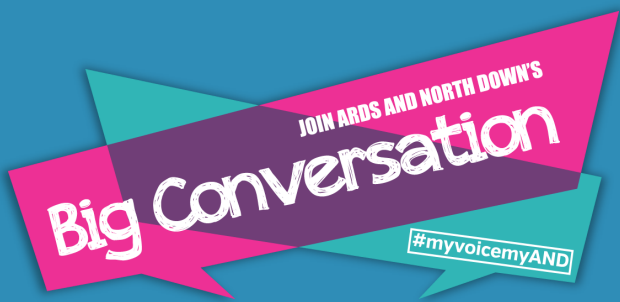


# engage

Community Planning in Ards and North Down #myvoicemyAND

March 2019



**Welcome** ....to the spring 2019 edition of engage! Keeping you up to date with the Big Plan and community planning in Ards and North Down.

## In this edition...

We get back in touch with nature and the environment around us.

Do you or a family member have limited mobility or a disability that prevents you from accessing the outdoors? Find out what's happening in Ards and North Down to help make the outdoors more accessible.

We tell you about a few exciting initiatives including how social prescribing is helping people to improve their mental health and wellbeing.

And find out about the bins that are making regional headlines, thanks to your recycling efforts and Ards and North Down Borough Council's Recycling Community Investment Fund.



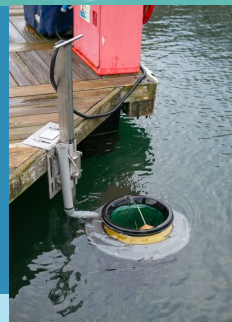
Outdoor spaces for everyone

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# Outdoor spaces for everyone!

## Mobility scooters for outdoor trails

*Making their properties and land as accessible as possible is very important to the National Trust. In 2016, Mount Stewart invested in special mobility scooters offering those with reduced mobility the freedom to explore Mount Stewart's beautiful outdoor spaces.*

The trails that surround the grounds have been opened up and visitors can now access areas of the Mount Stewart Estate that they wouldn't have previously been able to. The provision of the scooters has allowed friends and family to spend quality time together, exploring the great outdoors. This has been invaluable to many.

Hannah McCloy, Visitor Experience Manager at Mount Stewart said "It is very moving to see the impact that the scooters have on our visitors and their experience at Mount Stewart. There have been some very moving stories including one lady who described them as her life-line. The scooters are **free** of charge to hire and they can be pre-booked to allow people to plan their visit in advance. They are a fantastic addition to our visitor offering and we couldn't recommend them highly enough".

For more information or to hire a scooter and explore Mount Stewart's trails, please contact Mount Stewart on: 028 4278 8387 or email: [mountstewart@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:mountstewart@nationaltrust.org.uk)



Mobility scooter accessing one of Mount Stewart's trails

## An accessible beach for Groomsport

*While Groomsport is best known for its picturesque harbour and tranquil environment, it was once a major fishing port with two fishermen's cottages known as Cockle Row. Today the beach is a popular spot for tourists and locals alike, especially in the summer months.*

Now, following the development of an action within the Big Plan to increase disability access to open natural spaces, £68,314 of funding has been committed to make Groomsport the first wheelchair accessible beach in Ards and North Down.

The funding has been made available by Sport NI, one of our community planning partners.



Work is underway to regrade the access slope on to the beach and to significantly upgrade the existing toilet block. The toilet block will include a 'Changing Places' toilet facility which will allow people with disabilities, in particular those with higher levels of personal care needs, to access a hoist and height adjustable bench facilities. There will also be a storage area to house beach friendly wheelchairs and rollators that will make accessing the sand so much easier.



Jayne Moore, Sport NI. Alix Crawford, Mae Murry Foundation and Mayor of Ards and North Down, Councillor Richard Smart

Making our beautiful landscapes accessible to everyone is really important. The 2011 census showed that 12 % of people living in Ards and North Down reported having a mobility issue, which may mean they are unable to take advantage of our beautiful beaches. Improving access to Groomsport Beach will allow people who previously may not of been able to join their families and friends at the beach, with the opportunity to experience a day at the beach together.

