



Welcome

to the October edition of Engage! The Community Planning Team at Ards and North Down Borough Council hope this newsletter finds you well, after what has been a difficult and challenging eighteen months.

This edition of Engage focuses on our **sustainable food priority** and how making small changes can help to improve health (physical and emotional), budget better and help to make a positive contribution to the environment. An interview with Jude and Tracy from The Warehouse Newtownards on pages 4-5 provides good advice on making food go further while also reducing waste.

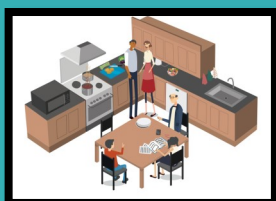
On page 7 we will look at the transition back to 'normal life' and how to deal with any associated anxiety. There is also information on the new **Here to Help** app which is a great way of quickly accessing vital services.

The newsletter concludes with some feedback from The Big Panel Conversation Panel and how the Council's Community Planning Service, and our partners, will use the information provided by Panel Members.

Wishing everyone a safe autumn.



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Ards and North Down's Sustainable Food Programme

Via Ards and North Down's Community Planning Partnership, we are establishing a 'Sustainable Food Programme' to help transition to a healthy, sustainable, and more equitable local food system. This priority is relevant to everyone. The past eighteen months highlighted some of the problems that exist within the existing system, from access to affordability to quality. A sustainable approach to food can't look at one aspect of the system in isolation as everything regarding food is connected. This is demonstrated by the overarching aims of the 'Sustainable Food Programme' which are to:

- Build public awareness to create a local **Good Food Movement**
- Tackle food poverty in Ards and North Down and diet related ill-health, by ensuring access to **Healthy Food for All**
- Revitalise local and sustainable food supply chains through **Catering and Procurement**
- Create **Food for The Planet** through a vibrant, prosperous and diverse sustainable food economy
- Tackle the climate emergency through sustainable food and farming in order to end food waste and create a **Sustainable Food Economy**
- Take a strategic and collaborative approach to good **Food Governance and Strategy**



Sustainable Food is ... “a way of food production that generates abundance while ensuring future generations can do the same”

Spencer (2014)

“Food is the single strongest lever to optimize human health and environmental sustainability on Earth.”

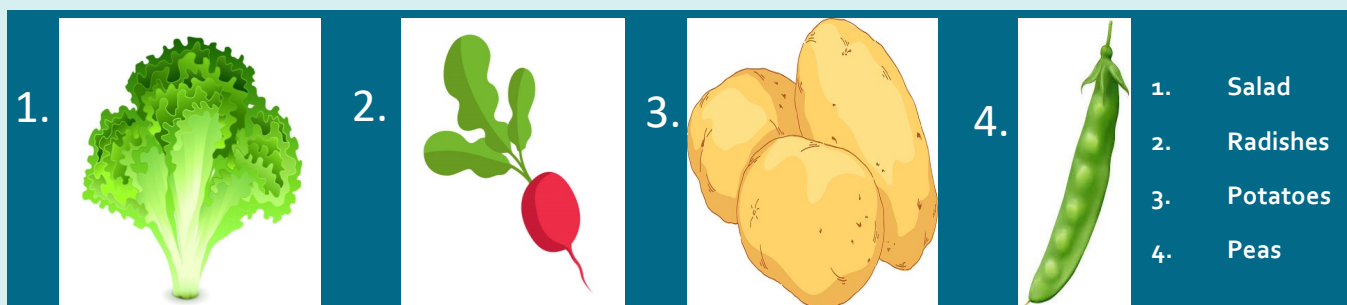
-Eat-Lancet Commission Report
(Willet, et al., 2019)

Sustainable food is beyond being organic...truly sustainable food will not only be good for the health of people but also the planet. In order to achieve this goal there needs to be action at a local level so get involved at home! Small steps, such as buying local, can make a huge difference.

Buying food that is in season is also a positive step towards sustainability. Seasonal food generally has less air miles, and therefore, depending how it has been grown, may have generated fewer carbon emissions. You can use Ulster Farmers Union Seasonality Calendar (online [here](#)) to check what food is currently in season in Northern Ireland. Another way of making the change towards sustainable food is by reducing your food waste. Tips on how to achieve this can be seen in the interview with 'The Warehouse' in pages 4-5.

A great way of incorporating sustainable food into your diet is by growing your own! This will reduce the amount of food you consume that's been tightly packed with plastic with a large carbon footprint. This method also gives you control over how your food is grown and you can choose to go organic. Not only will you be supporting the move to sustainable food but are likely to increase the amount of fresh fruit and vegetables you eat whilst cutting shopping bill costs.

