



Community Impact News

A publication dedicated to reporting the impact of our work. Inside you'll find updates on how Supporting Communities has been working with community groups and others to create positive change for people throughout Northern Ireland.

Graduation Day for Social Enterprise Students

Thirteen certificates were presented to local volunteers and staff who have completed the OCN NI accredited "Understanding Social Enterprise Level 2" course delivered by Supporting Communities.

The presentation of certificates to graduates took place in the Greater Shantallow Area Partnership on Friday 30th September 2016.

The awards ceremony celebrated the successes and accomplishments of individuals and community groups within the community sector which was sponsored by the Housing Executive Social Investments Team.

Paul Carland, from the Housing Executive Social Investments Team, closed the proceedings by thanking Supporting Communities for delivering the Programme and congratulated the graduates on the completion of their studies. He went on to highlight the Housing Executive's commitment to continuing to provide investment opportunities for Social Enterprise within the Voluntary and Community Sector.



Course graduates with Stephen Marks and Laura O'Dowd from Supporting Communities and Paul Carland, Manager of the Housing Executive Social Investments Team.

"These qualifications are a significant recognition of the efforts and commitment of the people within their local communities.

My congratulations go out to all who have completed the qualifications."

- Laura O'Dowd, Supporting Communities Support Services

Update on Training and Good Practice

Lisburn and
Castlereagh
City Council



Supporting Communities has continued to work closely with Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council by delivering a range of training at Bridge Community Centre to staff and volunteers from community groups throughout the Lisburn and Castlereagh council area.

Over the summer months Supporting Communities delivered 'Treasurer Training', a newly developed course, to 8 participants from a range of community groups including Derryvolgie Parish Church, YMCA Lisburn, Fibro Support Lisburn, Sarah Crothers Centre, and Drumbo and District Community Group.

Additional training that took place at Bridge Community Centre in Lisburn included four participants completing our OCN NI Community Capacity Building Level 1 over a 12 week period.

Each week the participants successfully completed a new module, on topics such as Successful Fundraising, Money Matters, Dealing with the Media, and Effective Lobbying to name a few. The work produced from each learner was at an exceptional standard and it was a pleasure for Supporting Communities to be involved.



Townparks Community Association

Since the last edition, the training team at Supporting Communities have continued to work alongside a wide range of community groups around Northern Ireland to develop new and existing skills through a range of tailored training.

Over the summer months, Karla Turner Training Officer, visited Townparks Community Association, a newly established charity based in Antrim with a lot of exciting plans ahead for their local community.

Staff at Supporting Communities have been working closely with Townparks Community Association to begin their journey ahead as a registered charity. To continue with that support, Supporting Communities had the pleasure of delivering three training sessions to the newly formed Management Committee, including Team Building, Effective Meetings, and Good Governance.

The Management Committee have a wide range of knowledge and expertise between them so the standard of work throughout each training session was fantastic.

Supporting Communities would like to wish Townparks Community Association the best of luck in their new journey ahead providing support and services to their local area.

Lisburn Funding Surgery

Supporting Communities, in partnership with Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council, hosted a Funding Surgery for community and voluntary groups in September 2016.

At the event, groups within the Lisburn area were given the opportunity to meet with our Funding Officer for one to one support and practical advice on funding opportunities and guidance. Also available to them on the day was:

- Practical Advice on completing Successful Funding Applications
- One to One Support, Top Tips and a range of ideas to make sure your application stands out from the crowd
- Funding Enquiry Service; where groups had access to information on a variety of funders specific to their project or programme!

One participant concluded:

“The funding surgery was very useful in terms of identifying new sources of funding that we did not know existed.”

Supporting Communities have a number of tailored Fundraising Services to address the needs of groups and individuals so that they can plan their fundraising strategy and achieve success from Funders. See our website for more information.



“Once again, the Funding Surgery for the Lisburn area was a great success and extremely well attended.”

Our Funding Service aims to inform community groups of the most up to date and relevant sources of funding available and provide guidance on the overall fundraising process.

I would like to thank Rhonda Frew, from Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council for asking Supporting Communities to deliver this service”.

