



**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE HELD IN THE CHAMBER, MOSSLEY MILL
ON 13 OCTOBER 2025 6.30 PM**

In the Chair	:	Councillor S Wilson
Committee Members (In person)	:	Alderman S Ross Councillors – M Brady, R Lynch, H Magill, T McGrann and A O’Lone
Committee Members (Remote)	:	Councillors - P Dunlop, J Gilmour, M Ní Chonghaile, and M Stewart
Non-Committee Members	:	Councillor N Kelly
Officers Present	:	Director of Community Development – U Fay Head of Community Development – R McKenna Head of Arts, Culture, Tourism & Events – S Goldrick Head of Corporate Affairs – J McIntyre IT Systems Support Officer – Colin Bell Member Services Officer – C McGrandle Member Services Officer – L McDonald

CHAIRPERSON’S REMARKS

The Chairperson welcomed Members to the October meeting of the Community Development Committee and reminded all present of the audio recording procedures.

The Chairperson extended his sincere condolences to Alderman Cosgrove and Councillor Cosgrove at the recent passing of their mother, Joan.

1 APOLOGIES

Alderman J McGrath
Councillor J Burbank

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

3 ITEMS FOR DECISION

3.1 COMD/CD/006 COMMUNITY SUPPORT PROGRAMME 2025-2026

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to update Members on the Letter of Variance that had been received from the Department for Communities (DfC) for the Community Support Programme 2025/26.

2. Background

The Community Support Programme was established in 1975 and was a joint programme involving the Department for Communities (DfC) and local Councils. The programme supported the provision of community centres, local advice services, social supermarkets, resource centres, grants to community groups and the employment of community support staff in Councils.

3. Previous Decision of Council

It was reported at the September Community Development Committee that Council was awarded an allocation of £548,838.67 towards the delivery of the programme in 2025/26.

4. Community Support Programme 2025/26 – Integrated Advice Partnership Fund

Correspondence had been received from the DfC (circulated) confirming a revised award of additional financial assistance of £29,383.22 for the delivery of the Integrated Advice Partnership Funding for 2025/26 under the Council's Community Support Programme.

As a result, the DfC offer of financial assistance had increased from £548,838.67 to £578,221.89 for the delivery of the Council's Community Support Programme in 2025/26.

5. Summary

Council had received a revised offer for funding of £578,221.89 from the DfC for the costs associated with the Council's Community Support Programme for 2025/26.

The Letter of Variance offered an additional £29,383.22 in financial assistance which included additional Integrated Advice Partnership Funding for 2025/26.

Proposed by Alderman Ross
Seconded by Councillor Lynch and agreed that

the offer of additional financial assistance totalling £578,221.89 from the Department of Communities for the Community Support Programme 2025/26 be accepted.

ACTION BY: Jonathan Henderson, Community Services Co-ordinator

3.2 COMD/CD/011 THE KING'S AWARD FOR VOLUNTARY SERVICE 2026

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval in relation to the nomination of two voluntary groups for the King's Award for Voluntary Service in 2026.

2. Background

The King's Award for Voluntary Service was the highest accolade which could be given to volunteer groups within the UK to recognise the outstanding work being done in their communities. The award was created in 2002 as the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Her Majesty the Queen's Accession to the Throne. The Award changed to the King's Award in 2023, following the Coronation of King Charles III.

Any organisation that had been in existence for a minimum of three years and undertaking voluntary work within their local community, whether social, economic or environmental, could be nominated for this award. To be successful, groups must be volunteer led, well managed in terms of governance, financial management and safeguarding, be making a considerable difference to the lives of their beneficiaries and had an outstanding reputation locally.

Over the past three years, the following groups had been successful in receiving the award:

- All About Us – ASD Teens (2024)
- Queenspark Women's Group (2024)
- Monkstown Village Initiatives (2024)
- Randalstown Ulster Scots Cultural Society (2024)
- The Breakaways (2024)
- Mayfield Village Community Association (2023)
- Muckamore Parish Development Association (2023)
- River Bann and Lough Neagh Association (2022)

- Whiteabbey Community Group (2022)
- Monkstown Community Association (2022)

3. Previous Decision of Council

Approval for the nomination of two (2) groups for the 2025 King's Award for Voluntary Service was given by Council in October 2024. The two groups nominated were: Mallusk Community Action Group and Sensory Kids. The outcome of these nominations would be announced on Thursday 14 November 2025, the day of the King's Birthday.

It was approved at the January 2025 Community Development Committee that the Council limit King's Awards nominations by the Council to two Organisations per year.

4. 2026 Nominations

The deadline for nominations for the King's Award for Voluntary Service 2026 was Monday 1 December 2025 and Officers proposed that the following two community/voluntary groups be nominated:

The Community Relations Forum

The Community Relations Forum (CRF) in Antrim and Newtownabbey, a volunteer-led organisation dedicated to building inclusive, respectful communities through dialogue, education, and cultural engagement. Driven by a committed team of volunteers, CRF creates safe spaces for open conversations, delivers cross-community programmes, and organises events that celebrate diversity and promote mutual understanding. Their tireless voluntary efforts had had a lasting impact on community cohesion, making CRF a vital force for positive change in the Borough.

Moneyglass Community Centre Hall Committee

The Hall Committee managing Moneyglass Community Centre, a dedicated group of volunteers who managed the centre in a rural area with limited access to other community facilities. They work tirelessly to maintain the building, organise activities, and ensure the centre met the needs of local residents. Thanks to their commitment, the centre served as a vital hub for social, cultural, and recreational life, providing a welcoming space that bring the community together and helps combat rural isolation.

5. Financial Implication

There would be no cost to the Council to nominate the two groups, however, if the groups were successful in securing the award, it was proposed that celebration events, up to a maximum cost of £5,000 per group be organised and hosted by Council as in previous years. Provision for two celebration events would be included in the Community Development budget estimates for 2026/27.

6. Summary

It was proposed that the Community Relations Forum and Moneyglass Community Centre Hall Committee be nominated for the King's Award for Voluntary Service in 2026.

Proposed by Alderman Ross

Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

the Community Relations Forum and Moneyglass Community Centre Hall Committee be nominated for the King's Award for Voluntary Service in 2026.

ACTION BY: Jonathan Henderson, Community Services Co-ordinator

3.3 **AC/EV/025 BALLYCLARE MAY FAIR**

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for the minutes of the Ballyclare May Fair Working Group meeting of 10 September 2025 as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.

2. Background

The role of the Ballyclare May Fair Working Group was to promote, develop and organise the annual Ballyclare May Fair. The specific role of the May Fair Working Group was set out as follows:

- to advise the Council on the programme for the May Fair.
- to organise delivery of the May Fair.
- to promote participation in the May Fair by the Ballyclare community and wider Borough community.
- to explore opportunities for sponsorship and additional funding for the May Fair.
- to provide advocacy for the May Fair and achieve collaboration of a range of stakeholders into the design and delivery of the May Fair.
- to contribute expertise, skills and knowledge from a range of sectors to the benefit and continuous improvement of this annual event so that Ballyclare DEA achieved maximum benefit from its delivery.