Easy to grow fruit and veg



Purge the plastic! When shopping try to notice how certain foods are packed and choose the items that aren't so plastic heavy. Plastic is unsustainable as it is so energy intensive to make and recycle. Similarly, also try to choose foods that are traded fairly. Fair trade products are products that have been traded fairly. This means that farmers, pickers, growers and producers have been paid a fair wage and contributes towards sustainability. Look out for the distinctive green and blue FAIRTRADE mark. These small steps make a big change!



Interview with ... Jude and Tracy from The Warehouse Newtownards



Can you tell us more about the work you do at The Warehouse?

The Warehouse Newtownards give back to the community through their Crisis Kitchen which provides up to 150 frozen meals weekly to those facing a food crisis in Ards and North Down, with demand being tripled due to the impacts of Covid-19. The Warehouse receives food from local shops and businesses such as ASDA, Lidl, Tesco and even from the Council's walled garden in Bangor. Food from supermarkets is provided through the [FareShare](#) service. Good food, near its use-by date, is saved from being thrown out by being cooked and then frozen in order to prolong its shelf life. The Warehouse also provides a 'Wear n' Share' clothes service. There is the option to swap clothes or pay a donation, but it is not mandatory, ensuring the service is available to all those who, for what ever reason, need some extra help.

What is the food revolution? And how can our readers get involved?

The Warehouse places a huge focus on sustainability– with the belief that if we did things differently there would be enough food for everyone. A huge step towards achieving this goal is by joining the 'Food Revolution' at The Warehouse. This is provided through the community fridge, community store and garden. By allocating a day a week to check your fridge and cupboards for food that you will not use before the use-by date, and then donating it to The Warehouse where it will be turned into tasty meals, you can support people whilst also reduce your own food waste. The Warehouse's community garden is used to grow nutrition rich fruit and vegetables that is also used to prepare cooked meals.

Anyone who would like to help with the maintenance of the community garden is welcome to come on down to [The Warehouse, Newtownards](#).

Do you have any tips on making meals with whatever ingredients are available?

The key is to be flexible! At The Warehouse you never know what food you are going to receive, it could be boxes of carrots one day and something completely different another. Soups are a great way to utilise ingredients, especially fresh vegetables that need used up. If you want to be more creative, google recipes with the ingredients you have lying around your kitchen that are near the use by date. The chefs at The Warehouse once whipped up a delicious chocolate and courgette cake (see recipe below) as these were the ingredients available. The reviews were very good!

Chocolate and Courgette Cake Recipe

Ingredients

125g butter, 1 cup brown sugar, 1/2 cup white sugar, 3 eggs, 2 1/2 cups flour, 1 teaspoon vanilla, 1/2 cup plain yoghurt, 1/4 cup cocoa, 2 teaspoons baking soda, 1 teaspoon cinnamon, 1/2 teaspoon mixed spice, 1/2 teaspoon salt, 1/2 cup chocolate pieces and 350g grated courgettes.

Method

Prepare 25cm square cake tin by lining with strips of baking paper.

Beat the butter and sugars until light and creamy.

Add the eggs one at a time, with a spoonful of the flour to prevent the mixture curdling.

Add the vanilla and yoghurt and mix well.

Sift dry ingredients together. Stir into mixture with the grated courgette.

Turn into prepared cake tin. Sprinkle surface with chocolate pieces if desired.

Bake at 170 degrees centigrade for 45 minutes or until the centre feels firm and the skewer comes out clean.

How can readers reduce the amount of food they throw away?

An excellent tip is to look in the reduced section of the supermarkets. This food is perfectly okay to eat as long as you consume it or freeze it before the use by date. Not only will this reduce food waste but save you money too. A good tip when buying food this way is to **Cook it, Freeze it, or Eat it**. Don't shop hungry as this can lead to you buying more than you need and when you are putting away your shopping store it correctly to increase shelf life. An example of this is keeping your fridge clutter free so that you can see more clearly what you have and what needs used.

Fun Food! Taste Ards and North Down with the Autumn Food Festival

Support local and join in the delicious celebration of local food and drink at this years Autumn Food Festival! Ards and North Down home to the finest and freshest ingredients from land and sea, all to be discovered in delicious dishes served in award-winning borough restaurants.