Groomsport Beach will be accessible just in time for summer 2019!

## A diversity play zone in Newtownards

***Ards and North Down Borough Council have opened a fully integrated diversity play zone at the new Ards Blair Mayne Wellbeing and Leisure Complex.***

Complete with a sensory garden, the new play zone enables children with disabilities and sensory needs the opportunity to experience the same playground activities as their friends and family.



Play zone at new leisure complex in Newtownards

The rest of the complex is also fully accessible, with two disability friendly swimming pools and a ground floor café.

Between the trails at Mount Stewart, the beach at Groomsport and the diversity play zone in Newtownards, families will have more options to choose from for a fun day out!

For more information please visit: [www.leisureardsandnorthdown.gov.uk](http://www.leisureardsandnorthdown.gov.uk)



# What is Social Prescribing?

*From early on in the community planning process social prescribing has been on the agenda. Social prescribing enables GPs, nurses and other primary care professionals to refer people to a range of local, non-clinical services. Recognising that people's health is determined primarily by a range of social, economic and environmental factors, social prescribing seeks to address people's needs in a holistic way. It also aims to support individuals to take greater control of their own health.*

Social prescribing is designed to support people with a wide range of social, emotional or practical needs and many existing schemes are focussed on improving mental health and physical well-being. Those who could benefit from social prescribing schemes include people with mild or long-term mental health problems, vulnerable groups, people who are socially isolated, and those who frequently attend either primary or secondary health care.

If rolled out, social prescribing will allow GP's the option to refer patients based on their needs to non-clinical services, including community and voluntary groups, with the aim of helping them to take greater control of their own health and wellbeing. Patients will be assessed and involved in all decisions.

Based on their interests patients may be prescribed one or more of the prescriptions shown in the boxes to the right.



## Green prescriptions

- Gardening programme
- Walking group

## Arts prescriptions

- Creative activities/class
- Museum access

## Exercise prescriptions

- Exercise class
- Access to gym /sports centre

## Learning prescriptions

- Educational classes
- Developing new skills

## Community prescriptions

- Volunteering

# Social Prescribing in Ards and North Down

An exciting Social Prescribing health pathway is now operational and available across Northern Ireland, including Ards and North Down. The Social Prescribing Programme aims to give patients greater control over their own health and wellbeing, helping them to make healthy choices, strengthen resilience and stay connected to their own community.

The Social Prescribing Programme is a partnership between the Healthy Living Centre Alliance, Scottish Communities for Health and Wellbeing, and Bogside and Brandywell Health Forum.

## How does it work?

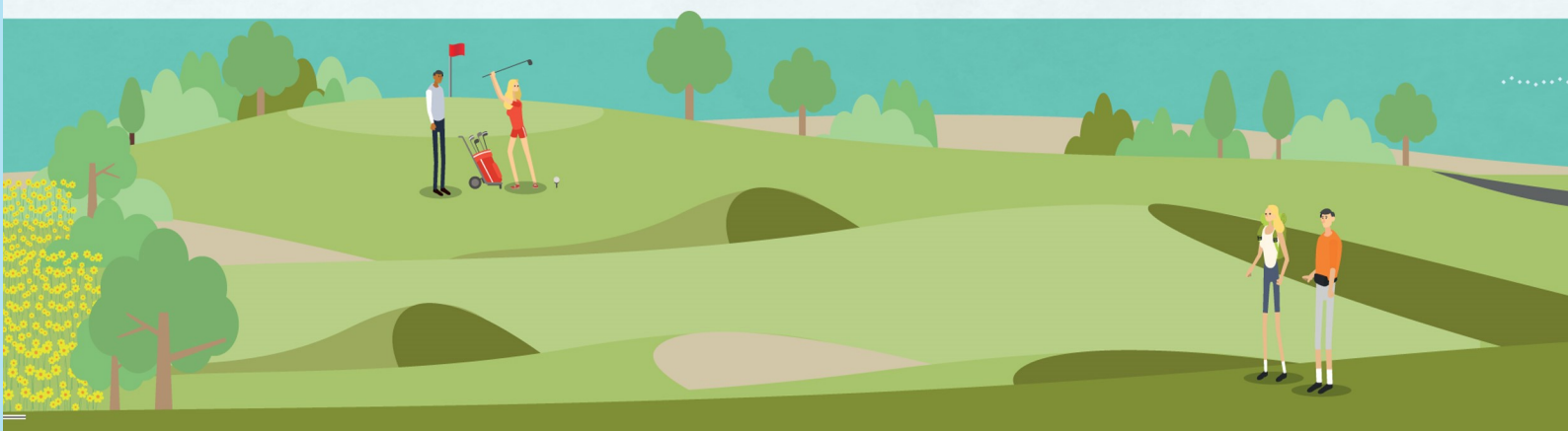
Patients will be referred into the scheme by their GP. A social prescribing co-ordinator will arrange a meeting to discuss the areas of need and support that are non-clinical but may help to improve health and well-being.