The Working Group would meet monthly from September to June each year and report to the Community Development Committee. Membership would consist of all Ballyclare DEA Elected Members, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, and up to five non-elected voluntary members who were actively involved in the local community.

3. Previous Decision of the Council

The revised Working Group Terms of Reference were approved at the December 2023 Community Planning Committee. The minutes of the

previous meeting were approved at the May 2025 Community Development Committee meeting.

4. Working Group Meeting

The Ballyclare May Fair Working Group met on 10 September 2025 in Ballyclare Town Hall. The minutes of the meeting were circulated.

Proposed by Councillor Magill

Seconded by Alderman Ross and agreed that

the minutes of the Ballyclare May Fair Working Group meeting of 10 September 2025 be approved as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.

ACTION BY: Joanne Hamilton-Whyte, PA to Director of Community Development

3.4 **CP/CD/435 SOCIAL SUPERMARKET AND FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAMME 2025-2026**

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval to continue to deliver a Social Supermarket in the Borough in partnership with Community Advice Antrim and Newtownabbey and a Family Support Programme in partnership with Save the Children.

2. Introduction/Background

Social Supermarkets were community driven shops which support those living in food poverty. They supply low-cost food sourced from the charity FareShare NI and donations from local businesses. The aim of a Social Supermarket model was to offer a longer term and sustainable response to food insecurity by seeking to address the root causes of poverty rather than simply providing food.

The initial process to develop a Social Supermarket for the Borough commenced in June 2022 with a Consultant carrying out a feasibility study which included stakeholder engagement, focus groups, meetings with Elected Members and best practise visits with a view to designing a viable Social Supermarket model for the Borough.

3. Previous Decision of Council

It was reported at the September Community Development Committee that the Council was awarded an allocation from the Department of Communities (DfC) of £548,838.67 towards the delivery of the Community Support Programme in 2025/26. Financial assistance of up to £171,864.89 was allocated for the delivery of the Social Supermarket Programme.

It was agreed at the Community Development Committee in May 2024 that the continuation of programmes in partnership with Community Advice Antrim and Newtownabbey through Service Level Agreement to deliver a Social Supermarket in 2024/2025 including funding of £101,977. It was also agreed to continuing engagement with Save the Children to deliver the complimentary Family Support Programme in 2024/2025, including funding of £20,000 with match funding of £14,000 each being provided by both Save the Children and the Northern Health and Social Care Trust.

The interim Social Supermarket model opened in November 2022, and an update report was noted at the January 2023 Community Planning Committee.

4. Performance Review 2024/2025

The following statistics had been provided by CAAN and Save the Children in relation to the Social Supermarket and Family Support Programme in 2024/2025:

Social Supermarket (April 2024 to March 2025)

- 385 Adults, 176 Children, 321 Households supported through the SSM.
- £115,560 food vouchers allocated.
- 321 Benefit checks completed.
- 78 clients offered 1-1 tailored advice and support on Budgeting & Debt advice.
- 321 clients linked into other services.
- 90 Clients referred from 49 referral partners. In addition, clients are signposted to CAAN for SSM support.
- 83% of people accessing service felt they were better off in the longer term for the help they received.

Family Support Programme (April 2024 to March 2025)

- 119 families supported.
- 234 children supported.
- £45,385 of vouchers and early learning support packs provided.

5. Financial Position/Implication

The total budget for the 2025/26 Social Supermarket programme was £171,864.89 as provided for in the 2025/26 estimates, of which £15,187.29 would be utilised for administering this grant fund, and it was proposed that the remaining £156,678.41 to be allocated to CAAN and Save the Children for the delivery of the Social Supermarket and Family Support Programme in 2025/26.

6. Equality and/or Rural Screening Requirements

An Equality impact Assessment and Rural Needs Impact Assessment had been carried out to inform the DfC's allocation of 2025-26 funds.

As part of Council's responsibilities to identify and address potential Section 75 implications and promote equality of opportunity and good relations as required by the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Social Supermarket and Family Support Programmes had been subject to Section 75 Equality Screening and had been screened out for the need of an Equality Impact Assessment. Council carried out an Equality Screening on these programmes which was reported to Committee in June 2025.

In addition, the Rural Needs Act places a duty on public authorities and local Councils to have due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans and when designing and delivering public services. A Rural Needs screening exercise was carried out for the Social Supermarket and Family Support Programmes which was reported to Committee in June 2025.

5. Governance

Community Advice Antrim and Newtownabbey had been engaged through procurement of the Generalist Advice Contract, which includes provision for contract variations. Save the Children had previously been engaged through a Letter of Offer, which included funding conditions.

All funding awards are subject to satisfactory monitoring and evaluation.

6. Summary

Both the Social Supermarket and Family Support Programme had been very successful and provided significant support to families and individuals across the Borough during a time of need.

Given the performance review outcomes, it was proposed to continue both programmes in their current form as follows:

- Funding of £136,678.41 to be allocated to CAAN to deliver the Social Supermarket for the Borough in 2025/26.
- Funding of £20,000 to be allocated to Save the Children to continue to deliver the Family Support Programme in the Borough, with match funding from both Save the Children and the Northern Health and Social Care Trust anticipated as in the previous year.

Proposed by Councillor Lynch

Seconded by Councillor McGrann and agreed that

(a) the ongoing engagement of Community Advice Antrim and Newtownabbey to deliver a Social Supermarket in 2025/2026 including funding of £136,678.41 be approved.

(b) the ongoing engagement of Save the Children to deliver the complementary Family Support Programme in 2025/2026 including funding of £20,000 be approved.

ACTION BY: *Conor Cuning, DEA Engagement Manager*

3.5 AC/GEN/037 CULTURAL GRANT AID AND BURSARIES PROGRAMME

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for a Cultural Bursary award.

2. Introduction/Background

The aim of the Cultural Grant Aid and Bursaries programme was to provide support to constituted groups and individuals based in the Borough to participate in, develop and promote Cultural activities and projects. Funding would be available for projects which develop artistic talent and knowledge, showcase the arts and promote participation and inclusion, celebrate shared heritage, and contribute to the understanding of minority languages and cultural diversity.

Cultural groups could apply for grants for:

- Eligible costs involved in running a cultural event (with a maximum award of £1,000).
- Costs relating to the production of a cultural product e.g. a publication or an exhibition (with a maximum award of £500).
- Course fees for group members to attend an event or course or undertake training (with a maximum award of £500).

Individuals may apply for bursaries for:

- Costs relating to the production of a cultural product e.g. a publication or an exhibition (with a maximum award of £500).
- Contribution to costs associated with the attendance at cultural events, specialist training courses or study programmes relating to Arts or Heritage (with a maximum award of £500).

3. Previous Decision of Council

The Cultural Grant Aid and Bursaries Programme was approved by the Community Development Committee in February 2025.

4. Application for 2025/2026 Cultural Grant Aid and Bursaries Programme

One application had been received and assessed by officers under the appropriate funding category and maximum award available.