- Roisin Hamilton Funding Officer, Supporting Communities

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Menu of Funding Services

SERVICE

SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES CAN

Funding Enquiry	<p>Our Funding Enquiry Service enables groups to access Information on a variety of funding sources for specific costs or projects.</p> <p>Our Funding Enquiry form can be downloaded from our website or by contacting our Funding Officer.</p>
Funding Bulletin	<p>Supporting Communities Community Funding Bulletin provides details of charitable trusts, foundations and statutory sources of funding programmes.</p> <p>Our Funding Bulletin can be accessed from our website or by contacting our Funding Officer.</p>
One to One Support	<p>Supporting Communities Funding Officer can provide community organisations with one to one funding support and provide advice on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good Governance• Models of Good Practice• Funding Opportunities and funding streams available• The application process• Financial
Funding E-Bulletin	<p>Supporting Communities fortnightly E-Bulletin highlight the latest funding news and grant available to community groups.</p>
Funding Strategy/ Action Plan	<p>Supporting Communities can provide community organisations with support with support to develop a funding plan. A Fundraising Strategy/Action Plan will involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Setting fundraising targets• Assisting your group to focus on its objectives and priorities for the future• Preparing a Budget• Identify potential sources of funding
Funding Factsheets	<p>Supporting Communities have a range of funding factsheets including 'Preparation for Fundraising' and 'Local Fundraising Ideas' and a series of specialist factsheets providing information on access Business, Council, Trust and Lottery Support.</p>
Funding Clinics	<p>Supporting Communities Funding Clinics provides groups with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• One to one specialist funding information• Support and guidance with the application process• Information on potential sources of funding
Funding News	<p>Supporting Communities Funding News Sheets aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share good practice• Highlight the impact made by Supporting Communities staff in helping community organisations being projects into fruition• Identify potential funding opportunities

Seven Towers Berries and Blooms Community Allotment Scheme



The Seven Towers Community Association formed to empower local residents to have a say on the issues affecting them, to identify and prioritise needs, and to work co-operatively to effect positive social change. Since forming, the group have worked in partnership with local communities and statutory bodies to improve the quality of life for people living in an area of high multiple deprivation.

The Community Allotment project was developed from the results of the group's community survey which highlighted a lack of local services and facilities within the Ballee area.

The Association, in partnership with the Ballymena District Housing Executive and local Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership, secured funding and land to make improvements in their area. The result is an allotment scheme with raised vegetable and flower beds and individual allotment spaces for the community to use.

The Berries and Blooms Community Allotment Scheme programme aims to:

- Provide a Community Allotment Scheme for the Ballee area

- Provide inexpensive fruit and vegetables for the local community
- Provide skills for the local community in maintaining and growing fruit and veg
- Actively engage young people to take ownership of an allotment plot
- Encourage and develop a wildlife garden
- Improve the mental and physical wellbeing of the local residents

“This project has been a huge success to date and has enabled our group to maintain and develop existing relationships, while also engaging young people and members of the wider community.”

- Thomas Balmer, Chairperson of Seven Towers Community Association

The allotments have created an accessible door-to-door provision for healthy foods for the local community. Regular volunteers oversee and maintain the project.

The allotments are a great place to learn about food growing, cooking and eating fresh produce and are a great way to meet new people.

In the current economic climate, the local community wanted a provision that would allow the residents to grow produce which could then be used at home to combat the levels of deprivation in their area.

Another outcome of the allotment has been the provision of healthy eating classes. This initiative shows the local community how to use the produce they grow and to incorporate them into healthy meals. Users and volunteers have also had the opportunity to engage in horticultural classes.



"I am delighted to have attend the Launch of the Berries and Blooms Allotments and Community Hub. Supporting Communities have been working alongside the Seven Towers Community Association over the last year providing training and support and advice.

It is a pleasure to work with the diligent volunteers within the Seven Towers Community Association and to witness the impact that the group has made in their local community.

I am proud to support Seven Towers Community Association in Ballee and it is evident that the Spirit of Community is well and truly alive."

- Gillian Forrest Liaison Officer
Supporting Communities concluded

The group has secured funding from Awards for All to purchase the necessary equipment and tools for training required and volunteers and the group continues to work with our Funding Officer to source different funding steams for community activities and services.

Supporting Communities have been working closely with the group to provide help with good governance, committee skill training, the Charity Commission application process, estate inspections, financial management, developing an action plan, as well as any other advice or support as needed.

Connecting Cloughey

There are more than 5 million people over 65 in the UK who have never been online (Age UK). This is very worrying as the UK is moving to a 'digital by default' society. For those who didn't grow up with the internet/computers/tablets, the online world can sometimes be a daunting place or a place that they don't think they can join or that will be relevant to them. However, as the residents of Cloughey, found out this is far from true.

