

Rural Matters

Spring 2019

Focus On

Agewell Partnership in Mid Ulster
Preventing Homelessness
Rural Community Award Winners
Banking Scam Update
Learmount Dementia Friendly Hub
Identifying Rural Housing Need

Housing
Executive

Welcome to the Spring 2019 edition of our Rural Matters magazine

Throughout 2018/19, we have continued to engage with tenants, residents and community groups in rural areas across NI to deliver a range of our services and programmes.

This year, the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 has come into effect. We have taken this on as an opportunity to renew our commitment to rural communities by ensuring that we fully consider rural needs when developing our policies and strategies and when delivering our housing functions. We are confident that this will help us to improve further our understanding of those issues which can impact on people living in rural areas and ensure that rural areas receive an equitable share of our resources.

In this edition, we have included a feature on the Agewell Partnership in Mid Ulster on page 3 where we have provided funding for the invaluable 'Good Morning' telephone call service which provides reassurance to elderly and vulnerable people in the area. In Learmount we have supported the community in the development of their Dementia Friendly Hub (page 10).

On pages 4 & 5 we focus on Homelessness Awareness Week which took place in December 2018.

Last year, we launched our 2018 Rural Community Awards at the Balmoral Show and were overwhelmed by the response.

A total of 32 applications were received for the 6 awards. These applications were from community groups who have really made a difference for people living in their

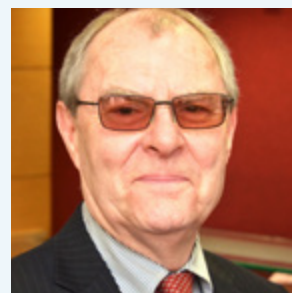
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rural areas. Read about the winners of the competition and the projects which most impressed our judging panel on pages 6-7.

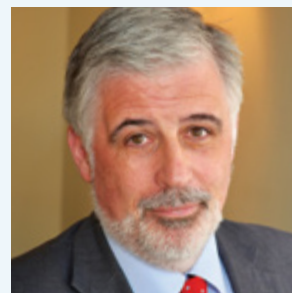
On page 9, we have included some useful contact information from Ulster Bank who are keen to raise awareness of how to bank safely online. Hopefully this will help you avoid frauds and scams which are a very real concern for those who are isolated and depend on these digital services.

Finally, on page 11 you can learn more about our rural housing need testing programme. You may wish to contact us if you need a home in any of the areas we are focusing on this year, or if you think there is another rural area we should consider for new housing.

We are always keen to work with rural communities to identify needs and provide support where we can. If you would like more information on any of the housing issues discussed, please contact our Rural & Regeneration unit at rural.housing@nihe.gov.uk.



Professor Peter Roberts
Interim Chair



Clark Bailie
Chief Executive



Keep in touch with agewell

The Housing Executive's Community Safety Team provide funding for a range of projects that help residents feel safe in their own homes and encourage people to play a positive role in their community.

This year, Community Safety were pleased to contribute funding to the Mid Ulster Agewell Partnership. The Agewell Partnership is a voluntary organisation that works to improve physical and mental health and reduce poverty, isolation and fear amongst older people, as well as encouraging more involvement in community activities. Mid Ulster Agewell provides 3 vital services to older and vulnerable people living in the entire Mid Ulster Council Area. All services are provided free of charge.

At the heart of the project is the Good Morning telephone call. This is a daily telephone call, provided by a team of advisors and volunteers, to some 350 isolated and vulnerable older people across Mid Ulster. The call can be a general social chat, which helps to give residents a feeling of connectedness, security and reassurance that reduces social isolation. However, it can also act as a reminder to take medication or can be an important opportunity to raise concerns and receive advice and signposting to other sources of support. The calls are invaluable for recipients, some of whom may not have anyone else to speak to that day.

The Agewell Partnership also provides a handyman service across the council area. Maintenance workers visit older people in their homes to carry out small maintenance tasks and repairs, such as gutter cleaning,



on their behalf.

This service enables older people to maintain their property and supports them to live independently in their own homes for longer. The Handymen will fit a Keysafe to facilitate a care package going into the home or early discharge from hospital.

Agewell also has a Community Engagement Officer who works with Community Groups, Social Work Teams and Statutory Agencies to promote the Agewell Project.

If you know someone in the Mid Ulster Council area who would benefit from these services or you would like more information please contact:

Telephone: 028 7963 2170

Email: marie.devlin@agewellpartnership.org

By post: Mid Ulster Agewell, Unit 3, 80-82 Rainey St, Magherafelt, BT45 5AJ.

