COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TOOLKIT

Ards development bureau & Community Network

NDCN

County Down Rural Community Network

Ards and North Down Borough Council

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TOOLKIT

WELCOME

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to this Community Development Toolkit which is the product of a partnership between County Down Rural Community Network (CDRCN), North Down Community Network (NDCN), Ards Development Bureau and Community Network (ADB&CN) and the Community Development section of Ards and North Down Borough Council (ANDBC).

Although each of these 'partners' have their own distinct areas of work and their own ways of going about their business, they share a real belief in the importance of the Community Development process in effectively identifying and addressing the needs of geographical neighbourhoods and communities of interest across our borough.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Community Development at its heart is about the active involvement of people in the issues that affect their lives and focuses on the relationship between individuals and groups and the institutions which shape their everyday lives. There is no 'one size fits all' in community development. What matters is what works for local communities. The key purpose of Community Development is to work with communities experiencing disadvantage enabling them to act collectively to identify needs and rights, clarifying objectives and act to bring about change, within a democratic framework which respects the needs and rights of others.

Community Development is a process which is based on a commitment to equal partnership between all those involved enabling a sharing of skills, awareness, knowledge, experience, enhancing social capital and increasing community benefit to bring about change for disadvantaged communities. It can take place with both communities of interest or in geographical neighbourhoods or indeed wherever people come together to identify what is relevant to them, and act to resolve issues of common concern.

Community Development recognises the need to celebrate diversity and differences and actively confront oppression however it may manifest itself. It attempts to challenge social exclusion, poverty, disadvantage and discrimination in all its forms. Through encouraging a process of active participation, we encourage social inclusion. This process is not one that can be done 'to' people but must be done with and by them.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT VALUES

Community Development National Occupational Standards outline 5 key values that underpin community development work:

1. **Equality and Social Justice**
2. **Anti-Discrimination**
3. **Collective Action**
4. **Community Empowerment**
5. **Working and Learning Together**

1 Equality and Social Justice

These values are aimed at addressing inequality in all its forms, increasing inclusiveness and fostering and promoting diversity. They are concerned with establishing communities that are supportive of all people.

2 Anti-Discrimination

Discrimination is often the underlying cause behind the lack of inclusion in our local communities. Discrimination is the unfair treatment of a person or group of people because of a particular characteristic such as gender, disability, age, ethnic origin, skin colour, nationality, sexual orientation and/or religious belief. Anti-discriminatory practice aims to counteract the negative impact of discrimination on local communities.

3 Collective Action

Collective Action is practice which encourages communities to come together with a view to organise, influence and take action. The form of this action can be either be collaborative with other social agents to address local needs or it may be more 'direct' action highlighting the need for social change and may be challenging towards and for various statutory and voluntary organisations.

4 Community Empowerment

This is about ensuring that individuals and communities are equipped, informed, skilled and confident in their abilities to define, by themselves, their priorities, agendas and ultimately any actions they may wish to put in place. At its basic level it is about the right of communities to be consulted, involved and ultimately be given the opportunity to influence the decision making process that affects their daily lives.

5 Working and Learning Together

Through working and learning together we hope to encourage good practice. Collective learning assists in promoting and valuing the sharing of skills, knowledge and experience across the sector. This type of learning builds on the experiences of local communities for the most part and encourages reflection on practice, values and principles.

With these key values at the heart of Community Development, shaping 'what' we do and 'how' we do it, we aim to empower and improve the lives of people in geographical neighbourhoods and communities of interest or identity across the borough. Community Development enables people and groups to work collectively to bring about positive social change. The CD process starts from where people are at initially and enables communities to work together to identify their own needs; take collective action using their strengths and resources; develop confidence, skills and knowledge; challenge unequal power relationships and promote social justice, equality and inclusion, in order to improve the quality of their lives and the communities and societies they are a part of.

It is our hope that local communities in Ards and North Down will find this Toolkit helpful and informative.

OUR COMMUNITY NEEDS

Local people normally come together in communities when they feel there are burning injustices in their local area, or they feel their particular cause or interest group is being neglected or treated poorly. They may feel that they can do something worthwhile and positive in their local area or may be able to highlight issues that they feel are important. It is often central to the success of such groups that they are clear about what the needs are in the local area. It is not really enough for group members to have a 'nagging feeling' that needs exist the group needs to prove and evidence that the need actually exists.

Just as a community may have its needs it should be realised that within our communities there may be many assets. Not least amongst these are the people who make up the community and all there many talents and abilities. All the positive things that go to make up our communities could be seen as assets, play areas, community centres, schools, churches, nurseries, open spaces, shops, take-aways, other community groups, voluntary group services and any statutory services that may input into the area such as public transport.

