

# Neighbourhood Renewal



## Newsletter



Issue Two

November 2006

### Sharkey Injects Music into Regeneration

*By Callie Persic  
West Belfast Partnership Board*

Fearghal Sharkey, a famous son of Derry and chairperson of the Live Music Forum, was a fascinating guest at one of the plenary sessions at the Warwick Convention. Outlining his passion for live music and its potential contribution to communities and economies, he described how music can transform peoples' lives.

Warwick is a city steeped in history and mirth – so I

found it a surprising choice to host such a forward-thinking event as July's National Regeneration Convention. Up to six hundred delegates from a range of sectors, community projects and regeneration initiatives came together to help plan a better future for our communities in the ancient English city.

On the theme 'Regeneration – doing it

*better: Changing people, changing neighbourhoods'* delegates filled up debates and flew into workshops, sharing their intimate experiences of building and re-building deprived communities and learning from other regeneration specialists from Belfast and beyond.

Site visits to regeneration projects formed an integral part of the convention, as did a major focus on the role of arts and culture in renewal. Inspiring potential leaders and promoting positive community engagement were key themes that sparked ideas in many of those present.

Meeting people from home and afar,



developing networks of communication was incredibly beneficial – it's just a shame we had to go so far away!

Hopefully the Neighbourhood Renewal conference in December will provide us with the opportunity to build on the sound foundations laid in that ancient castle town, helping us develop innovative and interesting ways of working together successfully.



*Top row, (L-R)  
Callie Persic,  
Martina Lundy,  
Jim McAteer,  
Annie Armstrong,  
Kathy Rea,  
Shauna Murtagh,  
Bernie Duffy.  
Bottom Row -  
Liam Stone  
and Kay Shortt*

### Every Department is committed to Neighbourhood Renewal

Did you know that the Minister for Social Development, David Hanson, leads a cross Departmental Ministerial Group to take forward the work of Neighbourhood Renewal? The most important role of the Group is to ensure that all parts of Government remain committed to the purpose and delivery of Neighbourhood Renewal. It is made up of senior representatives from each Government Department and meets quarterly to monitor progress and provide direction to the way Neighbourhood Renewal is delivered to communities. The Group also share good practice and new ideas about the programmes and projects being delivered to Neighbourhood Renewal areas by their Departments and work closely to see how Government services can join and develop to deliver improvements.

## Editor's Note

### Hello and Welcome to the second edition of the Neighbourhood Renewal Newsletter.

We hope you found our first newsletter useful and interesting and thanks to those of you who provided feedback. Much good work is going on in our Neighbourhood Renewal areas and this second Newsletter aims to demonstrate just how Government and statutory bodies are joining together and working with communities to deliver improvements.

We now have 36 Neighbourhood Renewal areas across Northern Ireland and it's great to report that, at the time of printing, Neighbourhood Partnerships are established, formally recognised and developing Vision Statements and Action Plans in 31 of these areas. Work is ongoing in the remaining 5 areas and Partnerships will be formally established very soon.

The first Northern Ireland Regional Conference on Neighbourhood Renewal will be held during December and will provide Neighbourhood Partnerships with the opportunity to come together to explore and discuss Neighbourhood Renewal issues, to share good

practice and to benefit from the experience of those working in urban regeneration in other parts of the UK. We are looking forward to an interesting and informative day and hope that all those invited will have a worthwhile and enjoyable experience.

In the meantime, we are looking forward to continued partnership working with communities, statutory bodies, the voluntary sector, political representatives and the private sector to deliver Neighbourhood Renewal over the forthcoming months and years and in the interim, hope you find this edition of the newsletter informative and useful.

