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Community Centre Update

The project to provide Saintfield with a community centre has made slow progress over the last year. We all thought that when the site was purchased two years ago this month, we would see construction completed by now. Unfortunately the merger of Down District Council with Newry and Mourne District Council has caused significant delays to the project, raising fears in some quarters that the project may not happen at all.

As with all major mergers, particularly in the public sector, it takes time to appoint all the new senior people and clarify new roles. We now know the Director in the new council who will be responsible for taking the Saintfield project forward and expect that he will have his team in place within a few months. In the meantime, members of the SDA have been meeting relevant people in the new council to ensure that Saintfield's priority

needs are not overlooked.

We invited the current Chair of NMD Council, Councillor Naomi Bailie, to an informal meeting here in Saintfield, where we explained what the SDA does and its ambitions and took her on a tour of Saintfield to see the facilities we have and to demonstrate what we need.



We have also had a meeting with the Chief Executive and two Directors of NMD, hosted by our MP, Jim Shannon (thanks to Councillor Billy Walker for facilitating this), where we pressed for better communication on the community centre project. Our Rowallane councillors were all present and spoke in

support of Saintfield receiving all of the budget allocated to it by the Down District Council. At that meeting, the Chief Executive stated that the new council was committed to both a community centre and improved outdoor sports surfaces for Saintfield, but explained that council finances were limited and could only meet identified needs. He undertook to ensure that

communications and engagement with Saintfield were improved from now on. We have also met with individual council Directors and have gone to see recent new community centres in

Cullaville and Ballyholland.

The site earmarked for the new community centre is currently being used by teachers at Saintfield High School for car parking during the construction of the new hall for the High School. One building is also being used as storage by the company making the next series of "Game of Thrones".

Saintfield Crime Report

The crime figures for Saintfield for the month of May 2015 show that there were 22 reported crimes in the area.

The breakdown is as follows:-
Anti-social behaviour (5),
criminal damage/arson (5),
violence and sexual offences (5),
burglary (2), other theft (4), and
vehicle crime (1).

As always, residents should report any criminal behaviour or suspicious activity to the authorities and keep an eye out for their neighbours and others in the community who may be at risk.

Saintfield is blessed with a relatively low incidence crime and we need to keep it that way.

PSNI Contact Numbers

Neighbourhood Policing Team
Contact Telephone Number: 101

Crimestoppers Telephone
Number (FREE): 0800 555 111

Emergency Telephone Number:
999

Non Emergency Telephone
Number: 101

Chair's Viewpoint



Martyn Todd
Chair of Saintfield
Development
Association

*"I will do my
best to build
a partnership
with the new
council"*

During the last five years of the existence of Down District Council, the Saintfield Development Association built a strong and positive partnership with the Rowallane councillors and senior council officials in DDC. Together we made good progress on many improvements to Saintfield and it's surroundings, including upgrading The Square, resurfacing lower Main Street, success in the Ulster in Bloom competition, tidying some of the derelict buildings on Fair Green and completing a Heritage Development Plan and a Landscape Master Plan.

We also carried out very significant public consultations, firstly for the village plan and then to identify priority facilities for the new community centre. I would like to pay tribute to our outgoing Chair, Barbara Graham for her major contribution to these, particularly during her

year in office.

The demise of Down District Council and the formation of a new entity, Newry Mourne and Down District Council, has brought many new councillors and council officials into positions where their decision



The painted derelict buildings on Fair Green

will affect Saintfield. Many of these new people do not yet know what community and sports facilities Saintfield has and hasn't got. They need to be convinced about exactly what facilities Saintfield genuinely needs.

We therefore have work to do with these new decision makers to ensure that they are all supportive of the necessary

improvements to community life in Saintfield.

It is my priority for my year as Chair of SDA to do everything I can to ensure that all political parties in the new Council and all new Directors and senior staff come to understand fully

the needs of Saintfield going forward. To do this I will do my best to build a partnership with the new council to equal the one we had with DDC. The test of this will be how successful SDA is in achieving progress with

the new community centre (see the article elsewhere in this Newsletter) and in working with all the sports clubs in Saintfield and Darragh Cross to improve our outdoor sports facilities.

With a new funding stream opening in Sport NI, there is an opportunity to do this, particularly if we can cooperate well with the NMD Council in making a strong application.