So, before you embark on attempting to conduct any form of research into your community/community of interest it might be best to clearly answer the following questions:

WHY	– is the research/audit necessary (to challenge service provision; to assess the impact of the policies of statutory/voluntary agencies, to assess community priorities)?
WHAT	– is the research question? – methods will be used and why? – resources need to be put in place to ensure and support participation? – will you actually do with the results of your research/audit when you get them?
WHO	– needs to be involved (other agencies, other community associations in the area, other relevant stakeholders)? – is actually going to carry out the research/audit? – is the target group for your research/audit?
HOW	– will the research/audit be resourced/funded? – many participants will be involved? – will information be gathered? – will the information gathered be analysed? – will community feedback be given? – will any findings be acted upon?
WHEN	– will the research/audit start/finish? – will progress or difficulties be reviewed? – will results be available?

All fairly basic questions but helpful if at least put out there from the outset to direct your research or audit. Its also important to realise that a lot of the information you might require to get going initially might already be out there in research already carried out by other organisations. Such 'desk top' research might be a good starting point.

In order to assess the needs and resources in any given community or community of interest it might be a good idea to carry out a SWOT analysis. Such an analysis looks at the: -

Strengths

A strength could be any factor that makes your community a better place to live in. This can include things like the local services existing in the area (schools, shops, community facilities etc), open spaces in the area, the level of people willing to volunteer in the community, the skills base of local people. These are attributes that might contribute to positive outcomes for the community.

Weaknesses

A weakness could be anything that makes the community less appealing to live in. These could include a poor transport network, lack or gaps in services in the area (schools, shops etc etc), perceived image of the area or any other perceived problems in the area. These are attributes that might contribute to negative outcomes for the community.

Opportunities

This usually concerns the possibilities that might exist for the area in the future. This might include things like new funding streams, building positive relationships with service providers, changes in government policy etc. These are external conditions that may prove useful to the community in achieving its aims in the future.

Threats

This usually concerns any negative aspects that might affect the area in the future. Cuts in funding, school numbers falling leading to closure, additional building in the area leading to drain on existing resources. These are external conditions that may prove problematic for the community in achieving their aims in the future.

At its very basic the SWOT process will throw up some of the real issues affecting communities or groups and give some themes for further consultation and needs analysis.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Community consultation has become a bit of a 'flavour of the month' with every statutory body, large voluntary service provider now tasked to actually ask the communities they serve how they would best like their services delivered to them in their locality. Although this should be viewed in a positive light at times groups and volunteers suffer from 'consultation fatigue'

As a community organisation you will need to consult with your respective communities around your plans for the area and to try and gauge if the groups perceptions, possibly the results of your SWOT analysis, are accurate.

OUR COMMUNITY NEEDS

QUESTIONNAIRES

A standard approach to finding out peoples views on things can involve carrying out a community Questionnaire. There have been leaps and bounds in how these can be carried out and various online models such as 'Survey Monkey' or 'Citizen Space' can do the whole shebang from design to results for you with you simply devising the questions you would like.

The questions however are key to you getting the information you require. Generally, there are two different types of question that can be asked. 'Open' questions are questions that respondents can have a wide range of answers to them. They allow respondents to reflect giving a wide range of individual responses and can result in difficulties in analysing responses in a meaningful way.

On the other hand 'closed' questions generally are answered through an agreed set of options or can be 'Yes' or 'No' answers. This can have the effect of limiting peoples options or possibly suggest that there are no alternatives to the options given.

For example an 'open' question could be:-
'What changes do you feel would improve your local community?'

Whilst a 'closed' question might be:-
'This community could be improved by providing:'
a Better public transport
b A community centre
c A safe place for children to play
d Traffic calming

The strengths of questionnaires are:-

- Relatively easy to design
- Low cost
- Can potentially gather info from a large group of people
- Are time bound

The weaknesses of questionnaires are:-

- Low response rates – especially postal questionnaires!
- Respondants are usually self selecting and may not be 'representative' of any given community with regards to the make up of that community – ie in terms of age,gender, cultural background and so on. This might 'skew' the findings.
- As mentioned earlier they can be difficult to analyse especially if a lot of 'open' questions are used.

FOCUS GROUPS

These are basically groups of 8–16 folk getting together with a very clear focus on the issue to be examined/explored. The folks involved should usually come from a diverse background but possibly have a common interest in the issue being explored. For example they may be service users of a particular service.

Here the use of 'open' questions to kick start the session and get people talking is useful. For example, *'How do you think we might improve service 'x' for local people?'* The ensuing facilitated discussion is then led to a concluding or summary point which can be used as a priority setting exercise around the issue under examination. It is hoped that the discussion will work towards a consensual end point although majority / minority viewpoints can also be recorded.