Supporting Communities digital champion training is offered to everyone regardless of age or ability. We aim to inspire people, help them gain basic skills, and signpost them to other local digital events. During our training sessions, the participants have free range on what they want to learn, with the hot topics usually being emails/downloading apps and shopping online.

Robin Holliday, a member of Portaferry Probus Club, made initial contact with our Digital Inclusion Officer to



organize something for his group. It was clear from the start that they were eager to learn! Six weeks of training has ensured that all the participants can now send an email, download an app, read books online, order photographs, and use social media, amongst other skills.

Digital skills are essential to ensure that the residents of Cloughey and other rural areas can stay connected.



“There are a significant number of people who own iPads and tablets who have not learned how to work them. The intimate classes encourage participants to build their confidence through contact with their tutor and develop friendships with other participants.”

- Robin Holliday, Cloughey

“Thank you so much for your help learning to use my iPad as a library; excuse the pun but what an eye opener, you are saving a rural pensioner pounds!

It's one thing having technology, but being able to exploit it is quite another. Your approach to all levels of learning in the class is so much appreciated.

Keep up the good work visiting people in rural areas and we hope to have another class with you again”

- Rosemary Matthews, Cloughey

If you are interested in getting involved in our Digital Inclusion programme contact our Digital Inclusion Officer, Stephanie McKillop via email: stef@supportingcommunities.org

Empowering Society

'D4C' Pilot Project Increases Access

Supporting Communities has recently launched an exciting new Digital Inclusion project called D4C (Digital for Community) with the Housing Executive and the Department of Finance. We are delivering digital skills training to four groups of Housing Executive tenants around Northern Ireland while the Housing Executive and the Department provide them with tablets and a broadband service to use for the length of the pilot.

Digital Inclusion means Everyone

The four groups are made up of all sorts of different people. We have people in their 20s mixing with folk in their 80's who both want to learn to email and Skype to keep in touch with far away family. We have parents who have come along to skill themselves up because their children need to use the internet for school. We have working age people looking to gain computer skills in order to get into work or find a better job. We have retired people curious and eager to keep up with changing technology. And everyone wants to find out how to save money by going online!

Whatever the reason, digital skills have become essential for everyone to



Aidan and Michelle get to grips with Gmail!

communicate and transact in the modern world.

Age is No Barrier

We have also teamed up once again with our friends at Breezie to kit out some of our more senior participants with tablets customised just for them to make getting online that bit easier.

Mary in North Belfast, shown below at home with her Breezie tablet, has got the hang of it already – no bother to her!



Impact

The project will last for 2 years giving us the time needed to make a significant impact in terms of developing digital skills, building confidence around using technology, and helping each participant meet his or her own learning goals.

Already the project has had a tangible impact by providing tablets and access to broadband in people's homes where there was none before. Having overcome this initial barrier to digital inclusion, we will see where the D4C groups go next as they become increasingly digitally included.

Watch this (cyber) space!

Working with Housing Associations

Supporting Communities has enjoyed a productive summer and autumn providing support, training and advice to Housing Association staff and tenants. The following is a snapshot of just some of the work we have been involved in...

Helm Housing

Making great strides in the implementation of their refreshed tenant engagement structure Helm Housing commissioned Supporting Communities to deliver training sessions to Helm staff and tenants involved in the newly established Area Panels and another session delivered to tenants who expressed an interest in getting involved in Scrutiny projects.

The Area Panel training concentrated on making clear the role and responsibilities of panel members as well as looking at how to hold effective meetings. The introduction to Scrutiny gave participants an overview of what is scrutiny and what is required to carry out a robust scrutiny exercise. Both sessions were well received, with terrific input from all participants.

Choice Housing

Working alongside staff from Choice Housing, Supporting Communities has been instrumental in assisting the Tenants Forum at both Regional and Central level to develop clear voting procedures within its proposed new engagement structure.

An information afternoon was held on Friday 4th November 2016 in Grosvenor House, Belfast with existing and new forum representatives. Following discussions around this very important area, a small working group has been set up to look at the options presented and fine tune the proposals for approval.



Tenant Engagement Workshop at Helm

“I enjoyed meeting and participating with staff from Helm Housing and listening to their views as well as the views of other tenant representatives”.

“I very much enjoyed this training course and feel that I have gained a lot from listening to everyone’s views and perspectives”.

“Trainers very enthusiastic and knowledgeable”.

Fold Housing

Over the last six months, Supporting Communities has engaged with tenants, panel members, and Fold Staff to develop a number of tenant involvement structure options as part of a major review of their tenant participation strategy.