The finest and freshest ingredients are sourced in abundance from the fertile fields and sparkling shores found in Ards and North Down. Fresh local food and can be found at markets, artisan food shops and dishes across the region's award-winning restaurants. Information on local food and food experiences is available from the visitardsandnorthdown.com website.

Ards and North Down is enriched by its famed agricultural and nautical heritage, which is home to world class ingredients. Comber Earlies PGI status potatoes, Portavogie prawns, Strangford Lough oysters and County Down grass fed beef are just a few examples of the fine produce that is unique to the area.



Look out for the special 'Tide and Turf' menus at some of your favourite restaurants. Find out more about [here](#) or online by searching Taste Ards and North Down Autumn Food Festival. If you are a passionate foodie why not find out more about happening in the region at [here](#) or online by searching Taste Ards and North Down Autumn Food Festival Foodie Experiences.

Dates for the Diary

Saturday 2 October

The Market on the Square
Portaferry 10am -1.30pm

Thursday 7 October

Comber Farmers Market St
Mary's Car Park Comber 9am -
1pm

Saturday 9 October

Market Fresh at Project 24
Bangor 11am -3pm

Saturday 16 October

Taste Ards and North Down at
Comber 10am -3pm



The Return to the New Normal and Managing Anxiety

Whilst the return to 'normal life' is welcomed by many, it is a source of anxiety for some. The return to 'normal' may feel overwhelming, however, taking small steps each day can help ease you back into the new wave of life comfortably. Ards and North Down Community Planning Partnership's 'Moved by Nature' Calendar 2021 highlights local and accessible outdoor spaces for you to visit safely. Accessing nature is a great way to 'Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing'. These steps are: Give, Be Active, Connect, Keep Learning and Take Notice. The importance of nature and being outdoors is proven to help people maintain positive mental health and build resilience, while also improving physical health and increasing social interactions.

The calendar suggests activities to do each month by providing places to explore and an activity to allow you to pause and connect. The activities for October can be seen below. By completing the suggested activities each month so you can improve how you feel and promote calm and well-being.

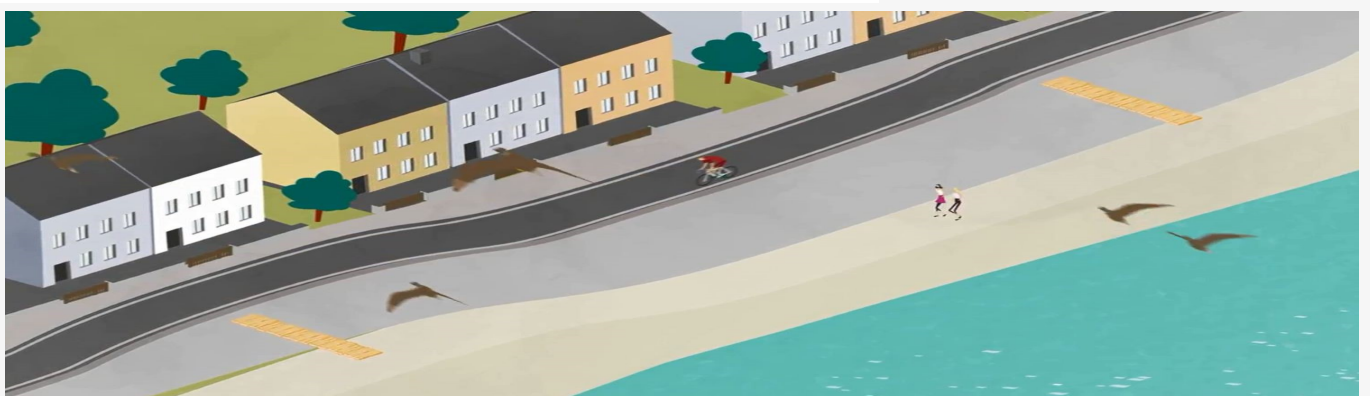
To access the calendar and enjoy the benefits click [here](#) or online by searching 'Moved By Nature Ards and North Down Big Calendar 2021'. We have already started to gather information for our 2022 Moved by Nature Calendar.

Places to Explore...

- Corrog Wood
- Crawfordsburn Country Park
- Grey Point Fort, Helen's Bay

Pause and Connect...

Pick some Blackberries when you're out and about. A ripe blackberry is deep black with a plump, full, and slightly tender feel. If the berry is red or purple, it's not ripe yet so leave those ones a little longer. A delicious seasonal treat just waiting in the hedgerows to be enjoyed.