The Rural Residents' Forum provides a rural voice on issues that affect rural dwellers and provides a consultation mechanism for the Housing Executive on all policy, strategic and financial decisions affecting rural dwellers. Membership of the Forum is drawn from across all NI and at least a third of members are Housing Executive tenants. Members are sought from the North West area, South Down and Newry. Mileage and allowance subsidy are paid.

If you are interested or know someone who may suit this role, contact Aidan at RCN on 028 8676 6670 or email aidan@ruralcommunitynetwork.org



A focus on homelessness

Homelessness Local Area Groups – Homelessness Awareness Week

As part of the Homelessness Strategy 2017 – 22 – Ending Homelessness Together, a number of Local Area Groups were set up to ensure the delivery of the strategy at a local level. Each group has produced an Action Plan covering the first three objectives of the Homelessness Strategy

1. Homelessness prevention
2. Sustaining tenancies
3. Chronic homelessness

Under Objective One, Homelessness Prevention, one of the key actions to help prevent homelessness is to improve communication and raise public awareness of the factors that can contribute to making a household homeless. Another key action is to provide the public with information about agencies and services that can help and to encourage households to seek help before they reach crisis point.

Homelessness Awareness Week took place in December 2018. During this week, four of the Local Area Groups arranged events in their areas, bringing together a range of speakers from agencies and organisations to share information and create new partnerships to improve services for clients that may find themselves faced with homelessness.

In South Antrim and Mid and East Antrim and in the Causeway Coast and Glens areas the Local Groups came together with the Local Councils to arrange events which looked at how interagency working in those areas could be improved and to find new ways to bring the remits of the various agencies together with the common aim of preventing homelessness.

At an event in Mid Ulster, there was a strong focus on the Service User story. The audience heard the story of a client that had lost everything due to addictions but had, with the support of DePaul, a homelessness service provider, turned his life around and was now rehoused and had beaten addiction. He encouraged anyone to seek help at the earliest chance to avoid ending up losing everything. They also heard from the Service Provider about what help and support they were able to give to clients and how they walk the journey with the client through to rehousing and beyond.

In the South West area the Local Mayor opened an event which ended with the launch of a Local Directory of Services. This brings together all of the agencies and support services available in the locality to ensure the public know where to go for help.



Launching the new directory in Antrim.

Feedback from the events was extremely positive with over 90% of attendees reporting that they could apply the learning from the event in their own workplaces and homes. New partnerships were developed as part of the networking at the start and end of events and new contacts were made within the community to assist with the future distribution of leaflets, booklets and other information.

If you or someone you know may be at risk of homelessness, for help and support please contact your local Housing Executive Office on 03448 920 900.

preventing ess

areness Week



Launching the new directory in the Causeway area.



Edel Fox and Bernadette McAliskey receiving Excellence in Homelessness Service and Support awards at the Mid Ulster Events.



South West speakers promote the new local directory.

The cream

In May 2018, our Rural Community Awards competition was launched at our rural housing stand at the Balmoral Show. The competition generated huge interest and a total of 32 applications were received in 2018. We were delighted with the response and overwhelmed by the standard of applications which showcased a wide range of inspirational community projects from across Northern Ireland.

Following visits and assessments during the summer, we decided on our 5 Rural Community Awards winners and they were invited to receive their prizes at a Community Networking event in the Mellon Country Inn outside Omagh on 15th October 2018.

This event was also aimed at celebrating the role of the community volunteer and giving rural community groups in the Fermanagh & Omagh area and beyond, the opportunity to network and share experiences of how they address local needs and encourage involvement in community activities.

The 15th October was also the International Day of Rural Women and so it was a great opportunity to recognise the invaluable role that women play in community work and in identifying and promoting the needs of families in rural areas.

The event was opened by Cllr John Feely, the Vice Chair of Fermanagh & Omagh District Council.

Housing Executive South West Area Manager, Oonagh McAvinney then introduced speakers from Arc Healthy Living Centre in Irvinestown, Eskra Community Association and Westend Partnership in Enniskillen who each spoke about how they and their fellow volunteers have helped to make a difference within their communities.



These insights provided food for thought for attendees who were asked to discuss in groups, those issues which are commonly faced in community work and what they need to improve quality of life for residents of their areas. Some of the issues which were echoed throughout the room included:

- More information is required on what funding is available for community groups
- There should be more opportunities for engagement between community groups
- There is a need for improved infrastructure in rural areas i.e. broadband, mobile phones
- There is a need for improved public transport services in rural areas.