**We value your opinions, so remember, your feedback is important to us. If you have any comments or would like to see your work featured in future editions of the Neighbourhood Renewal Newsletter, please contact Therese Pollock, Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, Level 3, The Lighthouse Building, Gasworks Business Park, Ormeau Road, Belfast. BT7 2JB**

Tel No 028 90 829398

Email: [therese.pollock@dsdni.gov.uk](mailto:therese.pollock@dsdni.gov.uk)

## Contents

Sharkey Injects Music into Regeneration	1
Every Department is committed to Neighbourhood Renewal	1
A Neighbourhood Manager's Perspective	3
Belfast's Travelling Community Receives a Helping Hand	4
Melvin Hall gets a makeover	4
Community Safety Bus promotes safe travel	5
Enterprising Ballykeel	5
Families Learn together in Ballymena	6
New Play Park for Kilcooley	6
Groundwork improves environment in North Belfast	7
New Centre for Old School	7
Arsenal Football Clubs Coaches Visit Coleraine	7
Brandywell's Bluebellhill Gardens Transformed	8
Extended Schools Programme Success in Neighbourhood Renewal area	8
Newry children get early Christmas wish	8

## Contact Us

**Belfast Regeneration Office** Email [bro@dsdni.gov.uk](mailto:bro@dsdni.gov.uk)

### **BRO North**

Michael Donnelly  
Tel 02890 744022

### **BRO Inner West**

Mark O'Donnell  
Tel 02890 244535

### **BRO South & East**

Joe Torney  
Tel 02890 456822

### **BRO West District**

Martin McDermott  
Tel 02890 244535

### **BRO Physical Development Branch**

Henry McArdle  
Tel 02890 819745

**Regional Development Office** Email [rdo@dsdni.gov.uk](mailto:rdo@dsdni.gov.uk)

### **RDO Ballymena**

Ian Snowden  
Tel 028 25636773

### **RDO Banbridge**

Liam Quinn  
Tel 028 90819870

### **RDO Omagh**

Alistair McKane  
Tel 028 82255506

### **North West Development Office**

Email  
[northwest.development@dsdni.gov.uk](mailto:northwest.development@dsdni.gov.uk)

Margaret Miskelly  
Tel 028 71319900

# A Neighbourhood Manager's Perspective

## How joined up working really is making a difference!

**One of the Neighbourhood Managers working in the Sandy Row and Greater Village areas of South Belfast is Kieran Goodman.** On a two year Interchange Opportunity from Department for Employment and Learning (DEL), Kieran took up the post last October and over the past year has been working closely with community leaders, elected representatives and various statutory bodies and agencies to improve the social and economic infrastructure of both communities. He is based in the Carnegie Business Centre on the Lower Donegall Road.

Kieran takes up his story. "Having worked in DEL,

on the regional operations side, I had fleeting contact with the Village and Sandy Row. I knew some of the key players in both areas and was acutely aware of the issues, particularly within the context of training and employment, affecting both communities. I saw the Neighbourhood Manager's post as the ideal vehicle for helping to make a difference to the lives of the people from these communities. There are a number of difficult challenges and issues to address including high levels of unemployment, low education attainment, a feeling of neglect on the part of Government and dereliction. It is my job, in association with the various statutory bodies

### Achievements ...

- Belfast Regeneration Office are working in partnership with Belfast City Council to develop a multi-purpose sports facility for use by all the community;
- The NIHE and Groundwork NI have worked with the communities of the area to deliver pleasant areas for residents to enjoy and safe play areas for children;
- The South & East Belfast Health and Social Services Trust, working with Inner City South Belfast Sure Start, youth organisations and the local community, schools and voluntary agencies, are developing a pilot programme to improve life outcomes for local children in the Village and Sandy Row.
- The NIHE has appointed a Neighbourhood Warden for Sandy Row and the Village to help residents with housing difficulties and has provided a Community House for the local Residents Association;
- The Department for Education has provided financial support for the continuation of the Kids into Education and Training (KITE) Project, which helps children and young people in the area to improve educational attainment.

### The year ahead ...

- The Department for Regional Development is working with Belfast Regeneration Office on a lay by creation scheme along the main thoroughfare of Sandy Row. This will also include improved street lighting, new lamp posts, hanging baskets, community gardens, decorative sculptures and artwork.
- As there is a need for more housing in the area, the NIHE is to provide new homes for families on derelict land and provide a Community House within the Village area for the local Focus Group.
- Work will begin on a new Resource Centre for use by the local community and on the multi-sports pitch. This work is supported through Neighbourhood Renewal;
- The Police Service of NI is already working closely with local community groups and will, in the months ahead, run a number of Safety of Seniors Days in both communities through the "Closing the Door on Crime" initiative which aims to replace rear yard doors.

and Agencies, including DSD, to facilitate change and improvements in these inner-city areas of South Belfast.

