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Upgrade For The Square

The SDA is proud to announce that work is due to begin soon on a £130 000 improvement project for the village square at the junction of Main Street and Comber Street. The upgrade, driven by the SDA and now being implemented by Down District Council, is the first major public investment in the Main Street area for many years.

The SDA is grateful to the Down Rural Area Partnership for granting the bulk of the funds needed, together with Down District Council and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive for their match funding.

The work will include the replacement of the pavements and road surface, new street furniture, new lighting and some planting.



Architect's impression of The Square

The idea is to upgrade this area at the heart of the village and give it more of a sense of being a "Square" by using a variety of surface finishes in keeping with the character of the village. The scheme is now solely under the control of the DDC, who hope to have the work completed by

September this year.

There will obviously be some disruption around this area over the summer and it is hoped that residents and traders affected will understand that the final result will be worth the inconvenience.

There are rumours circulating that this project is the beginning of a major renovation of the pavements and road surface of Main Street.

Although this is the ultimate aim of the SDA, there is no funding in place as yet as far as is known.

Rowallane councillor William Dick has been quoted as saying that talks to fund such a project are ongoing.

Down Your Street

The Saintfield Development Association has applied to Down District Council to take part in the "Down Your Street" initiative.

The project will allow volunteer groups to adopt an area and look after it by keeping it clear of litter, graffiti etc. It can be anyone from an individual, a community group, a business, school, sporting association etc. Groups must complete an application form and the successful groups will be sent

a cleanup kit which comprises a storage box, high visibility jackets in various sizes, heavy duty bags, litter pickers, gloves, a bucket, dustpan, brush and shovel.

Groups must agree to carry out four clean ups of their adopted spot throughout the year. The objective is to instil a "pride in my place" ethos and to reduce litter and improve the quality of the local environment. The Council will arrange removal of all the

rubbish collected under the scheme. If accepted for the programme, the SDA will organise the clean up events and report back to Down District Council with the results and photos of the events.

Successful groups who carry out cleanups will be able to enter for the prize fund. The fund comprises vouchers for selected hardware stores and nurseries within the DDC area.

Chair's Viewpoint



Martyn Todd MBE
Chair of Saintfield
Development
Association

"All the work that the SDA is doing takes a lot of time, effort and local expertise."

I hope you didn't miss the excellent Christmas Fair held on Main Street on 6th December. It was a great success, thanks to the work of many people before, during and after the event. Planning has already started for an even bigger and better fair this year to be held on Friday 5th December, so put the date in your diary now.

The big news since the last issue of Saintfield News is the progress on the community centre. (See feature on Page 4 of this edition.)

At very short notice, the SDA coordinated a public consultation exercise at the end of January to highlight the priorities for the new community centre, according to the needs expressed by Saintfield people. The questionnaire for the consultation also included a section on other priorities for Saintfield outside the new community centre site. The response was magnificent, with 940 questionnaires completed and returned in six days. As the Down Recorder said in its leader article on Wednesday 5th February, "No other area could possibly have generated such an overwhelming response to a project everyone in Saintfield has bought into". A summary of the responses can be seen on the website at:

<http://tinyurl.com/m99laod>

Now that the community centre project is well and truly underway, the long overdue need to upgrade the sports pitches in Saintfield deserves full attention. The SDA, together with Saintfield Sports Club (ladies hockey, men's hockey and cricket), Saintfield United Football Club and Saintfield AYC Football has met with Sport NI

to explore funding opportunities to provide the modern pitch surfaces that the 21st century player (and our weather) demands. The indications are that Sport NI will open a grant programme later this year for community based sport. All of the sports clubs and the SDA will work together to make their best possible application to Sport NI to meet Saintfield's needs.

SDA has four other projects on the go at present.

1. With youth trainees from South Eastern Regional College and generous discounts from



Blain Brothers Building Supplies, we are giving the empty buildings on Fair Green a face lift.

2. On a steering group with Down District Council, Saintfield Community Estates Partnership and the relevant statutory bodies, and using funding sourced by the SDA from the Down Rural Area Partnership (£95,000), for the Housing Executive (£20,000) and the Council (£16,000), we are giving the Square a new look (see elsewhere in this edition and on the website at: <http://tinyurl.com/mz84a3b>

3. In partnership with the Saintfield Heritage Society we have obtained a grant from the NIEL Challenge Fund for £9,000 to prepare a Heritage Development Plan for Saintfield. The objective is to identify which aspect of Saintfield's rich history

and heritage should be developed to increase the number of visitors coming to spend money here, especially on the Main Street. The plan should also identify potential funding sources to make these aspirations become reality over the next 5-10 years.