Siobhan McCauley, Director of Regional Services, introduced the afternoon session by setting out the aims of the Housing Executive Rural Community Awards competition and explaining the purpose of each award.

This event was also aimed at celebrating the role of the community volunteer



Magheralin Community Association were delighted to accept the Sustainable Village of the Year award in the large village category at the ceremony in Omagh earlier this year.



Donaghmore Horticultural Community's blooming beautiful flower displays saw them pick up the Cleaner and Greener award in the large village category.

of the crop!

The competition offers 3 awards with 2 categories for each award:

- I. The 'Rural Community Spirit Award' (small and large village). The aim of this award is to focus on and reward those communities who work together to make their village or small settlement a better place to live.
- II. The 'Cleaner and Greener Rural Community Award' (small and large village). The aim of this award is to encourage and celebrate the effort which is made by rural communities to improve the outlook of their settlement.
- III. The 'Sustainable Village of the Year Award' (small and large village). The aim of this overarching award is to acknowledge and celebrate the vital contributions made by a community who has gone 'above and beyond' to help make their village a better place to live.

The 6 awards were then presented to each of the successful community groups by Anne Marie McAleese, presenter of the BBC Radio Ulster show 'Your Place and Mine'. Anne Marie took the opportunity to entertain the audience with anecdotes of her visits with rural communities over the years, highlighting the uniqueness of rural Northern Ireland and the importance of celebrating those who quietly sustain and improve community life in rural areas.

Each of the winners received prize money of £1000 to use to support and extend activities/projects which would benefit their community as well as a plaque to display in their village.



Moneyreagh & District Community Association were delighted to pick up the Community Spirit Award in the large village category from BBC Radio Ulster's Anne Marie McAleese.



Boho Community Association's efforts to preserve their village for future generations saw them pick up the Sustainable Village of the Year award in the small village category.



Clockwise from bottom left:- Floral entrance to Magheralin on Flinty Hill; Floral entrance to Donaghmore celebrating the old railway line; Boho community Hall and children's playpark; Moneyreagh Community Centre, home to Moneyreagh Community Association; Floral display at entrance to Moneydig Park.



Moneydig Rural Network picked up 2 awards and now have £2,000 to spend on projects that benefit their community.

continued overleaf

THE AWARD WINNERS WERE AS FOLLOWS:

Award	Winner	Key Activities
<i>Cleaner & Greener Award Large Village</i>	DONAGHMORE HORTICULTURAL COMMUNITY Mid Ulster	Live Here Love Here big spring clean-up campaign; Annual cleanliness campaign; Regular weeding of planted areas and walls; Floral displays; Permanent planting; Enhancement of historic landmarks; Butterfly and wildlife garden; Community herb garden; Recycling at community allotments; Water butts to collect rain water; Primary schools have achieved eco school status; Work with primary schools; 'open to all' ethos
<i>Cleaner & Greener Award Small Village</i>	MONEYDIG RURAL NETWORK Causeway Coast & Glens	Litter picks; Planting hanging baskets/pots; Raised money to renovate local orange hall; Maintain communal/picnic area; Recycle glass jars for craft classes; Reuse old council material such as seats and picnic tables
<i>Community Spirit Award Small Village</i>	MONEYDIG RURAL NETWORK Causeway Coast & Glens	Easter egg hunt; Halloween party; Santa grotto; Christmas party; 'Gig in the Dig' festival; Family fun days; OAP luncheons; Dance classes; kids discos; craft classes; Involvement in housing forums; Neighbourhood watch; Hen shed; Provision of transport to events that are non-local
<i>Community Spirit Award Large Village</i>	MONEYREAGH & DISTRICT COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION Lisburn Castlereagh	Art group; mother and tots group; craft club; afternoon tea club; Christmas celebrations; Halloween parties; Day trips for elderly to reduce isolation; Cross community leadership programme for 16-21 year olds; Cultural events – taking residents to Chinese new year celebrations; Safety awareness event for elderly people; Discos for young people; Village neighbourhood watch; Relocation of village bonfire; Purchasing of community defibrillator; Health and fitness hub and Multi Use Games Area
<i>Small Sustainable Village of the Year</i>	BOHO COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION Fermanagh & Omagh	Oil buying club; Promotion of Affordable Warmth programme; Clothes recycling; Consultations with local windfarm company regarding the environment; Litter picks with local school; Promotion of community transport; Availed of energy efficiency grant to reduce heating costs in community hall; Pollinators programme with local children; Natural bug hotel; Local school is eco school; Women's group employs three part time employees
<i>Large Sustainable Village of the Year</i>	MAGHERALIN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION Armagh, Banbridge, Craigavon	Oil buying club; Links with SSE Electricity; Big Clean Up; Work with Conservation volunteers; Reuse old Council material; Wildflower Meadow; Trained local people in using defibrillator; Food Hygiene course; Gardening course



Friends Against Scams with Ulster Bank

Community Bankers visit people in their local communities, bringing face to face assistance and support, wherever it is most convenient, whether that's in libraries, places of work, clubs or leisure centres.

