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Saintfield News

ISSUE 21

WINTER 2019

Christmas Fair Set To Sparkle!

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The Saintfield Christmas Fair will be held on Friday 6th December on Main Street from 6.30pm to 9.00pm.

Please note that Main Street will be closed to vehicular traffic from 6pm until the close of the Fair at 9pm, so motorists need to plan accordingly.

The Events committee of the SDA have plans well advanced for the Fair, which promises to provide a fitting start to the festive season.

Santa will arrive at 7pm on his sleigh pulled by two of his reindeer, accompanied by pupils from local primary schools. He will travel from Fair Green down Main Street to the Christmas tree outside the Orange Hall, where he will switch on the tree lights.

He will hand out sweets to the children (only if they have been good!) and his reindeer will be there for photographs with the youngsters.

Attractions for the younger children will include the popular mini steam train and a Paw Patrol toddler play zone. Older children

will enjoy the Last One Standing game.

Firepoise, Northern Ireland's premier fire performance group, have again been signed

A variety of stalls will be there to browse and a number of our local shops will remain open for the duration of the Fair.

Four new Christmas street lights have been purchased by the SDA to add to the 16 bought last year. The lights will brighten up the areas around the mini roundabout and Fair Green.

The Fair promises to be an evening of festive fun and good cheer, with something for all the family, so put the date in your diary now.

The SDA is grateful to all the traders and businesses in the village and surrounds who

contribute financially to make the Fair a reality each year. Without their support and the fund-raising activities of the SDA, this annual event would not be possible.

Acknowledgement is also given to the many volunteers who freely give their time to help at this community event.

Checkout the SDA website and Facebook page for the latest news, and we look forward to seeing you at the Fair! [DiscoverSaintfield.com](#)



The Firepoise fire performance act will be one of the main attractions at the Christmas Fair

up for the Fair. They proved very popular a few years ago and delighted young and old with their spectacular fire act.

There will also be carol singers and school choirs performing a selection of seasonal songs.

Schoolchildren will parade along the street with lanterns which they will have made themselves at an earlier workshop.

Saintfield Heritage Society



The first three talks of this season have been very well attended, with near capacity audiences in the studio of the new Community Centre. This reflects the excellent range of interesting subjects selected by the Heritage Society's Programme Committee, chaired by Professor Des Greer.

The next two talks, in the new year, continue this high standard. On Thursday 9th January, Dr Garrett Carr, Senior Lecturer in Creative Writing at Queen's University, will talk on his experience of "Walking Ireland's Border". On Thursday 13th February, Mr Neil Hamilton, Museum

Curator of the Downpatrick and County Down Railway Society, will talk on "The Belfast and County Down Railway". These talks will both be in the Studio of the new Saintfield Community Centre, and commence at 8:00pm. Visitors are always welcome!



Chair's Viewpoint



Martyn Todd
Chair of Saintfield
Development
Association

*"I am very
pleased to note
that the new
Community
Centre is going
so well."*

In the last edition of Saintfield News, David Moffett, whose ancestors lived in Leggygowan, revealed his intention to donate US\$100,000 towards a heritage project in Saintfield. This is a unique opportunity to provide a way of telling some of Saintfield's unique history, while at the same time honouring David's family.

A small team of SDA members have been working with David, and some members of Saintfield Heritage Society, to come up with ideas to turn this opportunity into reality. Before anything is finalised, there will be a public consultation to ensure that whatever is developed has strong public support. We hope this consultation will take place early in the New Year and I encourage everyone to have their say.

I'm sure that you have enjoyed the magnificent floral displays around Saintfield again this summer. The SDA Green Team, with a few new volunteers this year, have made Saintfield more beautiful than

ever. Their efforts were again recognised by Ulster in Bloom at the annual awards ceremony.

The Events Team organised another very successful cycle run in September, which raised funds for SDA activities, including, of course, the highlight event of the year, the Saintfield Christmas Fair. This year it will be held on the evening of Friday 6th December and will include fun and activities for families and children of all ages. Put the date in your diary and don't miss the start of the Christmas season in Saintfield.