Focus groups benefit from a competent facilitator to keep the groups focused, ensure that all voices are heard, prompt the group and reflect back what the group may be saying. The facilitator should also effectively record the session and be able to feed back and write up the results of the session.

The strengths of Focus Groups are:

- They provide an opportunity for active participation
- Generate new / original ideas through group discussion
- Can build consensus

The weaknesses of Focus Groups are:-

- They can be dominated by one or two voices
- People may feel uncomfortable talking in the group setting
- Without clear ground rules and a strong facilitator, dissent and disagreement can be generated rather than consensus.
- Keeping a detailed record of the debate can be difficult

NOTES

SO... YOU WANT TO BE ON A COMMITTEE

Every community organisation has a group of people to manage its affairs. This is often called **the Management Committee** although it may also be called **the Executive Committee, Board of Trustees** or **Steering Committee.**

Occasionally a very small group may not have a committee as such as its entire membership makes up its governing body. We will use the term 'the committee' as a catch-all for the governing body of any community group.

Broadly speaking it is the committee's role to ensure that the community organisation does what it is set up to do, remains financially solvent and operates within the confines of its governing documents and the law. In furtherance of these broad roles the committee may have to carry out the following responsibilities :-

- Working together and making decisions
- Keeping the organisation on track
- Looking after the Finances
- Fundraising / Applying for Grants
- Equality and Diversity
- Health and Safety, Safeguarding and Insurance
- Regulations and Licences
- Events Management
- Delivering Projects
- Charity registration
- Legal liability of committee members
- Paid staff
- Volunteers
- Owning or leasing premises
- Dealing with crisis/ all the stuff that nobody else is jumping up and down to do!!

All members of committees play an important function in the life of their organisation and it is the role of 'all' the committee to scrutinise and agree all the work of the committee in ensuring that the community organisation does what it was set up to do. Within committees individuals may adopt both informal and formal roles. We will look in some detail at the formal roles that groups may bestow on some of their colleagues but it is important that we also are aware of the informal roles that committee members may adopt. These informal roles ensure that the committee is kept focused on their main tasks and are kept together as a group. Some of these task centred roles include someone who could be seen as an initiator who provides the group with good ideas and starts things off; someone who clarifies what is being said and possibly helps the group see the bigger picture; someone who gives clear and relevant information to the group; and someone who asks basic or at times challenging questions in the right spirit.

Roles that might maintain the group and keep it together include the supporter or person who gives some encouragement to group members, helps ease tensions and creates a good atmosphere; a joker can provide a bit of light relief and assists the group in letting off steam in a positive manner; a group observer may comment on how the group is progressing and in doing so help it get over hurdles and tensions that might exist.

So, there are many informal roles that committee members carryout and their roles may also change from time to time depending on the circumstances within the organisation. All these roles are important in the effective functioning of the organisation and ensuring that everyone feels supported and valued as a committee member.

Committees also have more formal roles and holders of these roles are usually called the Office Bearers of the committee. Usually each committee would elect a Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer. We will briefly outline the main roles of these office bearers.

THE CHAIRPERSON

The Chairpersons role usually falls into five main areas:-

- **Chairing committee and wider organisational meetings**
- **Assisting the committee to work together as a team**
- **Maintaining an overview of the work of the organisation**
- **The main contact person for the organisation**
- **A figurehead for the organisation**

Prior to any meetings of the organisations committee the Chairperson and Secretary would normally set the agenda for the meeting. Chairing actual meetings however is viewed as the central role of the Chairperson. During meeting they will:-

- Welcome members and any guests
- Ensure the agenda is followed
- Set appropriate time limits on agenda items depending on the level of importance. It is important to start and finish on time.
- Ensure that everyone has their say
- Ensure that any decisions are fully understood by everyone before going on to the next agenda item
- Ensure that important decisions taken and action points arrived at are recorded by the secretary

Although the chairing of committee meetings is the most visible role of the chairperson behind the scenes it is incumbent on the chairperson to ensure the smooth running of the organisation, helping the committee to work together as a team, have an overview of the organisations work and being a first point of contact for statutory or other bodies or groups. All vital and time-consuming roles, but vital in the healthy life of the organisation.

SO... YOU WANT TO BE ON A COMMITTEE

THE SECRECTARY

The Secretary's role falls into 3 main areas:-

- **Taking minutes at the committee and general meetings.**
- **Keeping people informed about the organisations activities.**
- **Receiving and responding to information, emails and letters and maintaining effective records and administration.**

Minutes are not a verbatim account of the meeting but rather should give a flavour of what has been discussed, what decisions have been made and, importantly, whose responsibility it is to carry out the actions decided upon.

