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# Saintfield News



ISSUE 26

SPRING 2023

## Community Heritage Park Progresses

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Overlay of key elements from historic maps onto current site plan of the windmill field, bounded by the red line, and the surrounding area

The **McBurney Windmill** in the 'Windmill Field' is a much-loved local landmark. The quandary was how to protect both the windmill and the buildings around it while making it beneficial to the local community. The windmill and the history of the surrounding area are an important part of Saintfield's heritage.

A community park is by definition an accessible place for everyone within the community. A place to take a stroll, help with the maintenance of the park by doing a bit of gardening, or just somewhere to sit and relax while enjoying the view.

The National Lottery Heritage Fund has enabled us to achieve both of these aims. We will be able to protect the windmill and ancillary buildings from further ruin and gain a natural area open to the people of Saintfield.

The project also plans for the industrial heritage of Saintfield to come to the fore. From the time the windmill was operational until the present day, Saintfield has been an important area.

The district had many mills and agricultural industries. The **SCA** now has the chance to protect a part of that heritage for the future.

It is essential to protect the biodiversity of the park. The natural beauty and the different types of flora and fauna will be protected and enhanced. Any works that take place in the park will ensure that protection of the environment and structures is of paramount importance.

In the past, there have been a number of consultations regarding the project. Prior to applying for planning permission from Newry Mourne and Down District Council, the results of these consultations were considered, as were the concerns of the neighbours to the field and the potential users of the park.

As the project is currently in the development phase, it was decided to canvass the general public once more to clarify and expand on

opinions and ideas put forward in previous consultations. As the project progresses, there is a need to ensure that the plans for the park incorporate the public's wishes. All the ideas in this questionnaire have been put forward by the residents of Saintfield.

You are encouraged to complete the questionnaire which can be accessed digitally through the QR code below. If you would like more information on the park, please visit our website [discoversaintfield.com](http://discoversaintfield.com) or contact [saintfieldcommunity@gmail.com](mailto:saintfieldcommunity@gmail.com)



SCAN ME



## Chair's Viewpoint



**Martyn Todd**  
Chair of Saintfield  
Community  
Association

*"This [newsletter]  
has been a great  
success in keeping  
Saintfield residents  
up to date with  
community  
activities."*



Congratulations to Brian Gamble and Dr. Ian Mack, who have published Saintfield News for the past 10 years, and to Vivien Lovell and her team of volunteers for the distribution of the newsletter throughout the town. Thank you very much indeed for producing this important link to keep residents informed of what is happening in our local area.

The meetings for SCA members in October and for the wider Saintfield public in November both went very well. It was great to have face to face contact with people after three years of mostly Zoom meetings!

Congratulations also to David Greer and the team who made the Christmas Evening in Saintfield special in December last year, helped by additional funding from Choice Housing, as well as generous donations from local traders and residents and a grant from Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.

Saintfield Community Association is now formally established following the merger between SDA and Saintfield Community Trust, the team who manage the community centre. The new board of 11 people with a new structure of three teams is now in place. The three teams are Community, Operations and Environment. The Community Team looks after events, community engagement and the new Community Heritage Park. The Operations Team looks after the running of the community centre and plans to

extend the facilities on the community centre site. The Environment Team comprises the famous, award-winning Greens and the community garden. All three teams would welcome new volunteers.

The team looking after the new community heritage park are making very good progress (see below), again with many hours of volunteer time making the difference.

Finally, we have the opportunity this year to improve on our 2022 result in Ulster in Bloom (second place). Some funding has been promised from Choice Housing and another local donor which will allow the Greens to add some more of their magic to our surroundings in Saintfield. Please support them with a few hours of your time or a donation if you are too busy.

### Windmill Park progress

This project is funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. In addition, it has support through advice and guidance from The National Trust, the Historic Environment Division of Department for Communities, Saintfield Heritage Society and our benefactor, David Moffett. Since the lead consultant, Paul McMahon of d-on conservation, was appointed, progress has been steady.

- the buildings and field have been surveyed in detail using the latest technology, which has captured digital images and measurements for future costings and designs.
- a conservation plan for the park has

been drafted. This document lists all the heritage assets of the site, including the buildings and ecology so that these can be protected in the future.

- the consultant to prepare the interpretation plan has been appointed. The interpretation plan will describe which heritage stories will be told in the park and how best to tell them. It will include the industrial heritage related to the two water mills and two wind mills of the local area, but also the wider history of Saintfield, including the Battle of Saintfield and the 1798 Rebellion.

- the consultant to carry out the long-term evaluation of the project has also been appointed. The evaluation of this first phase of the project will be important for our application to the Heritage Fund for the second part of the project, probably at the end of 2023.

- Emma Duncan is leading the consultation to finalise what will be in the new park. The closest neighbours to the park were all invited to a drop-in session in the community centre in February for their views to be captured. Further drop-in sessions and an electronic on-line survey will be carried out, so please use these opportunities to have your say.
- Following the consultation the lead consultants will prepare a final design for the park and its approaches, hopefully by the summer.