The Green Saintfield Committee

The Green committee of the SDA have been busy keeping Saintfield tidy with their clean up programmes and colourful with their schedule of seasonal flower plantings around the village.

They have recently held a fund raising talk with Mike Snowden to help with the costs of flowers and planters. Thanks are due to the public for giving their support to this talk. Ballot prizes were donated by Mike Snowden, Maxol Garage, The Fruit Shop, Massey's Paints and Norr & Brown.

A garden planting demonstration was held

at Saintfield Nurseries and a big thank you is due to Beth Lunney who was extremely generous, giving her time and the facilities to stage the event.

The SDA Green committee held another of their regular litter picks on Saturday 23 May. A total of 23 volunteers turned out to help clean up the roads and verges of the village, with 30 bags of rubbish collected. The committee thanks the second Saintfield Presbyterian Church, who provided refreshments for the volunteers.

The committee held a clean up at the



Downpatrick Street car park in July and lifted 18 bags of rubbish from the area. They continue to do their best to keep Saintfield clean, tidy and attractive with the limited resources available. It is incumbent upon all of us as residents to do our bit by respecting our environment and putting rubbish where it belongs – in the bin!

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The Queen Honours Saintfield Man

Saintfield Development Association treasurer and committee member Lawrence Murphy was awarded the British Empire Medal in the Queen's 2015 New Year's honours list.

He was presented with the medal on behalf of the Queen by the Lord Lieutenant of County Down, David Lindsay, at a ceremony at Hillsborough Castle on 30th April. He flew to London the following month to attend a garden party at Buckingham Palace with the other honourees.

Lawrence won the award for his services to sport and the community. He has been an active member of

Saintfield Sports Club since 1974, with a particular interest in hockey, both as a player and as a coach and umpire.

He joined the Saintfield Development Association in 2006 and is currently treasurer and chair of the Green Saintfield committee.

He can often be seen in the early mornings with his refuse sack and litter picker, cleaning up the road verges and hedgerows around the village. He is passionate about improving the facilities, cleanliness and infrastructure of Saintfield and thoroughly deserves the award.



CES Quarry Visit

Ten members of the Saintfield Development Association visited the CES Quarry Products Ltd business at Doran's Rock, just outside the village, on an unseasonably cold, wet and blowy 1st of June. We were the guests of Stephen McDougall (SHEQ Officer) and Ian McDougall (Production Director) of CES, whose family have run the 70 acre quarry business for over 40 years, with over 50 jobs dependant on the operation and using local suppliers and services.

The quarry is pretty well hidden from view from the main road although the yellow and blue lorries will be familiar to many. One of these big trucks even delivered Santa at Christmas into the Main Street! We

were intrigued to learn more about the quarry.

We learned from Stephen and Ian that a key aim of CES is to provide a safe operation with the least possible impact on the environment. Over the years, CES have planted over 5000 trees, and maintained some 25 acres of meadow and woodland. Because there are few vehicles and people, the quarry and its isolated edge is home to an array of lesser-seen wildlife such as buzzards, ravens, and Irish hares. Currently sand martins are in residence on the sand and gravel piles. CES are keen to contribute to the community and



this is in evidence in their sponsorship of the Saintfield Show, their support for the Christmas Fair, and their contribution to the Saintfield News. CES are also corporate sponsors of the Ulster Wildlife Trust. Their commitment is also through environmental and bio-diversity support. Stephen and Ian showed us work in progress to build a nature path all the way round the quarry lip. Much of this is through very un-quarrylike field and native-species woodland, and a

large pond with an island is under development.

When finished, they plan to offer outings for schools and other interested groups. Special

rock-blasting trips may even be arranged!

We came expecting to see an operational quarry, and we did. It was however most unexpected to be surprised by the sheer drama of the setting, and by the beauty of the extensive woods and pasture in the natural environment within feet of the precipices. We look forward to the completion of the nature path later this year. In the meantime our thanks to Ian and Stephen at CES for their time and hospitality. It just goes to show, there is a lot more on our doorstep than we are often aware of!

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Harfest Music Festival



The popular Harfest music festival is back for the third year over the weekend of Friday 23rd to Sunday 25th October.