4. All the work that the SDA is doing takes a lot of time, effort and local expertise. The SDA has nearly 60 members who volunteer for events (such as the Christmas Fair), Saintfield in Bloom, communicating to Saintfield residents and fund raising. If we could attract more volunteers we could do even more. We have obtained a small grant (£1500) to recruit more volunteers.

To this end, we are holding a public meeting at 7.30pm on Tuesday 25th March at The White Horse Inn where you can meet members of our committees who will brief you on their activities. This will enable you to ascertain where you would be most useful, depending on your talents, interests and availability. You will also hear details of the association's plans for the future and events already in the pipeline. You will be under no obligation to join us but may well find that you would like to become involved. If you do, you will make new friends and be instrumental in planning and implementing improvements to the facilities, infrastructure and events of our wonderful village. I look forward to meeting you there.

Martyn Todd, Chair, SDA

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Rowallane Community Hub

Saintfield residents may be curious as to what is going on with the work at 35 Main Street. Here is the background to the development.

In June 2010, The Rowallane Credit Union Limited (RCU) purchased the property as a new headquarters and Saintfield branch office. When the rear of the property was cleared, a farmyard was discovered.

Local architects were commissioned to draw up a set of plans for the development of the property and while these were awaiting approval by the authorities, various organisations were approached by the RCU for assistance with the project. This resulted in the formation of the Rowallane Community Hub (RCH), a company limited by guarantee and which has now been registered as a charity.

On completion, the Rowallane Community

Hub hopes to offer modern, accessible multi-use community space available to all in Saintfield and surrounding areas.

In conjunction with local schools and gardeners, the allotments at the rear will provide locally grown produce and horticultural training.



Architect's impression of Rowallane Community Hub

The stables will provide a base for eco-friendly studies including solar energy and rainwater harvesting.

The vision is for the Rowallane

Community Hub to become a sustainable social enterprise contributing positively to the community in terms of job creation, eco-education and shared community space.

The Hub will cater for all citizens and will provide a safe and welcoming environment.

Work on the project started at the beginning of January and the target completion date is September this year.

The need now is for more people to come on board to develop and run the project.

If you have expertise in any of the necessary areas and

are prepared to help, your assistance would be very welcome.

For further details contact Brian Graham:

PHONE: 07719917953

or

E-MAIL: rowallanehub@btinternet.com

Saintfield in Bloom

The "Saintfield in Bloom" committee of the SDA reports that the planter tubs on Main Street, which currently contain plants to brighten up the winter landscape, are under-planted with bulbs which will keep the displays going through the spring.

The committee is very grateful to all those residents who supported the collection boxes to help pay for the plants, as well as the traders and businesses for their generosity. A special "thank you" to Ken Lunney of Saintfield Nurseries for his continued support of the floral initiative.

As advised in the last issue of Saintfield News, our village won



A planter tub in full bloom last summer.

prizes for last year's displays and there will be an award ceremony soon.

The committee has been lobbying Down District Council and they have promised a much needed replanting scheme at Fair Green.

Efforts are being made to improve other areas as well and a start has been made at the junction of Lisburn Road and Old Belfast Road, for which grant funding has been obtained for an area of wild flower planting in the spring.

Volunteers will be needed to maintain this development and offers of assistance will be very welcome.

"Efforts are being made to improve other areas"

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Community Centre Update

The design consultants have been appointed by Down District Council and have been given the timetable for completing the design and detail drawings, obtaining planning approval and tendering for contractors by the end of 2014. The contractors are due to start work in January 2015 and complete by January 2016.

If all goes according to plan (and Down District Council has a very good track record of completing major projects on time) we should all be making good use of excellent community and sports facilities two years from now.

The huge response to the public consultation has given a very clear indication of the facilities people would like to see in and around the new centre. Internally, a sports hall sized to take four badminton courts or a full sized basketball or netball court or five-a-side football received the most votes. A fitness suite and a space for exercise or dance classes was also very popular. Indoor and outdoor play areas were next in popularity, with social space or a cafe of some sort. Indoor and outdoor sports pitches were next, followed by

bookable meeting rooms (large, medium and small). An arts and crafts area and exhibition space were next in favour, followed by public artwork, which received the least support, though still voted for by 129 people.



The Belfast Road site of Saintfield's Community Centre

Although a swimming pool received many votes, the costs of this would far exceed the current budget and would not be viable in a small town like Saintfield. The consultants now need to see how many of the above priorities they can fit into the existing buildings on the site, while staying within the remaining budget of £3.2 million. Sport NI will be opening a grant fund for community based sport and this fund could be approached for equipment to fit out the new centre.

Externally, all weather surfaces for soccer, rugby, GAA and hockey were

the most popular suggestions. Many wanted a town park and a wild-life and nature area. These would require additional land, such as the field behind the new centre, as would a dog-walking loop. A footbridge over the Belfast Road adjacent to the new centre received many votes, especially from the pupils and staff of the High School. Outdoor exercise equipment, a BMX track and more play parks for children were also popular.