## Saintfield News Celebrates Its Tenth Anniversary This Year!

The first issue was published in Spring 2013, when the late Gerry Lowe was Chair of the then Saintfield Development Association (now Saintfield Community Association).

The print order was 2000 copies, which were distributed to all households and businesses in Saintfield by a team of volunteers. Vivien Lovell arranges the bundles and organises the deliveries. The current print order is 2500 copies. During the Covid pandemic, an electronic only

issue was produced due to the difficulties of hand delivery during this period.

Brian Gamble has been editor and Dr. Ian Mack has done the desk top publishing since the publication was launched.

Printing costs of the newsletter are met through sponsor strips and we sincerely thank our advertisers for their support over the years.

The aim of the newsletter is to keep the

Saintfield community informed of news and events in the village as well as plans and projects of the Saintfield Community Association.

An electronic version of the newsletter is available on the SCA website, [discoversaintfield.com](http://discoversaintfield.com) or you can subscribe to the electronic issue by contacting [editor.saintfieldnews@gmail.com](mailto:editor.saintfieldnews@gmail.com)

Contributions, comments and suggestions are welcome.

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

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## Community Garden A Great Success



The Community Garden group in the Community Garden

The community garden is coming into its second year of growth. It has enjoyed a great first year and harvest, building up a team of members who have had great fun taking care of the plants and space.

The team have had a planning meeting this year - working out what they want to grow and how they will extend that across the community.

They have also held a seed-sowing day to kick-start the vegetables.

The group are planning a mix of vegetables and fruit and will try some cut flowers this year as well. The polytunnel and greenhouse will be very useful for this.

The photo shows the team enjoying a day in the garden, which is situated behind the community centre. If you would like to join the group, please email [saintfieldcommunity@gmail.com](mailto:saintfieldcommunity@gmail.com)

**No experience needed!**



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## Dolly Parton Imagination Library

Imagine if you could sign up to a programme that mails a free book to your child, every month from birth until the age of five?

That's exactly what country star Dolly Parton's Imagination Library has been offering since it launched in her home county of Sevier County, Tennessee, in 1995 - and now thanks to Hannah Taggart, the initiative has reached Saintfield.

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is a book gifting programme that mails free, high quality, age-appropriate books to signed-up children from birth to age of five, no matter what their family's income.

Dolly says that before he passed away her Daddy told her the Imagination Library was probably the most important thing she had done.

"I can't tell you how much that meant to me because I created the Imagination Library as a tribute to my Daddy. He was the smartest man I have ever known but I know in my heart his inability to read probably kept him from fulfilling all of his dreams," she said.

"Inspiring kids to love to read became my mission. In the beginning, my hope was simply to inspire the children in my home county but here we are today with a worldwide programme that gives a book a month to well over one million children.

"Of course, I have not done this alone. The real heroes of our story are the thousands of local organisations who have embraced my dream and made it their own. They raise millions of dollars each year and wake up every day with a passion to make sure their kids have every opportunity to succeed."

By January 2023 the Imagination Library had gifted more than 199 million free books worldwide - an incredible achievement.

Mum of one Hannah says she got the idea to set up a scheme locally in Saintfield after friends in Scotland told her about the benefits of schemes running in their area.

"I started this in November 2022 for no other reason other than that it seemed like a great idea to get children reading," she says.



"Families surveyed say they feel shared reading has a calming or relaxing effect on their child and developing good habits and a love of reading is important. They've also found that participants are around 30% more likely to read daily and 88% of Imagination Library families say they read more often because of the Imagination Library.

"The Saintfield scheme is one of three affiliates in Northern Ireland outside of Belfast and at the moment it's completely funded by my personal and professional contacts through a GoFundMe.

"We have 18 children registered and enough funding to take us to the summer. We want more children to register but need more funding to hopefully match demand!"

To find out more, email Hannah at [saintfieldimaginationlibrary@gmail.com](mailto:saintfieldimaginationlibrary@gmail.com).



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## Community Team Latest

The SCA Community Team has been meeting fortnightly since the New Year. Chaired by Hannah Taggart, it comprises a group of seven local residents with the goal of steering the community aspect of the SCA to make it as inclusive as possible. The team has held discussions with a Choice Housing representative about funding for local events and started planning a mural for the Community Garden to brighten the surroundings and complement the flora. They have also reached out to local community groups to see how they plan to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III so that they can contribute to the festivities.

Their biggest success to date is the discussion around setting up a Primary age youth club (see details in the article elsewhere in this newsletter). Also, the Saintfield Dolly Parton Imagination Library which now has nearly 20 sign-ups, and the planning of a Health and Wellbeing Week in late Spring/early Summer. The team is just getting started but hopes to continue building upon the great work done by the SCA to date.

If you have any ideas, suggestions, or would like to get involved, or simply just give some feedback, the team would love to hear from you. You can email Emma (our Community Coordinator) at [saintfieldcommunity@gmail.com](mailto:saintfieldcommunity@gmail.com) or feel free to stop Hannah in the street for a chat - she is the one usually wearing a yellow hat and walking a very fluffy dog or a boisterous toddler!