There is lots of support available for people who need it

GET IN TOUCH WITH LOCAL ORGANISATIONS WHO CAN PROVIDE SUPPORT

FOOD

If you are finding it difficult to afford food:

Bangor Foodbank - **0782 1791 674**

Storehouse North Down - **0752 6541 168**

Newtownards Foodbank - **0790 2933 297**

FUEL

If you can't afford to heat your home:

Society of St Vincent de Paul -

02890 351561

If you are a Housing Executive Tenant -

02895 982068

BEFRIENDING SERVICE

If you are feeling lonely and would like to have a chat over the phone:

AGEnda - **02891 271968**

Caring Communities Safe and Well -

02897 566934

AGE NI - **0808 808 7575**

Education Authority Stay Connected Local Service for young people - **07780 743 858**

BENEFITS

If you need advice and information on benefits or you are worried about issues around debt:

Community Advice Ards and North Down - **0300 123 9287**

Benefits Advice - **0800 232 1271**

Christians Against Poverty -

0800 328 0006

Check if you're getting all the money, support and services you're entitled to by contacting the DfC Make the Call team:

0800 232 1271

HOME ACCIDENT SUPPORT

If you would like some advice, support or equipment to help with home accident prevention:

Ards and North Down Borough Council's Home Safety Team - **0300 013 3333** ask for extension **40336**

DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL ABUSE

If you are experiencing domestic or sexual abuse and need support or information:

24 Hour Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline - **0808 802 1414**

North Down and Ards Women's Aid - **02891 273196**

FAMILY SUPPORT

If you are a parent and need support for yourself, your child or your family:

Family Support Hub (SEHSCT) -

02892 501357

Barnardo's NI - **028 9127 1538**

Home-Start Ards, Comber and Peninsula area - **028427 88369**

Home-Start North Down - **028 9127 1201**

SureStart Ards - **02891 819722** Ards or **028427 39322** Peninsula

SureStart - Bangor - **02891 457248**

OTHER SUPPORT SERVICES

Ards and North Down Borough Council - **0300 013 3333**

Ards Community Network - **02891 814625**

County Down Rural Community Network - **028 9182 8884**

North Down Community Network - **02891 461386**

NI Housing Executive - **0344 892 0900**

PSNI- 101 or if an emergency **999**

Samaritans - **116 123**

Education Authority Youth Services in Ards and North Down - **02890 566245**

Volunteer Now - **02890 232020**





During lockdown organisations, communities and volunteers worked together with a common goal. As the pandemic continued, significant funding was provided to Council from the Department for Communities to support programmes that addressed the immediate need of access to food, fuel and essential supplies, as well as addressing the wider impact of lockdown.

To remember the efforts made by local communities and organisations, the Community Recovery Steering Group has published a booklet to remember how people came together and made a very important difference.

We acknowledge it would be impossible to list every kind deed and voluntary effort but we want to publicly THANK everyone who stepped up in the face of Covid and provided support.

Together we Made a Difference.

We are always here to support you, even after Covid-19

The Here2Help app is a pocket guide of services and advice that may be able to give you some direction or help if you are worried about someone or if you are feeling the pressure of life. Download the **FREE** Here2Help App to your phone so it is always handy.

Information and Advice is available 24/7

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www.here2helpapp.com



'The Big Conversation Panel' was run as a pilot of three surveys, to see if residents of Ards and North Down would be interested in a sustained method of providing feedback on a range of topics.

Survey ONE, October 2020, focused on the impacts of the pandemic, how it had affected people and what the recovery priorities should be. Survey TWO, February 2021, and Survey THREE, June 2021, focused on the priorities of The Big Plan as well as the impacts of the pandemic.

The results of Survey THREE have been analysed and key areas of interest and concern noted. Panel Members felt that quality and locality of food is important when making purchasing decisions. This information is being used to develop a Sustainable Food Programme to create a transition to a healthy, sustainable and more equitable food system.

The responses from the surveys can be found online [here](#) or online by searching The Big Conversation Panel Ards and North Down Borough Council .

CONTACTING US

We are currently working from home. If you would like to get in touch, please:

Email us:

@communityplanning@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

Tweet us:

[@thebigplanAND](https://twitter.com/thebigplanAND) and we will get back to you as soon as we can!

Stay informed:

Stay part of the conversation by signing up for this newsletter, following us on twitter or view the community planning section hosted on the Ards and North Down Borough Council's website.

Please stay safe:

Keep 2 meters apart from others when you can, wear a mask and wash your hands well and often. Stay at home if you show any symptoms. Download the app — StopCOVID NI.