A summary of the application was set out below along with the proposed award:

Group / Individual Name	Funding Category	Funding Purpose	Proposed Amount Awarded
Linda McBurney	Contribution to costs associated with the attendance at cultural events, specialist training courses or study programmes relating to Arts or Heritage	<p>Linda was a local artist who lived in Parkgate, Ballyclare. She undertook a year-long printmaking and professional development project, to help advance her skills in etching and printmaking. This project would commence November 2025 and would last until December 2026. Council funding would directly support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist workshops at Belfast Print Workshop and Graphic Studio Dublin. • Research trip to London for study visits. • Professional photography training. • Materials <p>This grant would allow Linda to create a body of work suitable for exhibition submissions, residency applications, and collaboration as well as helping preserve and possibly extend the heritage of printmaking. Linda would share the outcomes with local audiences through exhibitions in ANBC galleries and digital platforms. Linda had previously exhibited her work in the Flax Gallery in Theatre at the Mill.</p>	£500

5. Financial Position

The budget available for the Cultural Grant Aid and Bursaries programme in 2025/2026 is £23,000. Thirty five (35) grants totalling £9,500 had previously been approved by the Community Development Committee. If the above application was approved, a balance of £13,000 would be left for the remainder of the year.

6. Summary

One Cultural Bursary application had been received for £500 to support a resident of the Borough to attend specialist workshops at Belfast Print Workshop and Graphic Studio Dublin and a research trip to London for study visits, professional photography training and materials.

Proposed by Councillor Lynch
Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

the bursary award for £500 be approved.

ACTION BY: Leeann Murray, Arts Development Officer

3.6 **AC/THB/008 FREE USE OF BALLYCLARE TOWN HALL**

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for the free use of Ballyclare Town Hall by the Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID) for the delivery of monthly Hearing Aid User Support Service sessions until December 2027.

2. Introduction/Background

The RNID, a national charity which support 18 million people in the UK who are deaf, had hearing loss or tinnitus by providing community-based audiology services and carrying out research into hearing loss and its treatment.

The RNID had been delivering monthly Hearing Aid User Support Service sessions with funding from the Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG) of the Department of Health in Ballyclare Town Hall and the Eyre Studio, Antrim Castle Gardens, since 2023. These public sessions had been well attended and had provided valuable support to residents of the Borough, with 553 people attending these sessions between July 2023 and May 2025. These sessions were only available in Northern Ireland.

Through these sessions the RNID provided:

- information on how to look after and fit hearing aids.
- re-tubing, ear mould cleaning and battery replacement
- hearing checks.
- information about coping with hearing loss, equipment and communication tips.
- talks on managing hearing loss and hearing health training.
- information about other services that can provide support.

3. Previous Decision of Council

Approval was given at the June 2023 Full Council meeting for the free use of Ballyclare Town Hall by RNID from June to December 2023.

Approval was given at the December 2023 Community Planning Committee meeting for the free use of the Eyre Studio, Antrim Castle Gardens, by RNID from January to December 2024.

Approval was given at the October 2024 Community Development Committee meeting for the free use of both the Eyre Studio and Ballyclare Town Hall by RNID from November 2024 to December 2025.

4. Request for Extension of Existing Free Use Approval

RNID had a contract with the Department of Health to deliver support for hearing aid users which runs until December 2027. The charity would like to extend the existing arrangement to hold monthly Hearing Aid User Support Service sessions in Ballyclare Town Hall, which runs until the end of this year, to December 2027. They do not wish to continue using the Eyre Studio after December 2025.

5. Financial Position/Implication

Each monthly Hearing Aid User Support Service session lasts for about 3 hours, and the community rate for hiring the town hall for this period of time would be £60. Over the course of a year this arrangement would equate to £720 in potential lost income.

There were no direct costs to the Council for facilitating these sessions.

6. Summary

The Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID) had requested an extension to the existing arrangement for them to have free use of Ballyclare Town Hall once a month for a three-hour Hearing Aid User Support Service session. The existing approval expires in December 2025, and the RNID would like to extend this until December 2027.

Proposed by Councillor Magill

Seconded by Alderman Ross and agreed that

the proposal to extend the free use of Ballyclare Town Hall for the Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID) to deliver monthly Hearing Aid User Support Service sessions until December 2027, be approved.

ACTION BY: Jenna Collier, Theatre Bookings and Events Manager

3.7 COMD/MCPR/001 MEDIA PROTOCOL

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for a Media Protocol which was intended to give clarity to Elected Members and officers on how the Council would deliver media relations.

2. Background and Introduction

The Marketing, Communications and PR Section of the Community Development Directorate are responsible for all aspects of managing media relations for the Council.

Council publicity was strictly controlled by provisions in the Local Government Act (NI) 1972. The Council attracted significant interest from all sections of the media and utilises media engagement to communicate, promote and seek publicity for all aspects of the Council's work.

A Media Protocol including an 'At a Glance Guide to Media Queries' had been developed in order to provide clarity to Elected Members and officers regarding all aspects of media relations in the context of the relevant legislation.

3. Media Protocol

The Media Protocol was circulated for Members' information. A Media Protocol ensures that all Council communications with the media are consistent, accurate and objective. It would protect Council's reputation, ensure compliance with legislation, prevent political bias and help build positive relationships with the media and residents.

The Protocol set out:

- Who can speak on behalf of the Council.
- How media queries, interviews and releases are managed.
- Rules on publicity, photo calls, social media and ministerial visits.
- A commitment to equality, diversity and impartiality.
- Arrangements which apply during elections.

4. Finance

There would be no financial implications arising from the development or implementation of the Media Protocol.

5. Governance

The Marketing, Communications and PR Section of the Community Development Directorate are responsible for the Media Protocol which would be kept under review with any updates or changes to be brought back to the Committee.

6. Summary

A Media Protocol which included an 'At a Glance Guide to Media Queries' had been developed to provide clarity for Elected Members and officers regarding all aspects of media relations. This ensured that all Council communications with the media were consistent, accurate and objective. It was proposed that the Media Protocol be implemented with immediate effect.

Proposed by Councillor Lynch
Seconded by Councillor O'Lone and agreed that

the Media Protocol be approved for immediate implementation.

ACTION BY: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Development

3.8 CP/CP/240 TRANSLINK REQUEST TO SUPPORT THEIR STUFF A BUS CAMPAIGN

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for participation in the Translink 2025 'Stuff a Bus' Campaign.

2. Background

Translink, a recognised Community Planning partner, would deliver their 'Stuff a Bus' campaign in partnership with Fareshare NI and media partners, Belfast Live and U105.

Research showed, one in six people across Northern Ireland were facing hunger, with increasing pressures from the ongoing cost-of-living crisis significantly affecting families and individuals.

Now entering its ninth year, the award-winning 'Stuff a Bus' initiative would provide vital support, ensuring no one in Northern Ireland faces hunger at Christmas.

The campaign had options for participation which included:

- Food donations.
- Staff-led monetary contributions.
- Financial support alongside existing charity commitments.

3. Stuff a Bus 2025

Correspondence had been received from Translink (circulated) inviting Council to participate and partner the 2025 'Stuff a Bus' campaign.

Translink had requested that Council participate in the 2025 campaign by providing food collection points in key areas for donations from Thursday 13 November 2025 to Thursday 18 December 2025. FareShare NI would supply

donation stations directly to each location and handle all logistics simplifying the process.

It was proposed that donations would be invited from Elected Members, members of the public and employees.