There are 20 partner organisations working across Northern Ireland to deliver the pilot project and a further 10 in Scotland. Within the South Eastern Trust area the project will be delivered by a network of four Healthy Living Centre partners:

- Resurgam Healthy Living Centre in Lisburn
- Sally Gardens Community Association in Poleglass
- County Down Rural Community Network in Downpatrick
- ***Peninsula Healthy Living Partnership in Kircubbin***

For more information, please contact Peninsula Healthy Living  
028 427 39021.

*The Programme is funded by the Big Lottery, who've recently changed their name to the National Lottery Community Fund. There is an enhanced scheme operating in some rural areas, with additional investment from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs.*



# First Seabin in NI installed at Bangor Marina

Seabins are the brainchild of two Australian surfers, Pete Ceglinski and Andrew Turton who while surfing saw first hand the amount of rubbish and plastic floating in the ocean and the damage it was doing to marine life. They wanted to help ensure that the ocean would remain pollution free for the next generation. Pete and Andrew quit their jobs and the Seabin was born.

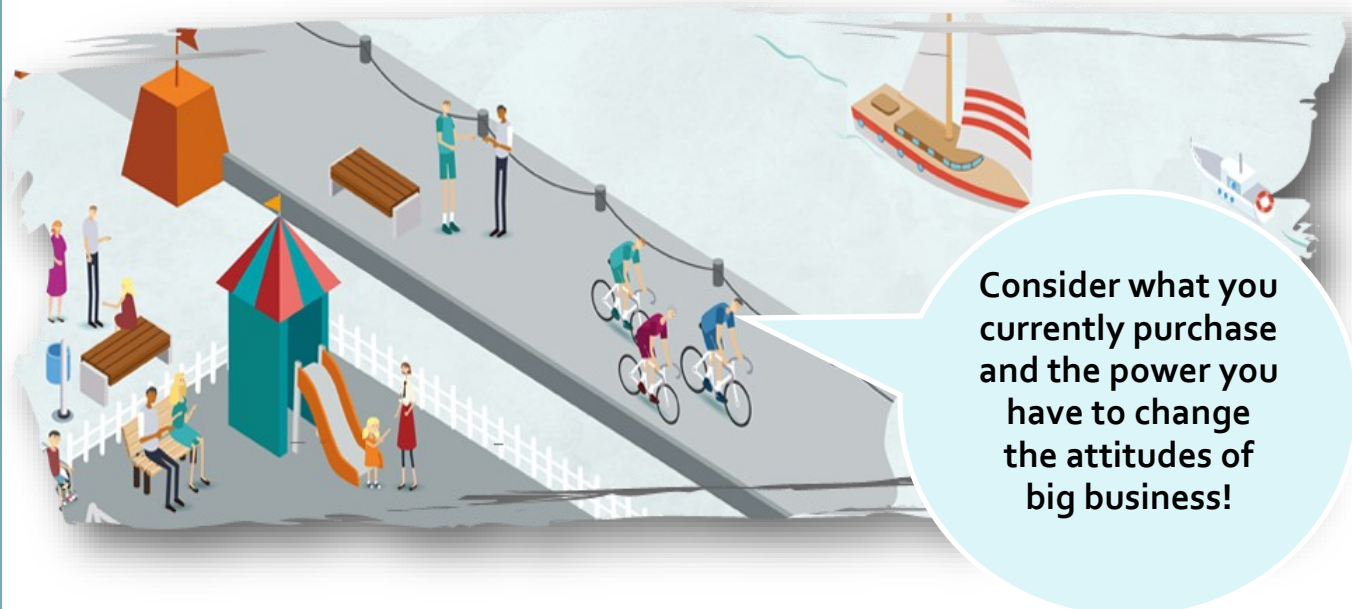
The Seabin, is a floating bin that sucks waste from the water of docks and marinas to remove hazards to marine life. Water is sucked in from the surface and passes through a catch bag inside the seabin, with a submersible water pump. Water is pumped back into the marina leaving litter and debris trapped in a special catch bag so that it can be disposed of properly. Seabins can collect up to half a ton of debris each year and have the potential to collect a percentage of oils and pollutants floating on the water surface.