"From day one I was warmly received by both communities. As the months passed by, quickly I hasten to add, I built up a very good relationship with key community players, local elected representatives and senior management in the various Government departments and agencies. It is my firm belief that these types of working partnerships are crucial to improve the delivery of public services and maximise the effectiveness of Neighbourhood Renewal,

not only in this area but right across Northern Ireland, to deliver meaningful and sustainable change over the years ahead.

"At this juncture I would like to extend my thanks and appreciation to the South West Belfast Partnership, Sandy Row Community Forum, Greater Village Regeneration Trust, the various community organisations and government departments and agencies for their valuable contribution in bringing about noticeable change to both areas – long may this valuable working partnership continue."

# Belfast's Travelling Community Receives a Helping Hand

By Harry Maher

Belfast Regeneration Office

Belfast Regeneration Office is working in Partnership with Belfast City Council to provide a mobile unit to accommodate the work of local Traveller's support group An Munia Tober. The organisation, with support from the Council, North & West Belfast Health and Social Services Trust and the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, will use this facility to deliver a wide range of services; including an after schools project and health related services to the local Travelling Community. The mobile



*Children from the Irish Travelling Community taking part in an After Schools Project (Photo courtesy of Conservation Volunteers NI)*

unit will be based on the Glen Road in West Belfast and will also be available for use by local residents.

The need for intervention arose following the

destruction of the previous unit by fire in November 2005.

Following the fire these vital services were able to continue following an

offer by St Mary's Primary School, to temporarily house the services in their premises.

The provision of this unit is a really good example of how Government departments and agencies are working, through Neighbourhood Renewal, to enable An Munia Tober to continue to enhance the delivery of services to the local Travelling Community and further support social inclusion through integration with local residents.

## Melvin Hall gets a makeover

Melvin Hall in Strabane, a popular facility with all sections of the community has benefited from a £324,000 facelift thanks to Neighbourhood Renewal funding and major input from Strabane District Council. The hall, which opened in 1975 as a Sports and Leisure Centre, attracts around 51,000 visitors per year and caters for residents from Strabane and the surrounding district. In need of major refurbishment, the hall has been modernised to provide upgraded changing and showering areas as well as extra space for bowls, karate, youth projects, art classes and children's birthday party packages. The new features include all-weather pitches, floodlighting, walking and

cycle paths, a new community meeting room and offices with facilities for people with disabilities. The centrepiece of the development is the much improved athletics track. This will enable Strabane to host high profile events, something which has not been possible in the past.



*Minister at the starting line with Philip Faithfull, Chief Executive of Strabane District Council; Thomas Kerrigan Chairperson of Strabane District Council and Declan O'Hare Director of North West Development Office .*

## Enterprising Ballykeel

By John McCandless  
Invest NI

Ballykeel, part of the Ballymena Neighbourhood Renewal area, has had its fair share of low levels of business investment, however the area has turned the corner through its participation with "Enterprising Britain", a national competition organised locally by Invest Northern Ireland.

The first of its kind across Northern Ireland, the Ballykeel Business Centre has beaten its original targets and is now fully occupied. It has managed to create an additional 38 jobs for the area and this achievement has been recognised by Invest NI with the centre being named "Enterprising Place of 2006" during the regional heat of the Enterprising Britain competition. Having won this acclaimed accolade the centre went forward to the National final in London where it received a 'Highly Commended' award and was narrowly beaten by West Kilbride Craft and Design Town.

Funding and support for the project was obtained from a number of different sources demonstrating the effectiveness of joining resources and working together. Ballymena Council, the International Fund for Ireland, Neighbourhood Renewal, Invest NI, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the North East Region Training and Employment Agency, the Northern Bank and local community associations all worked in partnership for the good of the community.

## Community Safety Bus Promotes Safe Travel on Public Transport

By Ian Hume  
Department for Regional Development

Translink's award-winning Community Safety bus has been visiting primary and secondary schools across Northern Ireland to highlight to young people the importance of safety and acting responsibly when travelling on public transport.