All donations collected would directly support local food banks, community groups, schools, and frontline charities throughout Northern Ireland via FareShare NI. The initiative aligned to the 'Food Support' pillar of the Council's Anti-Poverty Strategy, and the promotion of a holistic approach to food support across the Borough.

Media partnerships with U105 and Belfast Live offered opportunities for positive brand exposure through multiplatform promotions, media releases, social media features, and live broadcasts.

4. Financial implications

There would be no financial cost for the Council to participate in the 2025 'Stuff a Bus' campaign and FareShare NI would be responsible for logistical operation of food donation baskets and ensuring these are collected at appropriate times.

5. Governance

It was proposed that the 'Stuff a Bus' 2025 food donation baskets were placed at the reception areas in the following locations, with responsibility for these retained by FareShare NI:

- Mossley Mill
- Antrim Civic Centre
- Ballyclare Town Hall

Officers had liaised with the Mayor's Office and confirmed this arrangement does not conflict with the Mayor's official charities.

6. Summary

Translink had requested that Council participate in their annual 'Stuff a Bus' campaign, in partnership with FareShare NI as well as media partners Belfast Live and U105 by providing food collection points at Council venues.

The campaign would run from Thursday 13 November 2025 to Thursday 18 December 2025, with the logistical management of the proposed locations for the food donation points managed by FareShare NI.

Proposed by Councillor Lynch

Seconded by Councillor McGrann and agreed that

the request from Translink to participate in their Stuff a Bus 2025 Campaign be approved.

ACTION BY: Conor Cunning, DEA Engagement Manager and Stef Buchanan, Community Development Manager

3.9 COMD/CD/008 CHRISTMAS SWITCH ON EVENTS FUND GRANT AID RECOMMENDATIONS 2025

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval in relation to the Christmas Switch On Events Fund Grant Aid Recommendations 2025.

2. Background

As part of its Community Development Grant Aid Programme, Council operate a Christmas Events Fund to assist groups that may wish to develop and deliver Christmas Tree Switch On events in the absence of a Council installed tree and associated switch on ceremony.

3. Previous Decision of the Council

It was agreed at the Community Planning and Regeneration Committee in February 2018 to establish an annual Christmas Events Fund to assist groups who wish to deliver local Christmas Switch On events.

It was also agreed at the Community Development Committee in February 2025 to remove the match funding requirement of the programme and to increase the maximum award to £1,000.

4. Financial Implication

The total budget available for the 2025/26 Community Development Grant Aid Programme, including the Christmas Events Fund, was £14,000.

The Christmas Switch On Events Fund opened for applications on 1 July 2025 and closed on 14 August 2025. In total, 12 applications totalling £10,835 were received and assessed by a panel of Officers, all of which were recommended for funding, subject to the receipt of all relevant supporting documentation.

A detailed summary of the applications had been circulated for Members' information.

5. Section 75 Equality Screening

A Section 75 Equality Screening exercise, Rural Proofing and Data Processing Impact Assessment had been carried out in relation to the Grant Funding Policy.

6. Summary

The Christmas Switch On Events Fund opened for applications on 1 July 2025 and closed on 14 August 2025. It was proposed to award the 12 Christmas Events Fund Grants to the successful applicants as outlined, at a cost of £10,835, provision for which exists within the Community Development grant aid budget for 2025/26.

Proposed by Councillor Lynch
Seconded by Councillor McGrann and agreed that

the 12 Christmas Switch On Events Fund Grants requesting a total of £10,835 as outlined be approved.

ACTION BY: Jonathan Henderson, Community Services Co-ordinator

Councillor Ní Chonghaile joined the meeting remotely at this point.

3.10 **AC/HE/027 THE YANGTZE INCIDENT ON HMS AMETHYST IN 1949**

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for the erection of a plaque and information board in the vicinity of Macedon Point commemorating the eight sailors from Northern Ireland who served on board the HMS Amethyst during the Yangtze Incident in 1949.

2. Introduction/Background

HMS Amethyst was a ship of the British Royal Navy Far East Fleet in Hong Kong that was attacked as she made her way up the Yangtze River in China April 1949 during the Chinese civil war. Despite having a rite of passage, the Amethyst was attacked by the Communist forces of Mao Tse-Tung and many sailors were killed and injured. The ship grounded and the order to abandon ship was given. On board were eight sailors from Northern Ireland: James McClean, Samuel Bannister, Johnny Murphy, Raymond McCullough Snr, Alfred White, Hugh Haveron, James Johnston and John McCarthy.

Samuel Bannister was seriously injured with shrapnel wounds and, along with another sailor, was captured and taken prisoner. After 100 days, their release was negotiated and under cover of darkness HMS Amethyst eventually escaped in a daring exercise that goes down as one of the greatest escapes in Royal Navy history.

The film entitled 'The Yangtze Incident' was made during the 1950s and immortalised the episode.

3. Key Issues

The families of Samuel Bannister and Raymond McCullough had approached officers with a request to commemorate the role of the

Northern Irish sailors in the Yangtze Incident by erecting a plaque and an information board. The area around Macedon Point had been suggested as a suitable location for this.

4. Financial Position/Implication

The cost of producing and installing a memorial plaque and an information board would be approximately £1,500. This would be funded through existing Arts and Culture budgets.

5. Summary

Officers had been approached by the families of two of the Northern Irish sailors who served on board HMS Amethyst during the Yangtze Incident in 1949, requesting the erection of a plaque and information board in the vicinity of Macedon Point, Newtownabbey, to commemorate this historic event.

Proposed by Councillor Brady
Seconded by Councillor Magill and agreed that

the proposal to erect a plaque and information board in the vicinity of Macedon Point commemorating the eight sailors from Northern Ireland who served on board the HMS Amethyst during the Yangtze Incident in 1949 be approved.

ACTION BY: Philip Magennis, Culture and Events Co-ordinator

3.11 ED/ED/080/VOL4 COUNCIL EVENTS PLAN

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for the proposed Council events plan for 2025/2026.

2. Introduction/Background

The Arts, Culture, Tourism and Events team was responsible for the delivery of the Council's events programme, which included both directly managed events, and support for third-party events funded through the Council's Tourism Event Fund such as SuperCup NI and the Pipe Band Championships in the Borough. The programme of directly managed events includes annual highlights such as Enchanted Winter Garden and the Ballyclare May Fair, as well as one-off events such as the Tercentenary of the Old Courthouse (2026), VE Day 80th Anniversary (2025), Armed Forces Day (2024), the King's Coronation (2023) and the Queen's Platinum Jubilee (2022).

The annual events managed directly by the Arts, Culture, Tourism and Events team attract more than 185,000 attendees each year. The third-party events

supported by the Council account for thousands more visitors to the Borough and the economic benefits this brings.

3. Previous Decision of Council

The Council Events Plan would be brought to the Committee twice every year. The previous Council Events Plan update and associated costs to the Council were approved at the Community Development Committee in March 2025.

