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Community Centre Update

In the last issue of Saintfield News it was reported that Newry, Mourne and Down councillors had given unanimous support for the Saintfield community centre project and outlined some

of the target milestones for the project that had been agreed between the Saintfield Development Association and the Council. Since then there has been continued good progress:

- Justyna McCabe has been appointed as the Council's Project Coordinator for the project.
- Tom McLean has been appointed Project Manager for the technical side of the project and, with a small team, will be working closely with Justyna and the SDA.
- Monthly meetings of the Project Team in NMD and the SDA members involved with the project have been organised and the first one has already taken place. These meetings will focus on ensuring continued progress for the project and good communication between the Council and Saintfield residents.
- The Council has advertised for

expressions of interest from private sector leisure and fitness operators to join the project on the understanding that capital investment of around £1.5m from the private

- providing more detail on the likely use of the different rooms and space in the proposed community centre. A questionnaire is being sent out in June to all of the church,

school, community and sports groups in and around Saintfield to help provide this information. If you are a member of any group that might make use of the new facilities, even for only one event a year, please make sure that your group



sector partner is anticipated. The closing date for these expressions of interest is 23rd June and initial indications are that there will be enough interest.

- The Council has stated that they have committed £1.5m for the Saintfield community centre in the financial year starting April 2017.

- They have also stated that even if a private sector partner is not found, the project will go ahead in April 2017 with the Council's budget alone.

All of this progress is very good news.

The next important steps for the community are:

responds to the questionnaire, a copy of which is on page three of this issue.

- it is likely that the model to organise and manage the new facility will require a new trust to be established, comprising the Council and people from Saintfield. The SDA is keen to include people from other community groups in learning about suitable trust models and selecting the right one for the Saintfield community centre. This trust is likely to be the body who contracts any private sector partner, so will need to be set up during 2016. Please contact the SDA if you would like to be a part of the team exploring trust models.

Chair's Viewpoint



Martyn Todd
Chair of Saintfield
Development
Association

This is my last opportunity to provide a Chair's update as I will be standing down at the AGM on June 13th. I would like to remind you of the commitments I made at the beginning of my year and to comment on SDA's progress since then.

I said in Saintfield News edition 8 that my priority was to ensure that all political parties and new directors in the NMD Council came to understand the needs of Saintfield and to build the partnership between SDA and NMD. I said that the test of this would be the progress made with the new community centre and with working with the sports clubs in Saintfield and Darragh Cross to improve our outdoor sports facilities.

I am pleased to say that we have made very good progress in building relationships with councillors and officials in the new Council. We have met all political parties in NMD and had productive meetings with all relevant senior officials. I believe that the significant progress on

the community centre (reported elsewhere in this issue) has been largely due to these strengthened relationships and I would like to commend all those on the SDA community centre team for their hard work and perseverance in bringing this about.

The new Council has set up a "DEA Forum" for each of its District Electoral Areas. Community Groups were invited to apply to join these and I am pleased to advise that the SDA has been selected to join the Rowallane DEA Forum. The first meeting of this Forum was held on 8th June and it should provide better communications between the NMD and all community groups in our local area.

Progress to improve outdoor sports facilities has not happened as hoped as Sport NI applied restrictions to its new funding stream that effectively ruled Saintfield and Darragh Cross ineligible to apply.

Finally I would like to

congratulate the chairs and members of the SDA committees who have made so much happen during the year.

Lawrence Murphy, as well as being treasurer, is the chair of the Green/Saintfield in Bloom 365 Committee, winning awards yet again for their floral displays and litter picks; Bob Pollock and the Events Committee organised an excellent Christmas Fair and very popular cycle runs; Barbara Graham and the Infrastructure Committee led the progress for the community centre; Brian Gamble and the Communications Committee produced Saintfield News and various press releases, Ian Mack, as well as being secretary also kept the website up to date and circulated electronic newsletters, while David Greer managed the SDA Facebook page. Paul McGeown, as Vice-Chair, gave me excellent advice and support throughout the year.