**Hannah Taggart**

## Christmas Tree Volunteers



Situated at the Orange Hall on Main Street, the Christmas tree is the focal point of the festivities in the village each year.

This is made possible through donations from businesses and volunteers giving their time and expertise.

It is only fitting that they should be recognised for the support they gave this past year.

Gordons Chemists donated £300 towards the cost of the tree, which SCA members Bob Pollock and Denis Conn selected from Greenmount Christmas tree farm, assisted by owner Brian Donaldson.

The machinery used to erect the tree was hired from Cyril Johnstons of Carryduff at a discounted price.

Peter Burgess designed the cradle for the tree and McCormick Metal Fabricators manufactured it at no cost. David Murtagh and Raymond Massey operated the machinery to erect and dismantle the tree.

Erecting and decorating the tree in the winter weather is a cold and arduous task, made bearable by the refreshments supplied by the ladies, namely Noreen Pollock, Fiona Watters and Janice McHenry. They also helped to decorate the tree assisted by Seamus McGrath, Malcolm Foreman, Bob Pollock, Denis Conn and Michael Coyle.

Then when Christmas was all over, the team had to undress the tree and remove it, before cleaning up the area.

The above is just one example of people working together in harmony for the good of our community.

The SCA is always ready to welcome new volunteers to help with this and the many other projects in and around the village. If you can spare a few hours please let us know your interests and contact us through our website [discoversaintfield.com](http://discoversaintfield.com) or email [saintfieldcommunity@gmail.com](mailto:saintfieldcommunity@gmail.com)

## Ballycopeland Windmill

Ballycopeland Windmill (near Millisle) is similar to the windmill in Saintfield and has been fully restored by the Historic Environment Division (HED) of the Department for Communities. Maybelline Gormley from HED hosted a visit to the Ballycopeland windmill for four members of the Saintfield Community Association (Barbara Graham, Ian Mack, Lawrence Murphy and Marty Todd) together with the lead consultant for the Community Heritage Park, Paul McMahon.

The visit began with a tour of all four storeys of the inside of the windmill, with all the machinery in place as it was in the 19th century. Maybelline explained the restoration work completed over the last seven years, allowing the site to be safely opened to the public. The miller's cottage, the kiln building and the kiln man's house have all been restored and were part of the tour. It was very interesting to see how the three sets of mill stones were driven by the sails, allowing different grades of flour and animal food to be processed.



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It's been a long time coming, but there are promising signs that a cross-community youth club could be back on the table in Saintfield.

Local couple Rebecca and Brendan Burns are the driving force behind proposals for a new youth club based at Saintfield Community Centre after taking inspiration from the primary-age youth club in Downpatrick attended by their niece and nephew.

They are hoping that the club will operate every Saturday, with times to be confirmed, and say it is likely to be a mix of free play and organised activities.

"In my head, I thought it was going to take a lot more organising, but for the amount of effort that's required, it's very high impact for the kids," Brendan says.

"This is something that we could really take advantage of in Saintfield as well and build it up, starting off with a primary-aged group to get the momentum going, and then later on hopefully providing something for the 11 to 16 year-olds as well."

The most important ingredient for the success of the club, he says, will be to ensure that there is a good team of adult volunteers who can run it on a rota basis,

providing an appropriate adult-to-child ratio, so that all of the burden doesn't fall onto a small number of leaders.

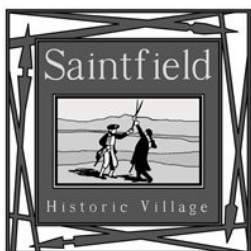
But if they are able to build up a bank of eight to 10 volunteers, they are hoping ultimately to run a primary-aged club each Saturday, followed by a senior club once the programme is up and running.

All volunteers will need to be Access NI checked and undergo safeguarding training, and children will fill out a registration form upon joining and pay a small fee every week to cover some of the costs.

In order to get the club up and running, Brendan is calling for volunteers who would be interested in leading the youth club on a rota basis.

"We do have to be mindful of the commitment by making sure there's a body of volunteers for it - so, as long as we can get that programme in place, I don't think there's going to be a problem," he says.

If you're interested in getting involved in leading a cross-community youth club in Saintfield, contact Brendan and Rebecca via the youth club email address [saintfieldyc@gmail.com](mailto:saintfieldyc@gmail.com).



Published as a Community Service by  
**Saintfield Community Association**

Registered with The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland (NIC103001)

**DTP: Ian Mack**

**Editor: Brian Gamble**

**Newsletter Distribution: Vivien Lovell**

**CONTACT: [editor.saintfieldnews@gmail.com](mailto:editor.saintfieldnews@gmail.com)**



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**Peter Bowles & Company**, Solicitors  
35, Main Street, Saintfield, BT24 7AB.

**WEB:** [www.bowles-law.com](http://www.bowles-law.com)

**EMAIL:** [info@bowles-law.com](mailto:info@bowles-law.com)

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