The design consultants, Consarc Design, will be reverting to the council and the Saintfield

community with some options based on the above priorities. When the option with the most support has been chosen and shown to be within the defined budget, Consarc will apply for planning permission and go to tender to select the contractor for the building work.

Although outside the remit of the new community centre, in the wider context of Saintfield the most frequently chosen item was improving the Main Street and pavements. A "Park and Ride" car park on the site of the old bus depot was also popular.

"The contractors are due to start work in January 2015 and complete by January 2016."

Fair Green Face Lift



Many residents and traders have commented on the face lift being given to the empty buildings on Fair Green. This has been made possible by the work being done by youth trainees from the South Eastern Regional College and generous discounts on

materials from Blain Brothers limited, the builders' merchants. The SDA is very grateful to both organisations for their continued support. This is part of the SDA's ongoing project to clean up run down areas of our village as funds become available.



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Editor's Letter



Brian Gamble
Editor of
Saintfield News

The SDA has always been in the forefront in its support of clean up and anti litter campaigns. After all, what is the point of going to all the trouble of arranging planters, floral displays and other means of beautifying our village if these efforts are swamped in a sea of rubbish?

I am sure we all know of residents who go out for their daily walk armed with a sturdy plastic bag to uplift any litter they encounter en route. Some residents take it upon themselves to look after their immediate residential area and sometimes beyond. They make a point of keeping the roads, verges and hedgerows free of the

debris dropped by the unthinking and uncaring among us.

Having myself taken part in official litter picks, I am surprised by the amount and content of the rubbish strewn around our village. I also regularly clear litter dropped on the road and pavement outside our home. The hedge on our frontage seems to provide a handy dumping ground for all sorts of debris discarded by passing pedestrians.

They say we live in a "throw away" society but let us at least throw things away in the proper place. In my view, litter is dropped by a small minority of self – centred lazy people who take no

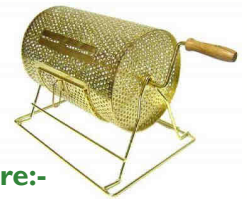
pride in either their surroundings or themselves.

Littering laws are in place but detection and enforcement are problems which need to be overcome. We can all do our part by politely challenging the litter droppers (should they be called "illiterates"?) and hopefully shaming them into changing their ways.

Staging litter picks is all very well and good but we need a concerted campaign of awareness and education to make littering as anti – social as smoking has become. Now just don't get me started on doggy poo and chewing gum!

STOP PRESS! *The Saintfield Development Association has been accepted for the "Down Your Street" programme and a similar one, "Adopt A Spot" run by Keep NI Beautiful.*

SDA Raffle Winners



The winners of the SDA St. Valentine's fund raising raffle are:-

1st. Prize — Brenda Maitland

Bicycle (kindly donated by **Motor and Sport**)

2nd Prize — Joanne Chong-Kwan

Family Photo Shoot (kindly donated by **Creative Light Photography**)

3rd Prize — John Branch

Meat Hamper (kindly donated by **Vivoxtra**)

4th Prize — Marion Ritchie

Meal for Two (kindly donated by **The White Horse Inn**)

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Details of these and other events can be found on our website:

DiscoverSaintfield.com

Saintfield Heritage Society (SHS) talks take place in the Woodrow Room of Saintfield Parish Church Hall at 8.00pm. Visitors are always welcome.

If you would like your club, organisation or society notices **for events open to the public** included in the diary, please submit them to the editor.

Thursday	13th March	Saintfield Heritage Society Talk: "Squares of Belfast" Speaker: Norman Weatherall
Tuesday	25th March	Saintfield Development Association: Open Night In The White Horse Inn at 7:30 pm
Monday	31st March	Saintfield Development Association: Committee Meeting (Open to public) In Saintfield Sports Club at 7:30 pm
Thursday	10th April	Saintfield Heritage Society Talk: "In the Steppes of Marco Polo" Speaker: Diana Gledhill
Sunday	27th April	Saintfield Cycle: "Pedal the Peninsula" A 50-mile cycle ride round Strangford Lough
Monday	12th May	Saintfield Development Association: Annual General Meeting (Open to all) In Saintfield Sports Club at 7:30 pm
Thursday	15th May	Saintfield Heritage Society Annual Dinner At the Temple Golf Club After dinner speaker: Walter Love
Thursday	29th May	Saintfield Development Association: Table Quiz In The White Horse Inn at 7:30 pm
Saturday	7th June	The annual SDA "5k Run & Family Day"
Saturday	14th June	Saintfield Heritage Society Annual Outing to Ballywalter House and Gardens



Published as a Community Service by
Saintfield Development Association
DTP by Ian Mack

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