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Saintfield News

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Christmas Evening A Great Success

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

PAGE

Chair's Viewpoint	2
Anit-Social Behaviour	2
Saintfield Community Garden	3
The Covid-19 Pandemic and You	3
Update on the Windmill Park Project	4
David Moffett's Visit	4
Crime Prevention at Christmas	5
Saintfield In Bloom	6

Saintfield residents shrugged off the Covid blues and turned out in force to launch the Christmas season with an evening of late-night shopping and entertainment.

The mild, dry weather attracted an estimated crowd of 1500 people who brought a festive atmosphere to Main Street.

Santa Claus arrived early in the evening, accompanied by two of his reindeer, to the delight of the children who swarmed around him. Two Storm Troopers were in attendance to add a hint of menace to the occasion.

The very talented Lisburn Ukulele Band played and sang to entertain the gathering and Mark Kent and his disco unit were there to fill the air with Christmas music.

The PSNI were in attendance with a patrol car and the youngsters enjoyed sitting in it and setting off the lights and siren to pierce the night air.

The ever – popular miniature train and roundabout were also there to keep the younger children entertained.



The adults took advantage of the opportunity to do some shopping and also catch up with friends and family.

The traders, including the Saintfield Market, all seemed to be doing well.

The Rowallane Hub hosted a few stalls selling a variety of products, although there were none of the usual stalls on the street due to prevailing Covid restrictions.

Due to the Covid pandemic, the evening was a much-reduced event this year than in previous years, but the support from the public was tremendous.

It is hoped that next year conditions will allow a return to the full Christmas Fair with street stalls, choirs and even more entertainment.

Well done to all the organisers, volunteers and helpers who proved the SDA motto 'Saintfield people working for Saintfield people.'

Saintfield Heritage Society



The first three talks of this season have been very well attended. 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, will continue this high standard. On

Wednesday 12th January, Margie Crawford, a past Commodore of East Down Yacht Club, will recount the sailing, wildlife and other highlights of her exciting and adventurous voyage "To the Antarctic In A Tall Ship". On Wednesday 9th February, historian and author Roy Greer will give a talk

on the fascinating and complex life of "Sir Con O'Neill And The Last Gaelic Lordship in Ireland". These talks will be held in the Church Hall of 2nd Saintfield Presbyterian Church, commencing at 8:00pm with Covid precautions being observed. Visitors are always welcome!



Chair's Viewpoint



Martyn Todd
Chair of Saintfield
Development
Association

*"This vision is what
inspires the SDA
volunteers to put
in the hundreds of
hours that these
projects entail."*

I hope you are all enjoying the run up to Christmas, in spite of the Covid restrictions. The Christmas Street lights, the Christmas tree and this year's Christmas Evening on 3rd December help to add to the Christmas spirit.

Thank you to all the SDA volunteers who apply for the necessary funding and organise these events and extras for the community's benefit. Thank you also to those residents, businesses and traders who donate towards the costs of the Christmas displays in Saintfield.

By the time you read this edition of Saintfield News, SDA will have submitted its application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for a grant to transform the windmill field into an attractive community park. The application includes the ambition to stabilise the

three stone buildings of the scheduled monument and make them safe for future generations to come along and learn about the industrial heritage of the two windmills, two water mills and the railway. David Moffett, the American benefactor whose ancestors emigrated to the USA from Leggygowan is donating further funding to match that being applied for. We should hear the results of this application in March 2022.

Also, by the time you read this, SDA, together with the Saintfield Community Trust who run the community centre, will have put in the bid to Newry, Mourne and Down District Council to expand the community facilities in the community centre. We anticipate hearing the result of this early in the new year.

The third new project under

way is a community garden to be sited at the rear of the community centre, beside the planned entrance to the proposed community park.

If all three of these projects are successful, Saintfield will enjoy shared indoor and outdoor space for the benefit of all ages and backgrounds for generations to come. This vision is what inspires the SDA volunteers to put in the hundreds of hours that these projects entail.

Finally, when you next see volunteers from the SDA Green team working to make Saintfield more attractive, please congratulate them for winning third place in this year's Ulster in Bloom competition, the fourth Ulster in Bloom award that they have won in recent years.

Wishing you all a Happy Christmas and a Healthy New Year.

Anti-Social Behaviour

Saintfield continues to suffer acts of vandalism and anti - social behaviour, as do most other towns in our district.

Many residents are frustrated by the seeming lack of effort by the authorities to combat the menace.