Community Litter Pick

The Green committee of the SDA organised a successful community litter pick on Saturday 14th May. A total of 28 people took part, including eight pupils and a teacher from Academy school, which was good to see.

In the space of two or three hours, the team of volunteers cleaned up 13 roads, a wood, three car parking areas, two play parks, two sports grounds and about 4 km of streets. The end result was 28 bags of rubbish, of which four bags

comprised recyclables. The result will be added to Saintfield's tally for The Big Spring Clean, Northern Ireland.

"Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful" provided the litter pickers, publicity material and recycling bags, while the NMD Council provided the bin bags and gloves and arranged for the removal of the rubbish. The SDA made a donation to the 2nd Presbyterian Church for the use of their premises and provision of refreshments to the clean-up squad.



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We Need Your Help!



An appeal to all community, school, church and sports groups in and around Saintfield.

We have established a project team with Council and have set up regular meetings to bring us to a proposed start date of April 2017.

An advertisement has already been published inviting private companies to tender as a partner in the development. This is a two stage process and response to this stage one has been good.

Council have made it clear that they will bring the project forward and contribute £1,500,000 to the capital budget. It is expected that the private partner will invest a similar amount.

To help us in this process we should be very grateful if you would answer the following questions and return to the e-mail address below as soon as possible. We will analyse your responses to obtain the best possible facility.

Questions

- 1 What would you do in the Centre?
- 2 How often?
- 3 How much space would you need roughly.?
- 4 What ancillary facilities would you use – storage, changing / toilets, kitchen, other?
- 5 Would you have occasional need for

- further space e.g. for social gatherings?
- 6 Any other comments or suggestions?
 - 7 What are your thoughts on an open day at the site (see below)?

The broad plan is as follows.

Building A

As proposed at the public meeting ,this will be an indoor space for large ball sports with a “4G” or similar surface and adjoining storage and changing facilities.



“Active Saintfield” is a group of our sports club leaders chaired by David Morrow.

They have volunteered to form a trust to administer this facility.

Building B

The idea is that this will be the hub of the Community facilities.

These will be guided by the results of the

questionnaire we carried out two years ago.

They include a multi purpose hall and both a small and large club / meeting room.



We also would like to include an adjoining small closed off outside space and a generous lobby / social space which would be common to all and form the approach to all the different spaces.

Building C

This will be largely the space for Leisure facilities, exercise classes, children's party



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We Need Your Help! (continued from previous page)

facilities etc and we expect this to be the focus of the private partner. It may be they charge a membership fee similar to most leisure facilities.

The Way Forward

At this stage we feel that we need to obtain more detailed feedback from end users. We need to know how you would use the community space e.g. what size of hall you would need.

We are conscious that we need to be very clear about what we want and why, otherwise we will have something imposed on us which may not be suitable or meet the needs of the community.

Governance

Council have proposed that the whole facility be overseen and governed by a Trust composed of local end users and Council representatives.

The advantage of this for us is that we will have a say in how the facilities are run and can design this to suit our needs.

It does, however focus minds on providing facilities which are well thought out and fit our needs without being excessive, impractical or uneconomic.

Private Partner

We also need to be conscious of a very tight budget. A private partner will take responsibility for the day to day running of the facility, so there would be no caretaking duties required from us.

The Saintfield Development Association cannot be the sole local member of this trust. The trust must have members representative of end users.

We need those who see themselves as regular users to contact us so that we can get together and develop a better idea of who should be involved in the Trust.

Open Day

We are planning to hold an open day at the site in early September. The idea is to let Saintfield people tour the site and get

an idea of the size of the buildings and how we hope to use them.

We envisage that this would be a fun day with play equipment for children, food stalls etc.

We thought clubs might like to put up stalls showcasing themselves and attract potential members.

Finally

We would appreciate your attention and help with this major project, which has taken so much time, effort and negotiation to reach this stage.

The finishing line is in sight and we just need to make the final push to achieve our goal – a well designed and useful facility to serve the needs of all sections of the Saintfield and district community.