The Community Safety Bus is operated by bus drivers who are also trained safety officers. The bus is equipped to give pupils information on issues such as personal safety while using public transport and illustrates the potential impact of antisocial activities like vandalism and trespassing through contemporary media including Translink's new Travelsafe DVD and learning pack.



*Surveying the new Community Safety Bus (L-R) David Stewart, Andrew Dyer, Jonathan Rainey, and Mark Wylie from Ben Madigan School in North Belfast, with Translink Community Safety Officer Susan O'Neill and Conal Devitt, Head of Community Safety Unit*

Translink's Community Safety Officer Susan O'Neill said "Young people respond positively to first hand experience rather than being preached at. This is why we have worked hard to develop an approach designed to get the message across without being patronising. The bus gives young people a sense of ownership incorporated in its funky design while providing us with a vehicle to communicate our safety messages."

Translink also hold joint events in partnership with the DOE Road Safety Education, Fire Service, Northern Ireland Electricity and PSNI to discuss community safety issues.

Public transport is an essential service across Northern Ireland used by thousands of people everyday, but it is also identified as a key resource to Neighbourhood Renewal Areas where there may be fewer privately owned vehicles.

Any Neighbourhood or Community Safety Partnership can request the Community Safety Bus to visit to their organisation, however visits are subject to availability. In addition Partnerships can obtain a free copy of Translink's 'Travelsafe DVD' by contacting the Marketing Department on 02890 899400 or visit Translink's website on [www.translink.co.uk](http://www.translink.co.uk)

## Families learn together in Ballymena

The North Eastern Education & Library Board held a 'Family Learning' day in Ballymena which attracted mums and dads from the local Neighbourhood Renewal area. With the help of partners such as Sure Start, Community Dental and Health Promotion as well as Health Visitor and Speech and Language, 40 parents and 47 children took part in the event. The day involved interactive and fun events for parents and children alike.

*"It was really enjoyable - thank you"*

Meanwhile several mums and dads decided to go back to school with the help of the Library Service.

They took part in two specially designed courses, enabling them to help their children, while developing skills they could use themselves. A crèche facility was provided by Sure Start for the duration of the course, this meant that parents completing the course knew their children were being well looked after and gave them no excuse to bottle out before it was due to finish!

At prize day, the proud children and families looked on as their, even prouder mums and dads received their certificates.



*Some families who enjoyed the learning day in Ballymena.*

---

---

## New Play Park for Kilcooley



*Minister asks children if he can join in the fun on the climbing frame*

Kilcooley estate in Bangor recently saw the opening of a play park designed with the latest equipment and child friendly surface. The idea for the park was brought forward by the Kilcooley Playground Action Group.

As part of the Government's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, DSD, North Down Borough Council and North Down Local Strategy Partnership contributed towards the cost of the play park. All have worked well together to bring an idea to reality. This investment will bring significant benefits to local people, both in physical regeneration of the area and in providing facilities for the community to grow.

Community information can be obtained from the Kilcooley Forum website – [www.kilcooley.org](http://www.kilcooley.org)

## Arsenal Football Clubs Coaches Visit Coleraine



*Gunning for Glory - Young aspiring football stars Jake and Abigail pictured with Grainne McGowan (Neighbourhood Renewal Officer for Ballysally) and Stephen McCartney (Community Sports Development Officer for Coleraine Borough Council) ahead of the Arsenal School of Soccer coaching programme*

Coaches from the Arsenal School of Coaching visited three disadvantaged areas in Coleraine for the "Neighbourhood Renewal Arsenal School of Football" programme which ran for 3 weekends up to 3rd June under the Community Sports Programme organised by Coleraine Borough Council and DSD.

All those who took part in the Soccer School received a certificate of attendance, an Arsenal School gift and more importantly had a really great time.

## Groundwork Continues to Improve the Environment in North Belfast

*By Richard Rogers*

*Groundwork NI*

The Community Environment Support Programme (CESP) is a two-year strategic regeneration initiative in North Belfast. It is a partnership between North Belfast Partnership, Groundwork NI, the Housing Executive, Belfast City Council & 10 North Belfast communities - Ardoyne, Carrick Hill, Glenbryn, Marrowbone, Mountcollyer, New Lodge, Rosevale / Manor Street, Shore Crescent, Skegoneill and Westland which fall within the Neighbourhood Renewal areas of North Belfast.