4. Council Events March 2025 to September 2025

Highlights of the events delivered since the last Committee report in March 2024 include:

- St Patrick's Day: In 2025 St Patrick's Day music, dancing and family fun events took place in Mossley Mill and Antrim Castle Gardens, achieving an overall satisfaction score of 86% and attracting more than 6,500 visitors across the two locations.
- VE Day 80th Anniversary: a three-day commemoration of the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe took place in early May, incorporated a Beating the Retreat performance at Mossley Mill, beacon lighting and flag raising ceremonies in Antrim Civic Centre, Antrim Castle Gardens and Mossley Mill, exhibitions focusing on the holocaust and World War II generally at Mossley Mill and Antrim Castle Gardens (opened by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland), and a VE Day-themed Party in the Park. These events attracted almost 4,000 people, with a customer satisfaction score of 100%.
- Ballyclare May Fair: the 2025 May Fair included new elements such as a football training day for local schools run in partnership with SuperCup NI and supported by the Manchester United Academy. Total footfall across the week (including amusements) was over 21,000.
- Garden Show Ireland: the 2025 Garden Show Ireland introduced a new Show Ambassador – renowned horticulturist and celebrity TV gardener David Domoney. David formally launched this year's Garden Show at a special event at the Old Courthouse Theatre on the evening of 3 April, mentored 40 community groups who competed to design a wheelbarrow garden for the show, and delivered a stunning Garden in Glass exhibition at the show. For the second consecutive year heavy rain throughout the 3-day event depleted audience numbers, which were down 53% compared to 2023 because of the weather.

5. Council Events October 2025-December 2026

Details of the proposed events to be delivered in the remainder of 2025 and throughout 2026 are circulated for Members' information. Members are asked to note the following points in particular:

- Enchanted Winter Garden: approval was given at the March 2025 Committee to expand the duration of this flagship event until 30 December, and 30,000 tickets had already been sold. Following the event, attendance data from the additional nights would be analysed and a proposal for 2026 dates would be brought to the Committee in March 2026.
- St Patrick's Day: approval was given at the March 2025 Committee to increase the budget for St Patrick's Day to £25,000. In 2026 events which draw on both Irish and Ulster-Scots traditions, would form part of a four-week 'festival of land, story and song' relating to shared cultural traditions that had been handed down through generations, as well as a St. Patrick's Day-themed Park Run and family fun day in Antrim Castle Gardens, and a concert at the Theatre at the Mill.
- Borough Summer Festival: as noted above, consecutive years of very poor weather had resulted in a drop of 53% in attendance figures for Garden Show Ireland. To reduce risk, increase attendance and deliver the best possible value for money, it was proposed that a three-week Borough Summer Festival was trialled in place of Garden Show Ireland in June/July 2026. This festival, which would be largely undercover in a giant marquee in Antrim Castle Gardens, would be made up of a wide variety of events and entertainment, including a Home and Garden Show, a Beer Festival, a Photography Festival, an Over-30s Disco, concerts and comedy nights. Through economies of scale related to event infrastructure, this entire festival would be delivered for the same budget as Garden Show Ireland. Following feedback from Members, the gardens would remain open to the public throughout the festival period with the exception of the Events Field, car park and Parterre.
- Old Courthouse Tercentenary: 2026 marks the 300th anniversary of the Antrim Old Courthouse. To celebrate this, a weekend of talks, tours and historical re-enactments of court cases from throughout history would take place across the European Heritage Open Day weekend in September as part of the PEACEPLUS Our Historic Borough programme. In advance of this, the building would be repainted and further heritage information would be installed around the courthouse.

6. Finance/Governance

The proposed Council Events Plan for 2025/26 includes dates, ticket fees (where applicable) and estimated costs. Provision for these events had been made in the 2025/26 budget estimates and would be included in the 2026/27 budget estimates.

7. Summary

The Council delivers a range of events year-round and across the Borough as well as hosting and supporting a number of events delivered by external event organisers. An update on the plan would be brought to the

Committee twice a year. Officers would continue to keep the Events Plan under review.

Proposed by Councillor O'Lone
Seconded by Councillor Lynch and agreed that

the Council Events Plan for 2025/26, including dates, ticket fees and estimated budgets, be approved.

ACTION BY: Simon Goldrick, Head of Arts, Culture, Tourism and Events

3.12 COMD/CD/009 CHRISTMAS FESTIVITY PROGRAMME 2025

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to update Members in relation to the delivery of the 2025 Christmas Festivity Programme.

2. Background

Since November 2018, the Council had been delivering Christmas Lights Switch On Events in each District Electoral Area across the Borough.

The programme at each event encompasses a range of family entertainment to include: Christmas Fun Rides, Meet Santa, Street Entertainment, Festive Food Stalls, Arts and Crafts and a short programme of Christmas Readings, Carols and Music following which the Mayor accompanied by the Schools Competition Winner and Santa switch on the Christmas Tree Lights.

Local School Choirs, Traditional Music Groups, Dance Academies and other local artists participate in the programme the theme for which changes on an annual basis.

3. Previous Decision of Council

It was agreed at the September Council meeting that the delivery of 7 Christmas Light Switch On Events be maintained, with a review to be undertaken by a sub-group or working group in January/ February 2026 to reassess the approach for the 2026 programme. It was also agreed that the live streaming of each event be discontinued.

4. 2025 Switch Ons

The programme this year would follow a keeping children safe online theme of "Santa Goes Digital."

All 7 events would be delivered over the period Thursday 20 November – Saturday 29 November 2025 as detailed in the table below:

DEA	Date & Time
Airport Crumlin Leisure Centre	Thursday 20 November 2025, 6.00pm - 7.30pm
Dunsilly Randalstown - John Street Car Park	Friday 21 November 2025, 6.00pm - 7.30pm
Antrim Railway Street Car Park	Saturday 22 November 2025, 4.30pm - 6.00pm
Threemilewater Jordanstown Road/Devenish Drive	Wednesday 26 November 2025, 6.00pm - 7.30pm
Glengormley Urban Lilian Bland Park	Thursday 27 November 2025, 6.00pm - 7.30pm
Macedon V36, Valley Leisure Centre	Friday 28 November 2025, 6.00pm - 7.30pm
Ballyclare The Square Car Park	Saturday 29 November 2025, 4.30pm - 6.00pm

- Times would facilitate traffic management arrangements and ensure young families can enjoy the full experience of the events.
- A Christmas Tree would be located in each of the seven areas.
- The switching on of the Christmas Lights would once again take place at the mid-point of the programme as opposed to the end to facilitate those attending with very young children.
- A programme of family fun entertainment to include: A Children's Pantomime, Live Festive Music, Carols, Switching on of the Christmas Tree Lights, Fun Fair Rides, Festive Food Stalls, Arts and Crafts Activities, a Festive photo opportunity with Santa inside his Magical Snow Globe, and Street Entertainment would be delivered in each DEA.
- On the advice of the PSNI the venue for the Macedon Switch On Event would be relocated from Hazelbank Park to V36 at the Valley. As V36 was a purpose-built event space, it would ensure access, parking and health safety concerns are alleviated whilst providing more space for the increase in numbers attending.
- Officers would once again encourage local businesses to open during the events however there had been limited take up of this opportunity in the past.

All events would be advertised and promoted through an electronic and direct marketing campaign to encourage residents' participation.

