial visits. New funding was being made available from the Department of Education and therefore there is no longer any need for Council to fund this initiative in the next financial year.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council notes the report.

Unclassified

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**ITEM 13****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	09 October 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Parks and Cemeteries
Date of Report	23 September 2024
File Reference	CW144
Legislation	The Control of Pesticides Regulations 1986
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Herbicide Reduction Policy Update
Attachments	

**Background**

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the Herbicide Reduction Policy previously agreed by Council in October 2021.

The policy aims to address the concerns and impact of herbicide use. The policy sets out the basis for using alternative methods of vegetation management within the Parks and Cemeteries Service of the Borough.

Weed control within parks, cemeteries, play parks and other urban landscapes is currently achieved through a range of techniques which in most UK councils are based on the use of herbicide application, particularly glyphosate-based products. However, public and political interest in reducing weed control herbicides in amenity areas is increasing due to concerns about safety of these chemicals including glyphosate for human health and wider environmental safety.

The future of weed control should be based on weed prevention to enable in the long-term, fewer herbicide applications, and laborious weed control and surface repairs.



## Not Applicable

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This policy aims to reduce the reliance on herbicides by:

- Applying a proactive approach in the design of new projects and facilities to remove the need for herbicide use.
- Designating herbicide free zones.
- Implementing alternative control methods, this includes, but is not limited to hand weeding, burning, steam treatments, grubbing etc.
- Creating 'wild' areas where appropriate.
- Developing a communication campaign to raise awareness and encourage acceptance of alternative management techniques.
- Supporting resident/community groups carrying out clean ups in local areas.
- Promoting of the importance of pollinator insects; developing and promoting pollinator friendly areas and maintenance techniques.

Where these alternative measures are adopted, they may not be as effective as conventional herbicide application therefore there will be a greater need to begin engaging with our communities on acceptance of weed levels and a shift in perceived acceptability and weed control of the public realm.

In managing sites for Green Flag Awards and Ulster in Bloom, there is an emphasis on reduced herbicide usage. This has been reflected in the success this year in adding two additional sites to Councils Green Flag portfolio in 2024. Seven sites are now accredited with Green Flag status.

By working within this policy statement, Council can demonstrate its commitment to a sustainable management approach. This approach is also supported within the Councils 'Roadmap to Sustainability' and agreed 'Local Biodiversity Action Plan'.

Upon the inception of the policy, there were two sites in the Borough which were managed herbicide free. These are Kiltonga Wildlife Reserve and Hunts Park. In adopting a management regime free from herbicide, the following techniques were trialled:

- Identify areas left uncut to encourage natural vegetation
- Reduced cutting frequencies
- The use of mechanical brushes
- Manual weed removal

Following the creation of a 'Herbicide Reduction Task and Finish Group' consisting of Parks and Cemeteries Operational staff, the effectiveness of the above techniques on the herbicide free sites was evaluated in terms of control success and also public perception. Each site had differing levels of success. Kiltonga experienced no negative impact and indeed benefited greatly from this approach. In the case of Hunts Park, the ageing infrastructure reduced the effectiveness of the alternative methods. This is being reviewed and a project for path refurbishment is being implemented. This will enable a more sustainable herbicide free approach to the site. Funding has been secured for Hunts Park and concept plans have been developed for engagement and delivery, a future report will be brought to Council for consideration on Hunts Park.

## Not Applicable

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Additional sites being managed herbicide free are Linear Park and Clandeboye Cemetery.

The Task and Finished Group identified several key areas for the further reduction in the use of herbicide. These included:

- The cessation of treating kerb lines and greater use of mechanical cleaning.
- Not spraying mature tree bases as appropriate.
- Allowing boundary edges to naturalise.
- Increased used of weed suppressant mulching.
- Localised herbicide free zones within selected areas.

Overall, the above measures have led to a significantly reduced reliance on chemical weed control since 2021.

To achieve a further increase in the use of chemical weed control, Members are advised that funding has been secured for two mechanical sweeping units and a non-herbicide weed control system. The procurement for these items is currently underway and they will be deployed in the programmed maintenance for 2025.

Going forward and to reduce the use of herbicide further, the following techniques are being explored:

- Additional non-herbicide-based products trialled for use on hard surfaces.
- Electrical Weed Control - eWeeding

Where appropriate, and following further industry research, Officers will be developing additional business cases for consideration in future budget rate setting process to further enhance Councils commitment for become less herbicide reliant.

It is important to note that this Policy does not apply to the management of Invasive Species, sports pitches, or fine turf areas such as bowling greens where chemical control is the most appropriate control option currently available.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council note the progress achieved by the application of the Herbicide Reduction Policy as outlined in the report.