This is a new role in Northern Ireland and the main aim is to support people within their own communities by helping them with financial education and awareness on topics such as Fraud and Scam Awareness, Digital Safety, Online Banking and Moneysense.

You'll perhaps be aware that frauds and scams are the fastest growing crime trend in the United Kingdom, with millions of people being affected. People who are scammed often experience shame and social isolation as a result. It can be detrimental to both their mental and physical health.

To help people to protect themselves against the risk of fraud, Ulster Bank Community Bankers are delivering Friends Against Scams presentations to interested groups. Friends against Scams is a National Trading Standards Initiative which aims to prevent people from falling victims to scams, by empowering them. The information provided enables people to understand scams, talk about scams and cascade information throughout their communities.

Ulster Bank have committed to educating one million people about scam awareness by 2020, so are offering this initiative for free to everyone. If you think this is something that you or your group could benefit from please contact your local Community Banker detailed below.



AREAS COVERED

County Antrim and East County Derry / Londonderry, Coleraine, Portrush, Draperstown, Randalstown, Ballyclare

Community Banker:

Siobhan Lowe
075 8599 5120
siobhan.lowe
@ulsterbank.com

AREAS COVERED

East County Tyrone and County Armagh, Cookstown, Stewartstown, Aughnacloy, Portadown

Community Banker:

Keith Jackson
078 2456 0782
keith.jackson
@ulsterbank.com

AREAS COVERED

County Down, Newtownards, Kircubbin, Killyleagh, Rathfriland, Newcastle

Community Banker:

Richard Gill
079 0151 8863
richard.gill
@ulsterbank.com

AREAS COVERED

West of County Derry, County Fermanagh and West County Tyrone, Waterside, Dungiven, Castlederg, Enniskillen, Irvinestown

Community Banker:

Stephanie Roberts
078 2353 4332 stephanie.roberts
@ulsterbank.com

Dementia Friendly Hub in Learmount

The Housing Executive recognises the importance of supporting rural communities to deliver projects that will enhance their local areas, make them attractive places to live and create thriving rural communities. To do this we offer Rural Development Programme match funding, up to a maximum of 15% of funding (up to £20,000), for projects under the Basic Services and Village Renewal measures.

One project we have been delighted to support through our Match Funding Programme is the Learmount Dementia Friendly Hub.

In October 2016 Learmount became the first rural area in Northern Ireland to be recognised as a 'Dementia Friendly Community'. The group has worked extensively since then to make their village a place where people with dementia and their families are supported to maintain and enhance their quality of life.

Using funding from a range of sources, including over £3,000 from the Housing Executive, Learmount Community Development Group have now created a Dementia Friendly Hub. This is a safe and welcoming communal space where people with dementia and their families can come to relax, socialise and be signposted to support services, with specific dementia friendly adaptations in place to make the space accessible as possible.

The Hub opened in September and offers users the opportunity to enjoy the 'memory café', to try a new hobby and to take part in reminiscence therapy. It has also allowed the group to also enhance their existing signposting service and support group.

When someone has dementia it can have a massive impact on their independence and can limit their social activities. By having this Dementia Friendly Hub, Learmount Community Development Group help people with dementia to continue to play an active role in village life.



The group has worked extensively since then to make their village a place where people with dementia and their families are supported to maintain and enhance their quality of life.

Identifying need for new housing in rural areas

Having difficulty in finding a suitable affordable home in your rural area?

The Housing Executive and registered housing associations own and maintain housing in many villages and small settlements across Northern Ireland. A range of house types are available at an affordable rent, to people who are assessed as being in housing need. This is usually termed as 'social housing'.

However, in rural areas where there is no existing social housing or where most houses have been sold, people in need of a home may not register or seek advice in their local Housing Executive office. Without names on the local waiting list, the need for any additional social/affordable housing will remain hidden and new housing schemes will not be planned. Over time, this may impact on the sustainability of our rural communities.