It is apparent that some residents no longer bother to report incidents in the belief that they are wasting their

time and nothing will be done.

The PSNI are suffering from budget cuts, as are most public services, and have to deploy their limited resources where statistics indicate there is the greatest need. The areas that complain the most will therefore receive the most attention.

Our Rowallane councillors are very aware of the problem of ASB and

continually push for positive action to combat it.

Residents can play their part by reporting all acts of ASB and vandalism to the PSNI phone line 101 or to Crimestoppers on 0800555111.

Only when the number of reports reflect the seriousness of the problem will the police prioritise our area.

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

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Saintfield Community Garden

The site for the planned Community Garden is at the Saintfield Community Centre. The NMD Council have given their permission for it to be constructed there. The Saintfield Community Trust is responsible for running the community centre and they will work with the green sub-committee of Saintfield Development Association as a partner to found the Garden and get it up and running. A sub-committee will be formed who will report to the Trust and keep the Council informed. Almost half of the funding for the garden has been raised to date through grants and donations. This will allow a start to be made, with additional developments introduced as funds permit. A public meeting, a survey and a competition have been held in the run up of the project to raise awareness, commitment and interest. The garden will help to promote the health and well – being of residents through recreational gardening with the associated social and ecological benefits.



Community gardens should promote leadership, outreach, and volunteering. People who do not garden themselves still like to see gardens in their village. Children also benefit when a garden is located on school grounds as in the eco-schools of Saintfield where our primary schools have garden-based

educational activities. These benefits can now be enjoyed by people of all ages with membership being open to the public for families, individuals' and groups. There will be a programme of training and events for the community with gardening, horticulture, biodiversity and environmental issues all being featured.

The Covid-19 Pandemic and You

The COVID – 19 virus continues to affect our lives and it shows no sign of abating, with a new variant emerging every couple of months. It is easy to become complacent and relax your guard as the weeks and months pass by and this could be disastrous.

We will have to exist with the virus as a part of our everyday lives and ensure that we protect both ourselves and others from infection. COVID-19 is spread through close contact with people who have the virus and people with the virus can spread it even if they do not have symptoms.

When someone with the virus breathes, speaks, coughs or sneezes, they release small droplets containing the virus.

You can catch COVID-19 if you breathe in these droplets or touch surfaces contaminated with droplets.

Here is a reminder of the simple but effective steps everyone should take as standard procedure:

- * Get vaccinated
- * Meet people outside if possible
- * Open doors and windows to let in fresh air if meeting people inside
- * Limit the number of people you meet and avoid crowded places
- * Wear a face covering when it's hard to stay away from other people – particularly indoors or in crowded places
- * Wash your hands with soap and water, or use hand sanitiser regularly throughout the day
- * Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean

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Update on the Windmill Park Project

Progress with the planning application for the proposed community park situated behind the community centre is slow but steady. The application is for the field outside the scheduled monument zone and is for change of use from agricultural to amenity use for the public. All statutory consultees bar one have now given their approvals for the proposals. Discussions with the final consultee are in progress. The application covers only the paths, pond, fencing and information panels associated with the rest of the field.

Many hours have been put in completing the application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund, which was submitted at the end of November. The Heritage Fund will give us their decision in March 2022. If they offer a grant, it will be for the development phase of the project. This will probably take one year and will



The Windmill Stump

include detailed measurements of the scheduled monument buildings, work plans, costings for stabilising these and obtaining scheduled monument consent and planning approval for these works. At the end of this development phase a further application to

the Heritage Fund would be made for the delivery phase of the project. If this were successful and all went well, the park and windmill would be opened to the public in the spring of 2024.

If the Heritage Fund decide not to give the project a grant, then SDA will go ahead with the park itself but this will exclude the scheduled monument area. This would be fenced off as unsafe and left as is. Competition for the Heritage Fund grants is very competitive and many other projects in NI will be applying, so it will be a great achievement if we are successful. This is probably the only source of funding that can preserve the windmill and the other two buildings of the scheduled monument for future generations. Without this funding, the buildings will continue their slow decline and will eventually collapse.

David Moffett's Visit

David Moffett recently made a short visit to Saintfield. He is the American benefactor who made a substantial donation to the SDA to enable them to purchase the windmill field adjacent to the Saintfield community centre. It is planned to develop the field as a heritage community park for the residents of Saintfield and district.