5. Elected Member Working Group

It was proposed to establish a cross party Elected Member Working Group to commence meeting in January 2026 to reassess the approach to these events for 2026. Group Leaders would be asked to nominate one member per political party.

6. Financial Implication

Provision of £100,000 for the 2025 Christmas Festivity Programme, The Spirit of Christmas Awards and £15,000 for the Christmas Celebration Events Fund had been included in the 2025/26 Community Development budgets.

7. Summary

Seven Christmas Lights Switch On events, one in each DEA across the Borough, would take place from Thursday 20 to Saturday 29 November 2025. The programme theme "Santa Goes Digital" would support keeping children safe online.

A sub-group or working group would be established in early 2026 to reassess the approach for the 2026 programme.

Proposed by Councillor Lynch
Seconded by Alderman Ross and agreed that

the 2025 Christmas Festivity Programme be noted and that Group Leaders nominate one representative per political party to participate in the Elected member Working Group.

ACTION BY: Jonathan Henderson, Community Services Co-ordinator

3.13 **AC/THB/008 FREE USE OF THE MASSEREENE ROOM, ANTRIM CASTLE GARDENS**

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for the free use of the Massereene Room, Antrim Castle Gardens by Impact Network NI for the delivery of a two-day Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training event with the PSNI in November 2025.

2. Introduction/Background

Impact Network NI, a registered charity based in Randalstown, provided community development support to communities across Northern Ireland to improve health and wellbeing, mental health and health inequalities. Impact Network NI responds to the key issues which impact on the lives of local people and communities and was committed to tackling the impact of poverty and economic crisis in communities through commitment to suicide prevention and addressing the determinants of suicide.

3. Previous Decision of Council

Approval was given at the June 2025 Committee meeting for a proposal to bring all free use requests to Committee for decision.

4. Request for Free Use

Impact Network NI had approached officers requesting the free use of the Massereene Room, Antrim Castle Gardens on 11 and 12 November to deliver an Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training event with the PSNI. This internationally recognised training program empowers participants to recognise signs of suicidal thoughts and intervene effectively, equipping them with practical tools to support those at risk. By doing so, it not only enhances individual confidence and competence but also strengthens the overall capacity of the community to respond to mental health crises.

The event also actively promotes equality and addresses disadvantage by focusing on mental health - an area often stigmatized or under-resourced, particularly within marginalized or vulnerable groups. By training a diverse group of 16–20 participants, the charity aims to create a more informed, compassionate, and supportive community where help was accessible to all, regardless of background.

This initiative directly contributes to building a safer, more inclusive society where mental wellbeing was prioritized and valued.

5. Financial Position/Implication

The daily community rate for hiring the Massereene Room was £135, and the potential lost income for the requested days would be £270.

There would be no direct cost to Council for facilitating these sessions.

6. Summary

Impact Network NI had requested the free use of the Massereene Room, Antrim Castle Gardens on 11 and 12 November for the delivery of a two-day Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training event with the PSNI.

Proposed by Councillor Gilmour
Seconded by Councillor McGrann and agreed that

the request for Impact Network NI to had free use of the Massereene Room on 11 and 12 November for the delivery of an Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training event with the PSNI be approved.

ACTION BY: Jenna Collier, Theatre Bookings and Events Manager

4 ITEMS FOR NOTING

4.1 COMD/GR/006 ULSTER-SCOTCH LEID WEEK 2025

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to update Members about Ulster-Scotch Leid Week 2025.

2. Introduction/Background

Ulster-Scotch Leid Week (Ulster-Scots Language Week) was an annual event that had been run by the Ulster-Scots Agency since 2019. The event celebrates the Ulster-Scots language, history, and culture through a diverse and engaging public programme that included interactive language workshops, storytelling sessions, community events, and exhibitions. This year Leid Week would take place from 24-28 November.

The Council had participated in Leid week annually since 2019 and plans to take part in this year's event are included in the Good Relations Cultural Awareness Programme alongside similar plans to deliver events showcasing the Irish Language during the Seachtain na Gaeilge le Energia festival.

In previous years, the Council had participated in Leid Week by offering walking tours of the Whitehouse, Antrim, and Ballyclare, as well as music, poetry, history, and language workshops for people of all ages. It was anticipated a broader programme would be developed for this year's Leid Week, to incorporate increased language learning opportunities and engagement with children and young people.

3. Previous Decision of Council

The Council's Good Relations Programme 2025/26 Action Plan, including a commitment to participate in the 2025 Ulster-Scotch Leid Week, was approved at the May 2025 Community Development Committee.

4. Leid Week

It was proposed that The Council's Good Relations Team would deliver activities across the Borough to include:

- Leid Week Opening Event and launch of 'Yarns' Poetry book in partnership with the Ulster Scots Agency.
- OCN Level 1 training in Ulster Scots Awareness- certification would be presented at opening event.
- Children and Young People's workshops focused on language and heritage.
- History, language, and poetry workshops.

Officers were now engaging with the Agency to develop and finalise plans.

5. Financial Position/Implication

The budget for the 2025 Ulster-Scotch Leid Week was £2,000. This had been allocated from the 2025/26 Good Relations budget. Officers had secured an additional £1,250 grant from the Ulster Scots Agency to support programme delivery.

6. Summary

The 2025 Ulster-Scotch Leid Week would take place from 24-28 November. As in previous years, the Good Relations team would work with the Ulster-Scots Agency to develop a programme of events celebrating the Ulster-Scots language, history, and culture.

Proposed by Alderman Ross
Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

4.2 **CP/TD/107 DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES FUNDING – AREAS AT RISK 2025-2026**

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to update Members on the offer of Areas at Risk funding from the Department for Communities.

2. Introduction/Background

The Areas at Risk (AAR) programme was delivered across six Super Output Areas in Antrim and Newtownabbey. Historically the Newtownabbey AAR programme was part funded by the Department for Communities (DfC), whilst the Antrim AAR programme was fully funded by the Council.

A budget of £229,250 was included in the 2025/26 Community Planning budgets with £66,750 contribution anticipated from the Department for Communities (DfC).

3. Previous Decision of Council

It was reported to the April 2025 Community Development Committee that in the absence of the 2025-26 budget settlement interim funding awards for the DfC programmes to the end June 2025 would be retained at 2024/25 levels inclusive of the 5% uplift awarded in 2024/25.

Funding was to be issued for the first quarter of 2025/26 up to the end of June with confirmation of the 2025/26 budget position anticipated in the near future.

It was agreed that an update on the DfC current budget position be communicated to those groups and organisations anticipating funding from the Department in 2025/26.

4. Letter of Offer

Correspondence had been received from DfC (circulated) confirming that

the Council would be offered Area at Risk Programme funding of £76,395.38 for 2025/26.

An additional non-recurrent flexible funding award of £9,645.38 had been added to the anticipated £66,750 contribution.

This offer of funding had been accepted by the Departments deadline of 26 July 2025.

5. Financial Position/Implication

The additional flexible funding award of £9,645.38 would be made to the organisations funded in part through DfC, the breakdown of which was contained with the Letter of Offer.

6. Equality and/or Rural Screening Requirements

An Equality impact Assessment and Rural Needs Impact Assessment had been carried out to inform the Department's allocation of 2025-26 funds.