Your Input

Please let us have your input by contacting the editor via e-mail:

editor@discoversaintfield.co.uk

Corporate Sponsor



CES Quarry Products, who operate from a site just outside Saintfield on the Crossgar road, recently became a corporate sponsor of the SDA. The family owned business has committed to contributing a significant amount to the SDA each month as a show of support for the activities and events the association does for the benefit of Saintfield residents. The SDA is a registered charity organisation and relies heavily on donations, grants and fund raising events to finance the wide range of activities with which it is involved. The Association is run by a team of volunteers, who give of their time unstintingly and whose only reward

is the satisfaction of contributing to the betterment of their village and environment.

If you or your company would like to support the work done by the SDA for your community, we would welcome any contribution you could make, whether as a corporate sponsor, a one – off donation or as a volunteer giving your time to help on any of our working committees which appeal to your interests.

Please express your willingness to donate or to volunteer your time and expertise by contacting the editor via e-mail:

editor@discoversaintfield.co.uk



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“Grow Wild” In Saintfield

The Green committee of the SDA has been busy developing the ground at two sites in Saintfield as part of the “Grow Wild” nationwide campaign.

Grow Wild is the U.K.’s biggest ever wild flower campaign, bringing people together to transform local spaces with native, pollinator friendly wild flowers and plants,

The areas selected in Saintfield are the Points at the junctions of Belfast and Comber roads, and Lisburn and Old Belfast roads. Committee members, with the help of volunteers and three pupils and a teacher each from St. Mary’s

Primary and Saintfield High, prepared the ground, seeded it with grass and planted a variety of wild flowers.

The wild flower sites will need constant watering during the summer months and their displays will do much to enhance the appearance of the roads into Saintfield and further improve the image of the village.

All the work has been done by volunteers, with machinery and materials donated by local people and it is hoped that their efforts will be appreciated by residents and the sites left alone to mature.



Saintfield Crime Report

There were 29 crimes reported in the Saintfield area for the month of March 2016, the latest figures available from the PSNI. This is a significant increase on the five incidents reported in January and the six in February.

Anti social behaviour once again tops the table with a total of 10 offences reported in March. This figure does not reflect the probable scale of the problem as by the very nature of the offence, many instances may go unreported.

There was a spate of burglaries, with six crimes reported, followed by five offences of violence or sexual violence. There were two drug offences, two vehicle crimes, two thefts and one report each of criminal damage and shoplifting.

Saintfield residents and businesses need to be more aware of the threat posed by criminals and hooligans and to be more security conscious.



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Saintfield Cycle Ride Success

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The Events committee of the SDA staged another very successful social cycle ride on Sunday morning 15th May.

A total of 175 cyclists of all standards entered for the event, which took them on a 35 mile circuit through the picturesque County Down countryside. The course was well signposted and marshalled and the riders were very complimentary about the organisation of the ride.

The SDA would like to thank Vivoxtra for donating the refreshments for the cyclists, the Women's Institute and committee volunteers for providing the tray bakes and The Rowallane Inn for hosting the riders after the event.

The funds raised will go towards providing attractions for the Saintfield Christmas Fair on Friday 2nd December.

The next cycle ride is the "Pedal the Peninsula" event scheduled for Sunday 11th September, which will take riders on a 53 mile tour around the scenic Ards Peninsula, starting and finishing in Saintfield. Watch for entry details on the SDA website and Facebook page.



Waste Ground Developed

The Green committee of the SDA has been hard at work developing the area of waste ground on the Crossgar road adjacent to the Maxol service station. David Hill carried out the manual work at no charge, ably assisted by Lawrence Sullivan and Stuart Johnston.

The blinding, barrier, grid matting and Donegal Gold decorative stones were supplied by CES Quarry Products free of charge, which is extremely generous. In the next week or two one large and two medium size planters will be installed.

This is another stage completed in the development of the access roads into Saintfield, which will improve the image of the town for visitors and residents alike.



Published as a Community Service by

Saintfield Development Association

Registered with The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland (NIC103001)

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