I am very pleased to note that the new Community Centre is going so well. Already the bookings are ahead of targets and the financial sustainability of this community run Centre seems assured. The priority for the future is to ensure that community needs are being catered for, as well as classes, activities and interests. Members of SDA are leading on developing youth provision (Sharon Young) and support for first time parents (Jen

Smith). If any of you are interested in either of these, please contact them through the website: www.discoversaintfield.com or by email via: editor@discoversaintfield.co.uk

Many of you have made suggestions about what you would like to see in the remaining buildings on the Community Centre site. SDA, with Saintfield Community Trust (the group running the new Community Centre) have asked to meet Rowallane councillors and senior council officials to discuss options for these remaining areas. Options that would need to complement the community activities already on the site. Again, there would need to be consultation with local people before final decisions are made. Look out for more on this and please ensure that you have your say.

As this is the final Saintfield News of 2019, I wish you and yours a very Happy Christmas and a healthy and contented New Year.

A Creative Opportunity On Offer

The Community Arts Partnership will, in February, fund a six-week project to create an artwork for display in the Community Centre. Would you like to take part? What does Saintfield mean to you? This is an opportunity to shape an art installation for the new Saintfield Community Centre.

SDA have received funding from the Community Arts Partnership to run a

six-week project. This will take place at the Community Centre on Tuesdays from 10am – 12 noon, commencing the first week in February.

The exact design will be determined by the group, although suggestions received so far are to include elements of the 1798 rebellion, Francis Hutcheson, Rowallane Garden, printing heritage, farmers, market town and horse fairs.

However, the participating group of 12 will make the final decision.

The materials used will be diverse and may include wood, textiles, metal, reclaimed materials, paint etc. No needlework skills are required.

If you would like to be a part of this project, book your place now.

Contact Janice McHenry by email: janice.mchenry@hotmail.com

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

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SDA Green Committee Activities

Container Planting

Containers will be planted with a selection of foliage and flowers to brighten up Main Street and beyond, giving a splash of colour to the village over the cold season.

Plants grow very little in winter so we are looking for good-sized plants and want to use sufficient numbers for the size of container to make an impact from the start.

Containers will be positioned to obtain as much light as possible during the winter months, thus ensuring the foliage remains green and healthy.

Winter bedding plants: these mainly flower in spring, but cyclamen, winter-flowering pansy, viola, primula and polyanthus will flower intermittently during mild spells in winter. The following can also be used: forget-me-not (*Myosotis alpestris*), large-flowered bedding daisies (*Bellis perennis*), wallflowers (*Erysimum*), Cyclamen persicum (not fully hardy but will usually last all winter until the new year in a sheltered location)

There will also be bulbs in the containers to flower the following spring.

Memorial Garden

This project is to introduce a natural, flower-rich pocket into our landscape. The SDA Green committee will be partnered in the



The wildflower bank on Station Road (top) and colourful Peacock butterflies (bottom).

project by Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful.

Pollinators play a key role in our natural environment. 78% of wild plants require insect pollination. Without these wildflowers, the landscape, cherished by us and crucial to our tourism sector, would be a less beautiful and colourful place. These plants provide food and shelter for our birds and mammals, as well as habitats for other animal populations, including many beneficial insects that attack crop pests.

The 21 species of bee in Northern Ireland are at risk unless action is taken. Bumblebees and solitary

bees are known as wild pollinators.

We will incorporate pollinator friendly perennial plants into the memorial garden to provide food for pollinators from spring through to autumn. There will also be a component of annual planting in the garden with pollinator friendly plants.

Also incorporated will be a mix of a pollinator friendly trees and shrubs that will flower throughout the season.

The aim is to create a structure which accommodates solitary-nesting native bees by providing cavities in natural materials for them to live in.