As part of Council's responsibilities to identify and address potential Section 75 implications and promote equality of opportunity and good relations as required by the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Areas at Risk Programme had been subject to Section 75 Equality Screening and had been screened out for the need of an Equality Impact Assessment. Council carried out an Equality Screening on this Funding which was reported to Committee in June 2025.

7. Governance

Council would continue to contract manage Areas at Risk Funding including bi-annual reporting and the monitoring of the programme to the Department for Communities, as per conditions set out in the Letter of Offer.

8. Summary

Council had received an offer of funding of £76,395.38 which was an increase of £9,645.38, from DfC for the costs associated with the Areas at Risk Programme, for the period of 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.

Proposed by Councillor Lynch
Seconded by Councillor Gilmour and agreed that

the update on the offer of Areas at Risk Programme funding 2025-2026 from the Department for Communities be noted.

NO ACTION

4.3 DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES FUNDING – NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL 2025-2026

COMD/TD/006 GRANGE NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL
COMD/TD/003 RATHCOOLE NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to update Members on the offer of Neighbourhood Renewal Programme funding from the Department for Communities.

2. Introduction/Background

In June 2003, the Neighbourhood Renewal – People and Place Programme was launched. Neighbourhoods in the most deprived 10% of wards across Northern Ireland were identified using the Noble Multiple Deprivation Measure. Following extensive consultation, this resulted in a total of 36 areas, and a population of approximately 280,000 (one person in 6 in Northern Ireland), being targeted for intervention.

Neighbourhood Partnerships had been established in each Neighbourhood Renewal Area as a vehicle for local planning and implementation. Each Neighbourhood Partnership had included representatives of key political, statutory, voluntary, community and private sector stakeholders. Together, they had developed long term visions and action plans designed to improve the quality of life for those living in the area.

There were two Neighbourhood Partnerships in the Borough, namely Grange and Rathcoole Neighbourhood Partnerships.

3. Previous Decision of Council

It was reported to the April 2025 Community Development Committee that, in the absence of the 2025-26 budget settlement, interim funding awards for the DfC programmes to the end June 2025 would be retained at 2024/25 levels inclusive of the 5% uplift awarded in 2024/25.

Funding was to be issued for the first quarter of 2025/26, to the end of June, with confirmation of the 2025/26 budget position anticipated soon.

It was further agreed that an update on the DfC current budget position be communicated to those groups and organisations, anticipating funding from the Department in 2025/26.

4. Letter of Offer

Correspondence had been received from DfC (circulated) confirming financial assistance totalling £117,315.64 for the delivery of the Grange and Rathcoole Neighbourhood Renewal Programmes for 2025/26.

The funding awarded included £27,858.56 for the Grange Neighbourhood Partnership and £89,457.08 for the Rathcoole Neighbourhood Partnership. This offer of funding had been accepted by the Departments deadline of 26 July 2025.

5. Financial Position/Implication

The £27,858.56 offer of funding for Grange Neighbourhood Partnership was a £1,955.28 increase on the £25,903.28 funding received in 2024-25 for the delivery of the Grange Neighbourhood Renewal Programme. An additional non-recurrent flexible funding award had been included within the Grange Neighbourhood Renewal programme of £1,955.28.

The offer of funding to Rathcoole Neighbourhood Renewal programme would increase from £83,174.95 awarded in 2024/25 to £89,457.08 with an additional non-recurrent flexible funding award of £6,282.13.

6. Equality and/or Rural Screening Requirements

An Equality impact Assessment and Rural Needs Impact Assessment had been carried out to inform the Department's allocation of 2025-26 funds.

7. Governance

Grange Neighbourhood Renewal

The partnership was formally established in April 2006 under funding from the Department for Communities as an inter-sectoral partnership, tasked with driving the delivery of the Neighbourhood Renewal strategy in Grange, Ballyclare.

Rathcoole Neighbourhood Renewal

The partnership was formally established in April 2006 under funding from the Department for Communities as an inter-sectoral partnership, tasked with driving the delivery of the Neighbourhood Renewal strategy in Rathcoole, Macedon.

The Council would continue to contract manage Neighbourhood Renewal programmes including the reporting and the monitoring of the programme to the Department for Communities, as per conditions set out in the Letter of Offer.

8. Summary

The Council had received offers of funding from DfC for the costs associated with the Grange £27,858.56 and Rathcoole £89,457.08 Neighbourhood Renewal Programmes, for the period of 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.

Proposed by Councillor Lynch

Seconded by Councillor Magill and agreed that

the update on the offer of Neighbourhood Renewal Programme funding

2025-2026 from the Department for Communities be noted.

NO ACTION

4.4 AC/EV/015 THE MRS JOAN CHRISTIE CVO, OBE LEGACY BURSARY SCHEME 2025

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to update Members on the Mrs Joan Christie CVO, OBE Legacy Bursary Scheme 2025.

2. Introduction/Background

The Mrs Joan Christie CVO, OBE Legacy Bursary Scheme was created in 2019 in recognition of the significant work carried out by Mrs Christie during her time as Lord Lieutenant for County Antrim. Each year, the scheme aims to award:

- Four bursaries of £1,000 to talented young musicians from the Borough to help further their career.
- Two bursaries of £1,000 to young volunteers who play an active role in a group in the Borough.
- Two bursaries of £1,000 to the groups in which the young people volunteer.
- Two bursaries of £1,000 to schools in the Borough for horticulture projects designed for pupils with additional needs.

Following an initial shortlisting process carried out by officers, applicants would be assessed by a panel made up of an Elected Member from each political party and chaired by Mrs Christie's daughter, Harriet Roberts. The awards would be presented at a lunch event at the Theatre at the Mill.

3. Previous Decision of Council

The 2025 Mrs Joan Christie CVO, OBE Legacy Bursary Scheme was approved at the February 2025 Community Development Committee meeting.

4. The Mrs Joan Christie CVO, OBE Legacy Bursary Scheme 2025

Applications for the 2025 Bursary Scheme opened at the start of June and closed at the end of August. Twelve applications were received for music bursaries, 2 for volunteering bursaries, and 7 for horticultural bursaries. Following initial shortlisting by officers, the assessment panel met shortlisted applicants at the Theatre at the Mill on 22 September 2025.

Recipients of Mrs Joan Christie CVO, OBE Legacy Bursaries would be announced at a lunchtime event on 3 November 2025 at the Theatre at the Mill.

5. Financial Position/Implication

The budget for the Mrs Joan Christie CVO, OBE Legacy Bursary Scheme 2025 is £10,000 for the bursaries, with a further hospitality budget of approximately £1,000 for the awards lunch. Provision for this had been made in the 2025/26 Arts and Culture budget.

6. Summary

The Mrs Joan Christie CVO, OBE Legacy Bursary Scheme 2025 received 21 applications, and the assessment panel met on 22 September to agree award recipients. Awards would be presented at a lunchtime ceremony on 3 November 2025.

Proposed by Councillor Gilmour
Seconded by Alderman Ross and agreed that

the update on The Mrs Joan Christie CVO, OBE Legacy Bursary Scheme 2025 be noted.

NO ACTION

5 **ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS**

There was no Any Other Relevant Business raised.