To date three Seabins have been purchased by the Council. Two Seabins have been installed in Bangor Marina and one will be installed in Portaferry by Easter 2019. If proven successful more Seabins will be purchased to bolster the activity.

However, Seabins by themselves are not the answer. If upscaled, they could impact on the delicate ecosystem of the ocean. Concerns have been raised that in addition to removing plastic, they could also remove important plankton from the ocean.

Stopping plastics entering the ocean is the ultimate goal and the use of Seabins on a small scale will help raise awareness of the issue and make people think about the damage of single-use plastics.

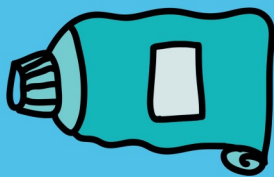




# Recycling Community Investment Fund

The Seabins project is one of many to be paid for by the Council's Recycling Community Investment Fund. This is a fund established from money saved by residents through their impressive recycling efforts. Over the past four years residents have saved almost £15M in landfill costs by increased use of their blue, brown/green and glass bins.

## Plastic: The Facts



Plastics account for 10% of the total waste we generate



50% of the plastic we use is used ONCE and then thrown away

94% of Fulmars (seabirds) in the North Sea have ingested plastic



At least EIGHT MILLION TONNES of plastic enters our oceans every year



Over 100,000 marine mammals and 1 million seabirds die every year from ingestion or entanglement in plastic litter



Plastic bags are used for an average of TWELVE minutes, but a single plastic bag has a life expectancy of up to **1000 years**

## People Power!

Seabins are only a small part of the solution. In Bangor their value is in raising awareness of marine plastic as an issue rather than removing the 8 million tonnes of plastic entering the oceans each year.

**You can help!**



## The Big Plan

for Ards and North Down

### Outcome 5

All people in Ards and North Down feel pride from having access to a well managed sustainable environment

# TAKE ACTION

Say **NO** to single use plastic



## CONTACTING US

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 T: @thebigplanAND

## Play the Big Game!

Would your local community group like to play the Big Game?

In 2017, we asked you what issues were important to you. Some of the issues you told us about were:

- Educational underachievement
- Access to public transport
- Social isolation
- Skills and employment
- Affordable housing
- Protection of our local environment

We want to find out if the issues you told us about a few years ago are still at the top of your list. This will help us to prioritise what we should focus on over the next few years.

The Big Game can be played with individuals and teams. Instead of answering a survey or questionnaire, the Big Game allows you to select the important issues, think about what actions could help and who needs to be involved to make a difference.

If you would like to find out more, please contact us and we will be happy to come out to chat to you and show you the Big Game in action.



### Stay informed

Stay part of the conversation by signing up for this [newsletter](#), following us on [twitter](#) or view the community planning section hosted on Ards and North Down Borough Council's [website](#).

### Ards and North Down's strategic partners include:

