

Award For SDA Green Committee Chair

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Lawrence Murphy, who chairs the Green committee of the SDA, won the 'Good Neighbour' prize at the 'Live Here Love Here' awards of Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful.

These awards celebrate the tremendous efforts of volunteers across the province who embody the values of Live Here Love Here. Volunteer efforts include improving the quality of their local environment, innovative ways of reducing litter, creating shared green spaces and encouraging people to have pride within their local community.

The award was presented by Choice Housing at a gala dinner at City Hall in Belfast in mid-February. A total of 16 awards were presented to groups and individuals across all council areas.

Television presenter Joe Mahon was the Master of Ceremonies and the main

speaker was Jo Ruxton, who made the film 'A Plastic Ocean'.

In his acceptance speech, Lawrence thanked all the

Housing Development" in Saintfield.

SDA volunteers cleaned up the entrance to the site last summer. There is a wildlife

friendly planting across the road from the development for bees and butterflies with the installation of the primary schools' 'bug hotels', developed with grant funding from Live Here Love Here.

Lawrence said "I am always amazed by people and what they can do as a volunteer and

although I was given the award, it is really for all the environmental work completed in our area by all our people and you get real satisfaction from that."

The SDA is very proud of Lawrence and his team of volunteers, who can often be seen around the highways and byways of Saintfield in their yellow Hi-Viz jackets. Lawrence is often out on his own in all weathers, working away to clean up the village.



Lawrence Murphy with the Good Neighbour award, presented by Ursula Connor of Choice Housing

volunteers who give up their time to keep Saintfield clean and presentable, as well as our local traders, schools, churches and businesses for their support of the committee's efforts, both financial and otherwise.

He also thanked Live Here Love Here and Choice Housing for their continued support of SDA projects.

Choice Housing produced the "Manse Court Social

Vice-Chair's Viewpoint



Janice McHenry
Vice Chair
Saintfield
Development
Association

"I would make an appeal to anyone who is interested in the work of the SDA and supporting their local community, to offer a little of their time."

It gives me great pleasure to write this Viewpoint as Vice-Chair of the Saintfield Development Association. Since our last Newsletter there have been significant and positive developments within the Association and the wider Saintfield Community.

As we look forward to brighter days and longer evenings, our Saintfield Christmas Fair seems a long time ago, but didn't Saintfield look good over the festive period with the new lights creating quite a sparkle and a particularly fine tree? The Christmas Fair was a great success despite the dire weather predictions and the feedback is that it is worth the SDA Events Committee's considerable efforts in organising the lights, Fair and associated activities. Our thanks to all our sponsors who help fund the Fair each year and to the volunteers, without whom the Fair would not take place.

Many more events are planned for 2019, indeed a spectacularly successful series of events have already taken place during January and February, with just under 500 free tickets being issued for the 'Discover Saintfield Community' series of talks and tours. This was made possible with the help of the NIHE Cohesion fund and in partnership with the Saintfield Heritage Society. Building on this success, a guided tour of some of the archaeological sites around Saintfield is at the planning stage. Upcoming events in the pipeline are the annual cycle run, a free food taster session, and a gardening event. We will of course be

associated with the first community event in the new Community Centre. Looking to the future of this Committee I would like to take this opportunity to welcome David Greer as the new Chair of the SDA Events Committee and sincerely thank the previous Chair, Bob Pollock, for his many years of excellent



ideas and hard work in the role. We are delighted that Bob will remain as a committee member.

As we look towards spring, the Green Committee are gearing up for another busy year of planting and maintaining the beautiful floral displays around Saintfield. We must also congratulate SDA member Lawrence Murphy. Chair of the Greens and member of many other SDA committees, Lawrence won the Live Here, Love Here, Good Neighbour Award. It is great to see Lawrence's exceptional contribution to Saintfield so widely recognised.

Phoenix Gas are coming to town and the Association in the form of the Infrastructure Committee will continue to liaise with them on their plans for bringing natural gas to Saintfield. Obviously, this will cause some disruption to traffic. Information on their plans have appeared in the local press and are also included in

this issue. We will keep you informed via the Discover Saintfield website of any additional information. In the meantime, take a moment to consider the impact this development may have on our local shops. Parking will be difficult, but your continued support for our traders is essential to maintain a vibrant community. So please continue to 'Shop Local' during the disruption.

Throughout I have alluded to volunteers, everyone associated with the Saintfield Development Association does so on a voluntary basis. I would make an appeal to anyone who is

interested in the work of the SDA and supporting their local community, to offer a little of their time. It is a friendly organisation and a great way to get to know people, particularly for those who are new to the village. If interested, contact me, Janice McHenry by email: janice.mchenry@hotmail.com or leave a message on our website:

www.discoversaintfield.com
If you are unable to volunteer but would still like to support the SDA and it's many projects, any financial contribution, however small, would be welcome.

Martyn Todd, one of our longest serving and hardest working volunteers, is the current Chair of the Association. As Martyn is standing as an independent candidate in the local Council election in May, he has stepped back from his roles within the SDA. For the time being, Peter Gregg, the current Secretary of the Association, will take over as Chair.

SDA has been able to publish this edition of *Saintfield News* thanks to sponsorship by:

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Phoenix Gas Coming To Saintfield

Phoenix Natural Gas is currently working to bring natural gas to Saintfield as part of a wider project to expand the gas pipeline into County Down and connect a further 28,000 homes and businesses over the next few years.

For the past 20 years, Phoenix Natural Gas has built a network spanning 3,500km and established gas as the fuel of choice for homeowners in Greater Belfast. Over 90% of gas users say they experienced the benefits of natural gas immediately and would recommend natural gas to friends and family.

In 2016, Phoenix Natural Gas commenced its £60 million investment project to bring natural gas to an additional 13 towns in East Down including: Annahilt, Ballygowan, Ballynahinch, Castlewellan, Crossgar, Downpatrick, Dromore, Drumaness, Dundrum, Hillsborough, Newcastle Saintfield and the Spa.

Phoenix Natural Gas is delighted to now be working to bring this fuel choice to home and business owners in the Saintfield area and that customers will soon be able to enjoy the benefits natural gas can bring, such as a constant supply of heat and hot water, instant heat for a cosier home and high efficiency performance.

Over the next few weeks, Phoenix Natural Gas will be carrying out key construction activity to lay the mains network that will enable natural gas to Saintfield.

Thank you to everyone who attended our recent public information event, held at The Hub in February, to learn more about the planned construction activity taking place in the town centre from Monday 11th March 2019 for approximately seven weeks.

For those of you who missed the event, this is the planned construction timetable:

Monday 11th March –

Construction will resume on the Ballynahinch Road towards Main Street for approximately two weeks

Monday 25th March –

Construction will take place on Main Street from the roundabout to Crossgar Road for approximately two weeks

Monday 8th April –

Construction will take place on Todd's Hill from the Crossgar Road to town limit for approximately two weeks

Tuesday 23rd April –

Construction will take place on the Crossgar Road Crossroads Junction for approximately one week. Four-way traffic management system will be in place and manned at peak times to manage traffic flow

Please note these are estimated timescales only and may be affected by ground conditions or other external factors.

As Phoenix Natural Gas works to develop the network in the area, we appreciate that local residents, businesses and traders will be impacted by road works, particularly in the main town centre. Whilst we are constructing our network, we will do our utmost to mitigate against disruption to the area and reduce the impact on residents and traders.

Phoenix Natural Gas is delighted to be working closely with the Saintfield Development Association to support a number of community and business initiatives this year and we look forward to integrating into the local community.

As we work to complete this most disruptive stage of construction works as efficiently and speedily as possible, we appreciate your continued patience.

For updates on the construction programme please visit:

www.phoenixnaturalgas.com/projects/breaking-new-ground-en-route-to-east-down

Should you need to contact us with any queries or feedback:

Please speak to us on **03454 55 55 55** or email info@phoenixnaturalgas.com



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Infrastructure Committee Update

Community Centre



Construction is progressing well at Saintfield's long awaited, Community Centre on Belfast Road. If all goes to plan, Saintfield people will be taking on the responsibility of managing the new facility this spring!

The centre will comprise a bright, cheerful main hall about the size of a badminton court with a wood strip floor; a "studio space" suitable for meetings, clubs and exercise classes with a nice view of the river and access to the outside; a meeting room with a commanding outlook towards the river, pond and road; a copious foyer / informal social space providing a great, light filled space with views to the pond.

There is a kitchen convenient to all facilities so we need never be far from a cup of tea and a biscuit.

The adjacent building has an indoor football space with a modern 4G surface, full changing and shower facilities, viewing space and reception area. This will be available to hire for everyone including clubs, children and groups of friends – great for any large ball sport, for training, five-a-side etc. The space can be sub-divided for use by smaller groups. There is plenty of parking space and even a grass area and walkway round the site.

Funding for the centre is from Newry, Mourne and Down Council, the Rural Development Fund and the European Union's "Peace 4" fund. The project has had a very long gestation period (at

least 12 years) from when the project was first mooted, but we are nearly there!

Local Sewage Problems



NI Water have identified serious short-comings in Saintfield's sewage collection and treatment systems. They are currently surveying the system to identify what remedial work is needed.

We understand that this will delay Planning Approval for any new development until the issues are resolved and, of course, this depends on available funding.

We are all hoping that we don't have to wait too long!

Parking



The Council recently invited local traders to a meeting to review the provision of off-street parking in Saintfield. A Consultant was preparing a report on this and wanted the local view point. Issues such as introducing charges for the car park, other potential parking areas near the shops, all day versus short stay parking, location of the bottle disposal area etc., were raised. The consultant's report should now be with the Council and we await further information on any action plan.

Phoenix Gas Supporting



Phoenix Gas advise that they will be laying pipes down Main Street during March.

They say that two-way traffic will continue but temporary lights may well cause a build-up of traffic. Signage will be placed on approach roads to try to reduce the volume of through traffic.

Phoenix Gas will help to fund a shop local campaign to encourage residents to continue to shop locally to ensure our local traders do not suffer a downturn in trade which may put their businesses at risk.

March is an important time for many retailers as Spring and Easter approach and any fall off in trade would be serious. Please support them and keep our shops and businesses alive!

Face Lift for Main St. Properties



Our Council has announced a scheme to help the owners of Main Street properties give their shop frontages a face lift.

Many of the properties applied but we now understand that the project has been suspended by NMD.



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Hundreds Attend '1798 Rebellion' Talk

An audience of over 300 people, including the Chair of NMD, Councillor Mark Murnin, attended a talk in Saintfield by Dr. Eamon Phoenix on the 1798 rebellion and the Battle of Saintfield.

The talk was presented in the Church of Mary, Mother of the Church on Tuesday 29th January and the attendance exceeded all expectations. The number reflects the interest shown by residents in the history of Northern Ireland and Saintfield in particular, as well as the reputation of Dr. Phoenix as a knowledgeable speaker.

Dr. Phoenix is a social and political historian specialising in Irish history and is a prominent figure in Northern Ireland. A former research fellow at the Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University, Belfast and sometime Archivist at St Malachy's College, Belfast, he has published a

number of scholarly articles on modern Irish history and a school textbook. He has written extensively on historical issues for the Irish Times and Irish News and is a well-known broadcaster.



The talk by Dr Eamon Phoenix on the 1798 Rebellion and the Battle of Saintfield was attended by over 300 people

The talk was the last in a series of three lectures organised by members of the Saintfield Development Association and the Saintfield Heritage Society, with funding received from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive

Social Cohesion Unit.

The first two lectures were 'The Early History of Saintfield' given by Alister McReynolds and 'Professor Frances Hutcheson, Saintfield's most influential person' presented by Philip Orr. A tour of the historical sites of Saintfield was conducted on a Sunday afternoon, when over 60 people were shown around the village by members of the Heritage Society.

The objectives of the talks were to increase the awareness of Saintfield's heritage and to encourage engagement of local people in the nearly 50 community groups in the area. The final event will be a Community Open Day, which was to be held at the new community centre, currently under construction, on 24th March. Due to a delay in the project, this event will now be held on Sunday 26th May from 1pm to 4pm.

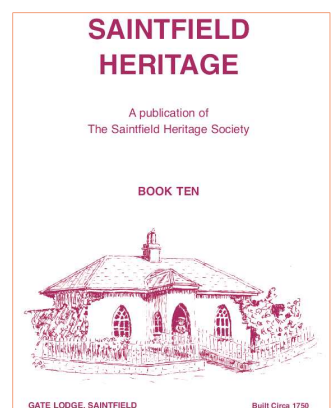
Saintfield Heritage Book 10

The large number of people attending the Discover Saintfield Community events in January demonstrates that there is a strong interest in Saintfield's history and heritage.

Every four years the Saintfield Heritage Society produces a book of articles on local history, the most recent being the tenth in the series. Book 10 contains thirty articles and forty-five photographs covering a wide range of topics relating to Saintfield and Saintfield people.

Joe Mahon, well known throughout the land for his Lesser Spotted and Ulster Giants television programmes, wrote the foreword for Book 10. In it he says "Regardless of how the rest of the world sees it, there is no hierarchy of knowledge when it comes to local history. Thus, an article about the early life of one of the fathers of the Scottish Enlightenment can sit cheek by jowl with a description of how carts were unloaded at McIlwain's store".

SHS Book 10 is now available from Jackson's at the cost of £8. Books 1-9 can be obtained through the discoversaintfield.com website.



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With Phoenix Natural Gas soon to begin laying a gas pipeline into and through Saintfield, a great deal of disruption will occur, especially down Main Street.

Our traders are concerned that this will have a major negative impact on their businesses as they fear residents will shop elsewhere during the work by Phoenix.

As many of our traders are struggling to survive in the current economic climate, it is imperative that we as residents continue to support them during this period. After all, without our traders and businesses, Saintfield would decline rapidly.

Do your bit for Saintfield – Shop Local!

The traders have arranged a series of events to encourage people to continue to shop in Saintfield. The details of the events are shown below.



Spring Events Organised By Your Local Shops

Saturday 23rd March, from 11am to 1pm in Rowallane Hub, 35 Main Street

Children's Story Telling & Nail File & Polish

Saturday 13th April, from 10am to 3pm in the Rowallane Hub Courtyard, 35 Main Street

Artisan Craft Fair

showcasing beautiful handmade jewellery, ceramics, sewing crafts and art. With LIVE music!

Saturday 20th April (Easter Saturday), from 11am to 1pm on Main Street

Guess the Fairy Tale!

Age: Nursery - 10 years. Pick up an entry form at Hazels Newsagents!

Prizes for all who follow the trail along Saintfield's Main Street and guess the fairy-tale themes of the shop windows.



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