There will be a wide range of musical events at various venues around Saintfield with something for every member of the family. There will also be demonstrations and workshops on the musical theme and most events will be free of charge. The exception will be a few formal performances where a

small entry fee will be charged to cover expenses

Plans and artistes are still being finalised, so make a note in your diary to keep that weekend free and keep an eye out for the publicity material for the event which will be released nearer the time.

Details will also be shown on the SDA website discoversaintfield.com and on our Facebook page.

Pedal The Peninsula



The Saintfield Development Association is staging the popular "Pedal the Peninsula" cycle ride on Sunday 20th September this year.

Starting and finishing in Saintfield, the route will be over 53 miles around the beautiful Ards Peninsula and will be suitable for all categories of cyclists. The route will be clearly sign posted and well marshalled. The finish will be at The Rowallane Inn.

Refreshments will be provided at the halfway stop (before boarding the ferry across Strangford Lough) and all finishers will be awarded a commemorative medal.

Registration is from 8.30am at the Downpatrick Street car park (behind

Danske Bank) in Saintfield for a 9.30am start.

The cost is £15 on the day, although a discount will apply if you register and pay online at the SDA website: discoversaintfield.com

Funds raised will go towards the cost of providing entertainment for the youngsters at the Saintfield Christmas Fair in December. Full details on the route and safety advice can also be viewed on the website.

With over 100 riders taking part in the shorter cycle event in May this year, the organisers are expecting a record entry for what many cyclists have called a well run and thoroughly enjoyable outing.

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website
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The SDA Committee

Barbara Graham, the outgoing chair of the Saintfield Development Association, presided at the annual general meeting of the association in May.

Martyn Todd was unanimously elected as the incoming Chair, with Paul McGeown as his vice – chair. Martyn had previously been in the chair for the year 2013/14.

Dr. Ian Mack was re-elected as Secretary and Lawrence Murphy was re-elected as Treasurer. Lawrence also agreed to take over as Chair of the Green committee.

Barbara Graham will preside over the Infrastructure committee, Bob Pollock takes over the chair of the Events committee, with Brian Gamble

continuing to chair the Communications committee.

Joelene Poole has responsibility for Recruitment, while Ian Mack and David Greer maintain their portfolios of the SDA website and Facebook page respectively.

Laura Meharry was appointed as Honorary Auditor.



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Outgoing Chair's Review Of 2014/15



Barbara Graham
Outgoing chair of
Saintfield
Development
Association

*"I can only be
proud of the
commitment
and enterprise
shown by
our active
membership"*

The on-going efforts of SDA in all its sub committees continued to bear fruit with impressive results throughout the year and I can only be proud of the commitment and enterprise being shown by our active membership.

I will break down these into the sub committees as they all deserve thorough credit for their achievements and I would like to thank them most sincerely for their support throughout the year.

Events

We have run a series of events in the past year including very successful bike rides and pub quiz nights as well as our blockbuster Christmas Fair and the Harfest music festival – ever growing in popularity.

The complexity of running larger events increases every year and the upcoming year poses more funding challenges as Council support is dependent on a complex application system the result of which has only just been announced and does not give the same level of Council support that we have enjoyed in the past year. Down District Council were stalwart in helping us through the trials of the ever increasing expense and bureaucracy involved in staging a public event.

It is always a struggle to gather helpers in planning and managing the larger events and we would like to encourage everyone to try to make time to participate.

During the year Ian Mack stood down as chair due to personal commitments and thanks to Bob Pollock for stepping into the breach.

Recruitment

One of the best ways to build

the association I notice is to find individuals with a good idea and the commitment to carry it through. We can get behind this and facilitate for example Edward Craig (Harfest) and Anne Walker (Saintfield in Bloom) to name but two. Every project needs a committed individual who will drive it.

It is vital that new members find a place in our sub committees that suits them and where they can benefit and enjoy taking part in projects as well as contributing to the aims for the village.

Infrastructure

Our Square refurbishment project reached completion and Down Council are to be thanked sincerely for their efficient and timely execution of the project.

Following on from our face lift project at Fair Green, Council have been able to help us by painting No 63 Main St. and they have completed a face lift to the old Hocks and Hooves building on Belfast Rd.