PROPOSAL TO PROCEED 'IN CONFIDENCE'

Proposed by Councillor Lynch
Seconded by Councillor O'Lone and agreed that

the following Committee business be taken In Confidence and the livestream and audio recording would cease.

6 **ITEMS IN CONFIDENCE**

6.1 **IN CONFIDENCE AC/TOU/010 CLOTWORTHY ICE CREAM PARLOUR**

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for the Project Initiation Document (PID) for a proposed Clotworthy Ice Cream Parlour capital project.

2. Introduction/Background

The gift shop at Clotworthy House in Antrim Castle Gardens was created as part of the 2011 restoration project, and stocks a wide range of local artisan crafts, home and garden gifts, and souvenirs. The shop forms part of the Clotworthy courtyard along with a café and the Garden Heritage Room and was open all year round. The shop was managed by Council staff.

3. Key issues

Over the last two full financial years the cost of operating the shop had been £39,936 in 2024/25 and £21,852 in 2023/24.

To provide a better service to visitors and to generate a new income stream for the Council, it was proposed to convert the shop into an ice cream parlour, which would also sell a range of unique branded Antrim Castle Gardens and other tourism merchandise.

The parlour would be run by the catering contractor operating the Clotworthy café, with an annual fee and/or percentage of sales paid to the Council. The catering contractor would also sell branded merchandise on behalf of the Council.

The ice cream parlour would offer a wide range of high-quality ice creams and hot and cold drinks (with a greater emphasis on hot chocolate etc during the winter months). The parlour would complement and share outdoor seating with the existing courtyard café and would incorporate bench seating with overflow seating in the Garden Heritage Room, which would be fitted out with new furniture and lighting as part of the project.

4. Finance

The estimated cost of the project had been identified by the Capital team as [REDACTED] (+/- 20%) with the cost of the project funded by capital financing over 15 years. It was anticipated that the ice cream parlour would generate revenue for the Council of approximately £35,000 per annum from merchandise sales and commission, representing an overall budgetary improvement of more than £60,000 for the Council compared to 2024/25.

A detailed Project Initiation Document (PID) was circulated for Members' information. If approved, this project would proceed to Stage 1 of the capital projects approval process, leading to the development of an Outline Business Case (OBC).

5. Governance

If the PID was approved, this project would be subject to Council's capital approval process before work would commence.

6. Summary

The Clotworthy gift shop was operating at an annual deficit, which in 2024/25 was £39,936. To provide a better service to visitors and to generate a new income stream for the Council, it was proposed to convert the shop into an ice cream parlour which would also sell a range of unique branded Antrim Castle Gardens merchandise. The cost of converting the shop into an ice cream parlour would be approximately £[REDACTED] which would be capitalised over 15 years, and it was anticipated that Council would generate approximately £35,000 per year in revenue. This would represent

an overall budgetary improvement of more than £60,000 for the Council compared to 2024/25.

The Director of Community Development provided assurance that the current estimated costs would be further refined during the preparation of the outline business case which would be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee.

Proposed by Councillor Lynch
Seconded by Alderman Ross and agreed that

the Project Initiation Document for the proposed Clotworthy Ice Cream Parlour capital project be approved.

ACTION BY: Simon Goldrick, Head of Arts, Culture, Tourism and Events

6.2 IN CONFIDENCE CP/CP/240 ANTI-POVERTY STEERING GROUP

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for the draft minutes of the Anti-Poverty Steering Group meeting held on 30 September 2025 as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting and agreement in principle to partner with the National Children's Bureau in relation to their Local Voices, National Change Project and application to the National Lottery Community Fund for this project.

2. Introduction/Background

The issue of poverty and its impact on the life choices of citizens had always been of concern to the Council, however the cost-of-living crisis which followed the COVID 19 pandemic sharply increased focus on the issue of poverty and how to provide practical support to address this challenge.

3. Previous Council decision

It was approved at the Council Meeting in January 2024 that a cross-party steering group be established to develop a coordinated, comprehensive Anti-Poverty Strategy for the Borough.

The establishment of the Anti-Poverty Steering Group aimed to develop an Anti-Poverty Strategy creating a single guiding strategic framework that would provide, but not be limited to:

- Agency for residents
- Fostering of economic empowerment
- Maximising stakeholder partnership opportunities
- Enhancing social inclusion
- Improved access to essential services for residents

The Anti-Poverty Strategy 2024-30 was approved at the November 2024 Community Development Committee.

4. National Children's Bureau Local Voices, National Change Project

The National Children's Bureau (NCB) provided a presentation at the Anti-Poverty Steering Group meeting seeking the Councils support to be listed as a named partner for a 5-year funding proposal to The National Lottery Community Fund for their Local Voices, National Change Project.

The project aims to engage young people who had lived experience of poverty. These young people would be up skilled and developed to act as a voice for change, a copy of the project specification was circulated for Members' information.

There was no request for any financial contribution from the Council. If the project was successful in its funding application, then a partnership agreement between Council and the project consortium would be drawn up and brought to a future meeting for approval.

5. Governance

The Steering Group of Elected Members and Officers had been meeting since the Group was established and had focused their work on the development of an Anti-Poverty Strategy for the period 2024 to 2030 to support the Councils Corporate Strategy and Community Plan.

The Group met on 30 September 2025 and a copy of the minutes were circulated for Members' information.

The Group would continue to meet quarterly with Officers to report progress of the Strategy at the quarterly meetings.

6. Summary

Following a Motion to the Council in January 2024 an Anti-Poverty Steering Group was established. The Group had agreed an Anti-Poverty Strategy for the Borough for 2024-2030, which would ensure a collective focus on this priority issue and support delivery of the Corporate Strategy and Community Plan.

The minutes of the Steering Group meeting held on 30 September were provided for Members' approval.

The National Children's Bureau were leading a project consortium on a funding application to The National Lottery Community Fund for their Local Voices, National Change Project and had requested that the Council indicate in principle if it would agree to being a Partner of the project. The project aimed to engage young people who had lived experience of poverty, to act as a voice for change. There was no request for any financial contribution from the Council with any partnership agreement to

be brought back to a future meeting of the Community Development Committee for approval.

In response to a question from a Member, the Director of Community Development advised that the report was in confidence due to the confidential nature of the information relating to the funding proposal contained within the enclosure.

Proposed by Councillor Gilmour

Seconded by Councillor Ní Chonghaile and agreed that

(a) the draft minutes of the Anti-Poverty Steering Group meeting held on 30 September 2025 be approved as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.

(b) an agreement in principle to be a partner with The National Children's Bureau in relation to their Local Voices National Change Project application to The National Lottery Community Fund, be approved, with any partnership agreement to be brought back to a future meeting of the Community Development Committee.

ACTION BY: Conor Cuning DEA Engagement Manager

PROPOSAL TO PROCEED OUT OF 'IN CONFIDENCE'

Proposed by Councillor McGrann

Seconded by Councillor Lynch and agreed that

the remainder of Committee business be taken in Open Session.

The Chairperson advised that audio-recording would recommence at this point.

There being no further Committee business, the Chairperson thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting concluded at 6.51 pm.

MAYOR

Council Minutes have been redacted in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation, and legal advice.