In an effort to identify hidden housing need, our Rural & Regeneration unit undertake rural housing need tests. Through these tests we work with rural communities to promote our range of housing services and to encourage those in need of a home to come forward and register on our waiting list.

We will also encourage those who may be interested in affordable home ownership to come forward to help us examine with housing associations, the potential for new low cost or shared ownership housing in rural areas.

This year the settlements included in our programme of tests are:

- 📍 Cloughmills
- 📍 Ballcastle
- 📍 Rasharkin
- 📍 Clady (Strabane)
- 📍 Magheramason
- 📍 Drumaroad
- 📍 Drumaghlish
- 📍 Moneyslane
- 📍 Tamnaherin
- 📍 Tullylish/Lawrencetown
- 📍 Darkely
- 📍 Derrymacash/Derrytrasna
- 📍 Moneyreagh
- 📍 Whitecross

To date the response to these tests has been encouraging but whilst we monitor the waiting lists and assess the results, we would still like to encourage anyone in need of a home in these areas to contact the Rural & Regeneration Unit ruralhousing@nihe.gov.uk or your local office.



We work with rural communities to promote our range of housing services

And the winner

Dara Walker
and his Amazon
Kindle Fire.



Our staff were at the 150th Balmoral Show giving out advice on a range of rural housing issues and promoting our services. People who visited our stand also had the opportunity to win 2 Amazon Kindle Fires! **The lucky competition winners were Dara Walker and Grace Close.**

Cathy Wright from the Housing Executive
Rural & Regeneration Unit presents
Grace Close with her prize.



EMBRACING ALL OUR NEIGHBOURS

ARABIC

مألأ كتغل يه فيزي لجالا ةغللأ نكت مل اذا
قم جرتلا يف قدع اسملأ لىل لوصحال جاتحتو
نالكسالا قمدخ عي طستستف ، في طخل او في فثشال
فيناجمال تامدخال هذه ريفوت في ذيفنثلا
اذه لوح راسفستسالا كنم ي جري ، بل طلال دن ع
يل حملال كبتكلم نم لي صفتلاب رمال

CANTONESE

如果英語不是你的母語，並且你需要幫助來進行口譯和文字翻譯，那麼Housing Executive可以根據請求而提供免費的服務，請在你當地的辦公室詢問進一步的詳情。

LITHUANIAN

Je anglų kalba nėra jūsų gimtoji kalba ir jums reikia pagalbos dėl vertimo žodžių ir rašto, jums pageidaujant Housing Executive gali suteikti nemokamas vertimo paslaugas; dėl išsamesnės informacijos prašome kreiptis į vietinį skyrį.

MANDARIN

如果英语不是你的母语，并且你需要帮助来进行口译和文字翻译，那么Housing Executive可以根据请求而提供免费的服務，請在你當地的辦公室詢問進一步的詳情。

If English is not your first language and you need help with interpreting & translation the Housing Executive can provide free services on request, please ask for further details at your local office.

POLISH

Jeśli język angielski nie jest Państwa językiem ojczystym i potrzebują Państwo pomocy w zakresie tłumaczeń ustnych i pisemnych, Housing Executive oferuje bezpłatne usługi tłumaczeniowe na życzenie. O szczegóły prosimy pytać biuro lokalne.

PORTUGUESE

Se o Inglês não for a sua língua materna e precisar de ajuda com tradução e interpretação, o Executivo de Habitação pode providenciar serviços gratuitos mediante solicitação, pode obter mais informações no seu escritório local.

RUSSIAN

Если английский не является вашим родным языком и вам требуется помощь с устным и письменным переводом, Жилищное управление может предоставить по запросу бесплатные услуги переводчика. За более подробной информацией обратитесь в ваш местный офис.

SLOVAK

Ak angličtina nie je váš materský jazyk a vyžadujete si pomoc s prekladom a tlmočením, kancelária úradu pre otázky bývania (Housing Executive) vám ochotne poskytne tieto služby bezplatne. Prosím, požiadajte svoju miestnu kanceláriu o viac informácií.

SOMALI

Haddii af Ingiriisigu uusan ahayn luqaddaada hooyo oo aad u baahan tahay in lagaa caawiyo turjumaadda oraahda ah iyo midda qoran Agaasinka Guryeynta (Housing Executive) ayaa adeegado bilaash ah bixin kara marka laga codsado, fadlan faahfaahin dheeraad ah weydii xafiiska xaafaddaada.

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