Shrub Bed Planting

It is planned to upgrade and maintain the shrubbery area located at New Line, Saintfield. It has been agreed with the Housing Executive Ground Maintenance Manager that the Green Committee can proceed with the pruning and replanting of this area with advice sought from a professional gardener and nursery.

Elements to this include pruning existing trees and supplying topsoil shrub compost soil/peat/grit mix, mini chip bark and some good shrubs to furnish the bare spaces around the bed.

Anyone interested in getting involved in these projects please contact: greens@discoversaintfield.co.uk

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Community Centre Up And Running

After the NM&D Council officially handed over the Community Centre to the people of Saintfield and district in April this year, the facility has gone from strength to strength.

The Centre is managed by the Saintfield Community Trust and is run by a small group of volunteers. This means that having the centre open all day and every day is not practical as the staff to oversee functions and meetings are just not available.

It is very satisfying to note, however, that as at the end of October there has been over 400 hours of use across the site.

The 3G pitch is now booked every week night and offers users a great opportunity to show off their skills indoors. It has become a training hub for Darragh Cross GAC, Saintfield United Football Club and Carryduff Colts.



Saintfield Community Centre

Local casual user groups are already making the most of the facility on their doorstep. The unpredictable summer weather also made the pitch the ideal location for our two primary schools to hold their end of year sports days.

The hall, studio and meeting room have been a big hit with user groups, providing a wide range of clubs, services and activities.

From the outset, the aim for the end of the first year of operation was to attract user groups catering for a wide range of activities and age groups. This has already been achieved in the first five months of operation and the centre is well ahead of projections. This early success is a testament to the hard work of the Saintfield Community Trust who oversee the centre, as well as the volunteers who keep it running.

Full details of events and other news about the Centre can be found on their Facebook page and website. (Search for Saintfield Community Centre.) The Centre can only be open and run with volunteer support from the local community.

If you can spare an hour or two per week and would like to become involved in supporting your community, please e-mail your contact details to:- reception.saintfieldcc@gmail.com

Dog Fouling Menace

Dog fouling continues to be a problem in Saintfield as well as the wider district. Appeals to dog owners appear to be falling on deaf ears and stricter measures need to be implemented to counter the menace.

Not only does dog fouling spoil our streets and byways, it also poses a health hazard to residents.

Councillor Patrick Brown has taken the lead on an initiative to resolve the problem and has issued the following statement to Saintfield News: -

"Last month Independent councillor Cadogan Enright and I met with the Council's head of waste management, who is also the officer responsible for enforcement of fines for dog fouling, fly tipping and similar issues. In the last

term, I, along with other Councillors raised the fact that Newry, Mourne and Down District Council (NMD) were issuing far fewer fines for enforcement issues than Ards and North Down Council (AND). In fact, in any given month, AND Council were issuing upwards of 30 fines for dog fouling alone, whereas NMD were issuing an average of 1 or 0! Over such a huge Council area, and given the number of calls and emails I personally receive on this issue, it is clear that the dog fouling issue is not exclusive to Ards and North Down. Therefore, the problem is clearly with our Council's efforts to enforce fines and produce clear anti-dog fouling strategies."

"Therefore, I have received assurances from Council Management that additional efforts will be made to increase patrols of

worst-affected areas and additional investment will be made to increase the number of cameras able to record offenders. Council will also look into additional signage, and I thank SDA members for highlighting a number of best-practice suggestions for signage from other Council areas.

Unfortunately, Council were not willing to double fines, as I requested, preferring to keep fines at the same level as other authorities. I would also urge any member of the public to photograph offenders in the act and their vehicle licence plates if possible (if they feel safe doing so) and report these offenders to the Council or to myself. Establishing a deterrent culture of naming and shaming may well be the best way to tackle this scourge."



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Editor's Letter



Brian Gamble
Editor of
Saintfield News

"I like to believe that Saintfielders **DO** care about their village and its people"



It is now 12 years since my wife and I left the chaos of Zimbabwe as 'economic refugees' and settled in Saintfield – a decision we have not regretted.

Potable water on tap (excuse the pun!), no power cuts, low crime levels, public services that work (except for Stormont), a viable health service and a stable currency. These were all positives for us after years living in a country with a rapidly declining economy under a political dictatorship with inflation in excess of 300 million percent.

Although we missed the African sunshine and our friends, we found Saintfield people welcoming and helpful as we settled into our new life. Even so, I appreciate that we will always be 'blow - ins'!

Not long after our arrival, I was introduced to the late Gerry Lowe, who was then Chair of the Saintfield Town Regeneration Committee, the forerunner to the SDA. Gerry, fondly known by some as the 'Mayor of Saintfield', invited me to join the association and I agreed. It was one way for me to repay Saintfield for the way we had been welcomed into

the community.

During the intervening years, I have been involved with many of the SDA committees and projects, including the launch of this newsletter with Ian Mack, of which this is the 21st issue.

The most ambitious project, initiated by Gerry many years ago, was to push for a community centre for Saintfield. A small SDA committee worked tirelessly over a number of years, working with Council and supported by our Rowallane councillors, to make it happen. Although he did not live to see it, Gerry's vision was realised earlier this year with the opening of the Centre. The facility was handed over to the Saintfield Community Trust to run as a shared space to cater for the sporting and social needs of all the people of Saintfield and district.

Now here is the crunch – it takes people to run a facility on the scale of the Community Centre. The usage of the Centre is growing rapidly and as reported elsewhere in this issue, is already ahead of projections. There is a small group of people helping out with the various duties, although more assistance is

needed. The people of Saintfield have been backward in coming forward.

Do Saintfield folk have too many other responsibilities to attend to in their daily lives, or is it just apathy? Some say that Saintfield is just a dormitory town, with most people working in Belfast and other centres, so they have no real attachment to Saintfield.

I like to believe that Saintfielders **DO** care about their village and its people and will give a few hours a month to support the operation of the Community Centre, or by serving on one of the committees of the SDA. Prove me right!

You don't need any special skills and you will also benefit by making new friends and doing your bit for the community.

If you are able to help or would like more information then please contact me by e-mail at:
editor@discoverssaintfield.co.uk



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It's been a busy year for the Saintfield Development Association in the quest to recruit new helpers to assist with the ever-increasing demands of organising activities in the village, together with our partner organisation the Saintfield Community Trust.

The year from January 2019 has seen several enthusiastic people join our hard-working band of volunteers, with both the Greens and Events Committees benefitting from the valuable assistance given by the new helping hands.

Thank you to all; experienced and new, who have given up some of their time for voluntary

community work during the year.

However, we still need more local people to commit to devoting a few hours to help with events such as the Christmas Fair. Volunteers are needed to assist with decorating the village Christmas tree on Monday 2nd December, and on Friday 6 December to help with setting up the various activities for the Christmas Fair, such as marshalling on the Main Street, and assisting with the children's parades.

Any help would be greatly appreciated, so if you are available please email your contact details to: discoversaintfield@gmail.com

Youth Club Update

Efforts are under way to establish a new Youth Club in the Community Centre. Meetings have taken place with the Education Authority, Choice Housing and other stakeholders as well as with parents and volunteers.

A first drop-in session was held at the end of October with a small group of children who gave some feedback on what they would like to see in a Youth Club, as well as what they would like to call it.

The administration aspects are being dealt with at present with the Education Authority for registration formalities, as well as plans for the launch of the club. It is hoped that these may be finalised in November, although this could depend on other factors.

Helpers are needed to assist with the club, so if any young people over the age of 16 are interested in helping out for an hour or so per week, they should get in touch via the e-mail address below.

This is an ideal opportunity for anyone who is doing their Duke of Edinburgh and needs to do their service-related volunteering. It would also be ideal for anyone who is interested in a career working with young people as there will be opportunities to do a qualification in Youth Work.

For further information or to volunteer your services, please contact Sharon or Kimberley at: saintfielddyouthclub@gmail.com



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