The Programme aims to support communities in developing environmental regeneration schemes and encouraging networking and skills sharing between participating areas. It has resulted in the creation of kick-about areas, community gardens, community safety schemes, and arts projects, including 'Community Environmental Leadership' training and a study visit for community representatives to Ballyfermot in Dublin.

This programme is funded by the EU Urban II Community Initiative Programme, with additional funding from the Housing Executive, Belfast City Council and Neighbourhood Renewal.

## New Centre for Old School

*By Cormac MacArt*

*Westcourt Project Belfast*

A major aim of Neighbourhood Renewal is to ensure that people living in disadvantaged areas have equal access to the best possible services and opportunities to enhance life skills.

An excellent example is Westcourt Centre in West Belfast, which recently received a cash boost to refurbish premises to provide much needed educational facilities for young adults. Funding, provided through Neighbourhood Renewal will enable the organisation to expand current provision to include adult education and lifeskills initiatives. The Centre will also provide programmes aimed at young people who have rejected or been excluded from school and will provide a valuable community resource for youth and multi-ethnic work.

Westcourt plays a very important role in providing education to marginalized young people. It helps them to turn away from anti-social behaviour and creates a focus on personal and career development. On completion of the refurbishment, it is anticipated that the centre will become a top quality educational facility for use by the entire community.



*Children enjoy the sculpture at Alexander Park, Mountcollyer. Photo courtesy of Groundwork NI*

## Brandywell's Bluebellhill Gardens Transformed

Thanks to the local residents, an interactive Community Garden has been created out of a piece of overgrown land in the Brandywell's Bluebellhill Gardens.

The project, supported by the Big Lottery Fund via the Creating Common Ground Consortium and Neighbourhood Renewal consists of a vertical piano, sound features, an echo chamber, mosaics and metal panelling designed by local young people.

The Brandywell has very limited play facilities and a lack of green space. The Interactive Park has been developed on a piece of land formerly owned by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive which will be responsible for its future maintenance.

The scheme was designed and project managed by Groundwork NI in conjunction with the Bogside Brandywell Initiative.



*Margaret Miskelly DSD with Sam McPherson, NIHE, Conor Heaney, Bogside Brandywell Initiative and Leonard Sproule, Creating Common Ground Consortium with children at the official launch of Bluebellhill Gardens*

## Extended School Success in Neighbourhood Renewal area

*By Dinah MacManus*

*Holy Family Primary School, Belfast*

Participating in the Extended Schools Programme with great success is Holy Family Primary School based in one of the Neighbourhood Renewal areas of North Belfast. The school has already been operating an Extended Schools Programme for some time. School opens at 8.00am with a Breakfast Club and provides after-school care until 5.30pm for children whose parents are at work or have returned to education. The school also opens in the evening for courses in ICT and music tuition in uilleann pipes, keyboard and banjo.

The school has also provided facilities for a Parent Support Programme where the parents have undertaken courses in European Computer Driving Licence and received certificates in Open College Network (3) and

First Aid. Other courses have been offered in literacy, mathematics and parenting. Through the programme, parents are gaining the confidence to attain the skills needed for them to return to the workplace or further education. It has also enabled parents to help their children with their schoolwork. A network of agencies has supported the programme and community support such as Sure Start has been invaluable to the school.

The new 'Extended Schools' financial support has also allowed the school to extend the After Schools programme to include health promoting activities such as Basketball and Gymnastics and learning support within a Maths Club.

## Newry Children get an early Christmas wish

Tired and damaged play equipment will be replaced in the parks at Newry's Greater Linenhall and Derrybeg areas. Newry and Mourne District Council and DSD are working together to help create safe and attractive play parks for local children. At Derrybeg a completely new play area is being built and as work has already begun it is hoped that the parks will be open for business by Christmas.

And not forgetting the young people - Neighbourhood Renewal funding has been awarded to the Meadow and Armagh Road Community Centre in the Meadow Estate of Newry to facilitate an extension to the centre to provide a Youth Room with IT facilities. The local Community Association will also have office space on the premises.