A number of key focus groups were held in Belfast, Portadown, and the North West looking specifically at how Fold can engage better with all tenants, looking at the most appropriate approaches, the potential barriers, and how Fold they might be overcome, and most importantly the key areas where tenants would like more to be more involved.

The terrific ideas emanating from the focus sessions with tenants and staff along with analysis of a tenant survey will hopefully provide the direction for tenant engagement in the years ahead.

Oaklee Housing

It was with great delight that Sheenagh McNally visited Oaklee Housing in Dublin to attend the Tenants Forum

AGM and to give a talk on the benefits of Tenant Participation and hear about Oaklee Housing's ambitious plans to double their number of homes across Ireland from 650 to 1300. The Tenant Forum representatives displayed a great desire to work with their landlord to ensure the services provided are the best for all tenants.

Mystery Shopping

This continues to be a much sought after service, with Supporting Communities currently engaged in three separate exercises using a combination of Supporting Communities staff and tenants.

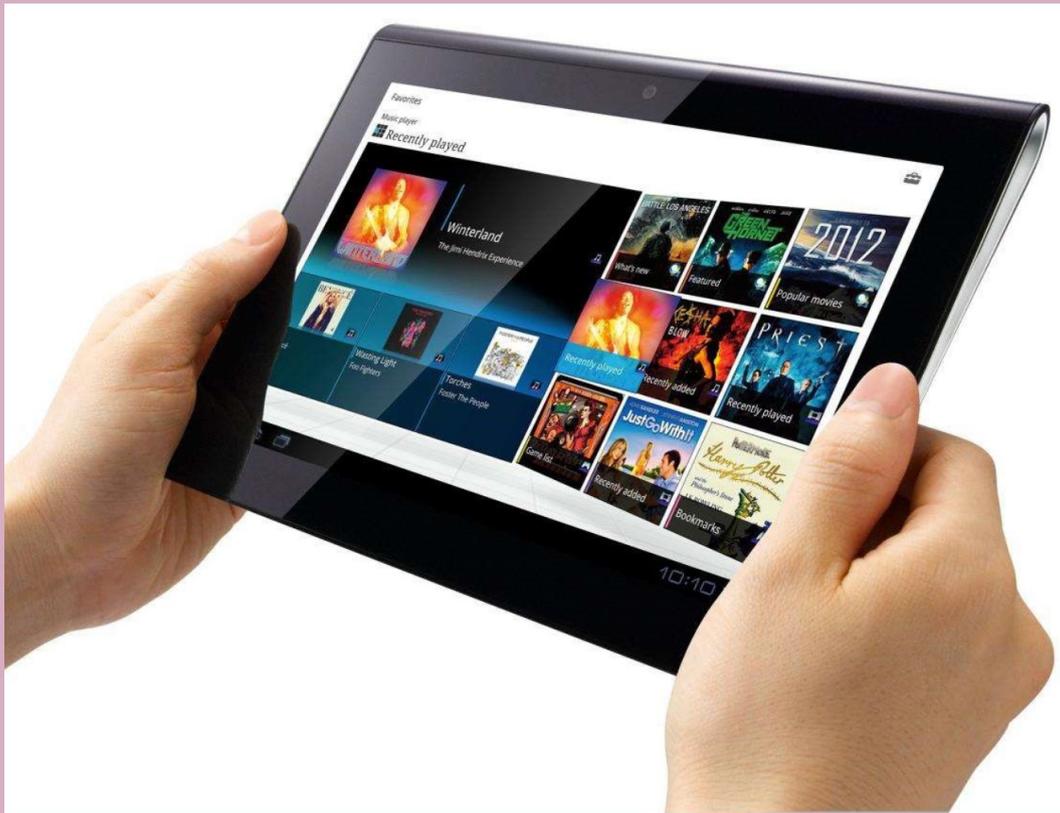
Along with our colleagues in NIFHA, we are looking at the possibility of benchmarking this work and anticipate piloting a few service area scenarios. This is very much in its infancy but we hope to explore the potential further.

For more information contact our
Housing Association Development Officer,
Sheenagh McNally
Tel: 028 3834 2792 or
email

sheenagh@supportingcommunities.org



Sheenagh McNally, Supporting Communities with delegates from Choice



FREE DIGITAL DROP IN SESSIONS IN YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY CENTRE

Would your community group benefit from 1-1 digital support sessions?

We are now taking bookings for 45min slots for individuals who want to learn more about their laptop or tablet device.

For more information-

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