Here is a brief report of his visit:

'I was greeted with beautiful Autumn weather and warm greetings from my many friends. I first had the opportunity to walk around the windmill field and a chance to envision how the proposed community park would surround the ancient windmill and caretaker's home that is so much a part of Saintfield's history. I then met with a number of residents at the community centre, then on to Rowallane Gardens.



David Moffett explaining his family's migration from Leggygowan to the USA.

I was given a guided tour of the beautiful gardens and ended my first day with a full tour of the community centre, followed by an evening reception.

The potential of fitting out the remaining buildings of the community centre, which

would include a heritage area to complement the planned Windmill Park, impressed me.

The following day I was hosted to a round of golf at Royal County Down, my all-time favourite golf course. This was followed by a tour of the rugged Mourne mountains. The beauty of southern County Down, its unique visitor sites and the central location of Saintfield reinforces, in my mind, the importance of the windmill park project and the heritage centre.

My third and final day was spent at a local shop exploring the location of my 18th century family's farm in Leggygowan. Exploring my family history was a wonderful way to end my visit to Saintfield. I look forward to returning soon and continuing to work on our shared interest in completing the windmill park project and heritage centre'.



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ADVICE FROM THE PSNI

“Simple precautions you can take to protect your home and belongings.”



Stay Safe Over The Festive Period

Most burglaries are opportunistic and there are simple precautions you can take to protect your home and belongings:

HOME SECURITY

- * Close and lock all doors and windows.
- * Keep gifts and expensive items out of view.
- * Mark valuable items in your home with your postcode and house number.
- * Don't keep large amounts of cash in your home.
- * Consider installing a home security system. Set your alarm when going out and at night time.
- * Leave a front room or bedroom light on if it will be dark before you get home.
- * Consider security lights. To a burglar, a dark house is an empty house.
- * Always check who is at the door. Not sure? Don't open the door.
- * Always keep sheds and outbuildings locked and secure any ladders.
- * If you notice suspicious activity or vehicles in your local area, make a note of relevant information – including vehicle registrations – and contact police straight away on 101 or 999 in an emergency.

If you are out and about this Christmas there are simple steps you can take to reduce the chance of being a victim of theft:

THEFT PREVENTION

- * Be aware and vigilant of your surroundings and the people around you. Pay particular attention to your valuables if a stranger talks to you, bumps into you, offers you something or tries to distract you.
- * Only carry what you need and don't carry large amounts of cash.
- * If you are using an ATM, be aware of who is around you. Conceal your pin number as you input it and put your card and cash away safely before leaving the ATM.
- * If you notice anything suspicious about the ATM or you feel uncomfortable with any of the people standing nearby, do not use the ATM.
- * Keep all valuables out of sight.
- * Keep your house and car keys in your pocket, rather than in your bag.
- * If you are carrying a handbag, make sure it is securely fastened and carry it in front of you. Wallets should be carried in front pockets.

**We wish all our clients a
Happy Christmas and a
safe and healthy New Year!**

**Thank you for your support in the
past difficult year and we look
forward to being of service in 2022.**

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Pictured at the Translink 'Ulster in Bloom' presentation are (L to R) Vivien Lovell (SDA Green Team), Cllr Frances Burton (Vice President, NILGA), Cllr Robert Burgess (NILGA President), Dr. Michael Wardlow (Translink Chairman), Denis Conn (SDA Green Team).

Saintfield was placed a creditable third in the Large Village category of this year's Translink 'Ulster in Bloom' competition.

First place was taken by Culleybackey, with Stewartstown in second place. The SDA Green Team was thrilled with this result as Covid restrictions this year had restricted their efforts to maintain their usual high standard of floral displays.

Lawrence Murphy, who heads the Green Team, thanked the volunteers for their continued support. He also thanked the local residents, traders, businesses, churches and schools who maintained their frontages in good order.

He made special mention of Beth and Ken Lunney of Saintfield Nurseries for their unstinting support over the years, as well as

James Lappin of Greenbank Nursery for his willing assistance. Danske Bank paid for some window boxes.

Lawrence paid tribute to the Green Team of volunteers who put in so many hours of their time to help keep the village clean, as well as donating flowers, seeds, plants and paint!

The Council played its part in the 'Ulster in Bloom' effort by supplying flowers and trees and the road sweeping vehicle.

Some residents have also assisted with donations and if you would like to give some of your time – or donate towards the costs of keeping Saintfield attractive, here's how. Visit our website discoversaintfield.com and use the 'DONATE' button or contact

editor@discoversaintfield.co.uk



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