Following the completion of our Heritage Plan, NIEL funded the landscape plan suggested therein. This is now complete. It identifies and specifies schemes for neglected spaces both large and small. Happily Down Council has implemented a phase of this at Fair Green planting a row of Lime trees as we have in front of the Parish Church – a bit of a theme.

A second phase is in progress at Lisburn Rd. The Greens are very keen to drive forward the implementation and we now need to support them in any way we can – it is a big job.

Another success worth mentioning is the fact that McRoberts is on the market.

We hope that it will be sold and refurbished to the same high

standard as the Rowallane Hub building for which Brian Graham and his colleagues are to be congratulated. This will secure its future and bring a new element to the Main St.

Communications

Communications committee continue to produce our News Letter regularly, and also prepare bulletins to keep members aware of developments in our various projects.

We have recently prepared a survey of Traders to assess support for changing parking restriction times to 2 hrs. throughout the day.

This proposal received overwhelming support from Main Street traders and has been submitted to the authorities for consideration.

Green Saintfield

The Saintfield in Bloom volunteers had another great result for their efforts in Ulster in Bloom with the placing in Best Kept Large Village despite the road works. Again a big thank you for the hard work of volunteers.

Thank you also for the donations from traders, churches, schools and the public and what with Grant aid from Down Council it was all made the most of.

Keeping Saintfield clean, tidy and well drained is an on-going commitment. We won the "Down Your Street" award in February.

A planting demonstration by Beth Lunney and the Mike Snowden talk will help to fund future events.

Finance and Funding

These are bumpy times for this committee as our core funding – *continued on Page 6 –*

Outgoing Chair's Review Concluded

PAGE 6

– continued from Page 5 –

from Council is by no means certain for coming years. Thanks to fund raising efforts, we have built up a small contingency fund but this will not approach covering the grants in question.

A huge amount of time can be spent applying for grants, and projects have to be ready when these become available. A Space and Place grant to help with the Community Centre development got through the first stage but needed more work to make it

eligible for progression. Due to the continuing uncertainty we deemed this no longer viable.

We continue to look for smaller grants and we gained one for help to publish the News Letter.

A Charities Commission registration has been lodged and we await a successful registration.

Active Saintfield

SDA took part in the formation of "Active

Saintfield" – a grouping of local sports clubs coming together to form a sports assessment and strategy for Saintfield and Darragh Cross as a whole. We prepared an application for a Sport NI grant to improve sporting facilities in our area.

A consultant was appointed who prepared a very detailed report (funded by DDC) preparatory to the expected opening of a grant scheme. This scheme did not open as anticipated, however we have heard that suitable grants may become available soon.

Diary Dates

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| 10th September | Archibald Hamilton Rowan and Killyleagh Castle Saintfield Heritage Society talk by Philip Orr in the Woodrow Room of the Parish Church Hall at 8:00pm |
| 20th September | "Pedal The Peninsula" Cycle Ride
Registration in Downpatrick Street car park from 8.30am for a 9.30am start |
| 8th October | Overland from Saintfield to Singapore
Saintfield Heritage Society talk by Penny Snowden in the Woodrow Room of the Parish Church Hall at 8:00pm |
| 23rd - 25th October | Harfest Music Festival
A wide range of musical events at various venues around Saintfield with something for every member of the family |
| 12th November | The Story of the Irish National Memorial Garden at Islandbridge, Dublin
Saintfield Heritage Society talk by Dr John McCullen in the Woodrow Room of the Parish Church Hall at 8:00pm |



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Laura Meharry has been appointed Honorary Auditor for Saintfield Development Association.



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SAINTFIELD IN BLOOM 365



The SAINTFIELD IN BLOOM 365 committee of Saintfield Development Association would like to thank all those who so generously gave donations to make Saintfield a nicer place to visit, shop, eat and live.

Sincere thanks go to all those who put out displays in support of our efforts in 2015.

Our appreciation goes to DJ Morgan, Parks Officer and his staff of Newry, Mourne and Down Council, for their continued help and for the small grant towards flowers.

We owe Ken Lunney and his wife, Beth, of Saintfield Nurseries, a huge debt of gratitude, for the immense amount of work they have done to make Saintfield a winner in the Ulster in Bloom competitions.



SAINTFIELD IN BLOOM 365

THANK YOU

(in no particular order)

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