Keeping people informed includes the very basics of date, time and venue of meetings and ensuring that minutes and agendas are received in a timely fashion. This area of the role also includes the promotion of the work of the group. It's not the Secretary's role however to make all the decisions about the publicity and general communication of the organisation but the committee needs to think about this and delegate tasks accordingly.

Any information received should be dealt with effectively and in a prompt manner. If for example an invitation to the organisation for an outside event comes in the secretary may forward it to the next meeting if it gives enough time to address the invitation, or email the committee to see if anyone is free and willing to attend if appropriate. The timely handling of such matters is essential for the smooth running of the organisation.

The Secretary acts in many ways as the custodian of the groups governing documents and as such should attempt to ensure that the organisation remains within its remit.

THE TREASURER

The Treasurer has the day to day responsibility of looking after the groups money. Its important that they have an overview of the financial position of the organisation which helps it make informed decisions around issues that have financial implications.

It is important to remember that the Treasurer does not exercise sole responsibility for the organisations finances. It is for the committee or indeed at times the organisation as a whole to decide how funds will be raised and spent. It is also the committees role to make sure the organisations money is being handled properly.

The Treasurer's role therefore covers two main areas:-

- **Keeping financial records for the group**
- **Keeping the group informed of their financial situation**

Keeping financial records for the organisation includes, keeping a written record of any monies going in or out of the organisations funds; keep and check bank statements; keep receipts for items purchased; keep all paperwork for all grants received and ensure the committee is kept informed of any stipulations regarding the spending of such grants; keep a system for paying any expenses and petty cash.

Central to the role of the Treasurer is ensuring that the committee are kept up to date on the financial situation of the organisation. At each regular committee meeting it would be useful if the Treasurer could tell the group, how much money there was, how much has been spent since the last meeting and on what. It would also be an opportunity to highlight any problems or issues such as cash flow for the group. At Annual General Meetings it would be necessary to give a more detailed report covering the whole year.

NOTES

VALUING VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are people who generously give their time to do positive things in communities and groups to help others; they are unpaid but are of great value to the community and voluntary sector. There are a number of stages to working with volunteers including:

RECRUITMENT

INDUCTION AND TRAINING

SUPPORTING AND MOTIVATING

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS

WORKING THROUGH PROBLEMS/DIFFICULTIES

RECRUITMENT

There are a support agencies who can help with this process, please see the 'Helpful places and people' section. Here are some stages of the recruitment to consider:

Decide the role

It is vital that you have a clear idea of the volunteer role that you would like someone to fill, their roles and responsibilities need to be carefully considered and made very clear. If there are particular skills you would like people to have, ask for specific examples about their experience. Please remember to have a plan in place to help support volunteers during their time with you.

Advertise, interview or have a chat

Create a simple role description to outline the opportunity, try to make as many people aware as possible of the opportunity so that you are being inclusive and making the opportunity open to all. Meet with people either in an informal interview or for a coffee and chat to see ensure that they are a good fit for the volunteer position, this also allows for any questions or queries they might have.

ACCESS NI

There some volunteer positions that require safeguarding checks, which are criminal history checks to ensure that children, young people and vulnerable people are kept safe. Please go to: www.nidirect.gov.uk then search for 'access ni' for details to see if the position you are recruiting for requires the check. See Helpful People and Places for more help and information.

Not everything goes according to plan, so please don't be surprised if:

- Lots of people enquire about volunteering but few actually apply.
- If circumstances change for volunteers and they are no longer able to help out or stay involved.
- Some people come along for a few meetings and then don't come back.
- Access NI check takes longer then expected.
- Volunteers need a bit more time and support than expected in the early days, this should change.

INDUCTION AND TRAINING

Volunteers like anyone joining a new team or group are likely to be both excited and nervous it's therefore really important to warmly welcoming people into your organisation/ group. They often have many questions and require useful information, here are some helpful tips and hints:

- Ensure you have a clear written description of the role for the volunteer, review this with them and give space for volunteers to ask questions.
- Carry out an induction to walk them through the practical parts of the post, with a range of information from where the kitchen is for tea or coffee, all the way through to how to contact people and what to do if a problem arises. It would helpful to give them an induction pack with this information in it so they can refer to it later.
- If there is particular part of the post requiring training, it would be best to have this in place early on to ensure the volunteer to given all the knowledge and guidance to fulfil the role.
- Make training available to volunteers on an ongoing basis.
- Have a file of policies and procedures in place specifically for volunteers and give each volunteer their own copy.

SUPPORTING AND MOTIVATING

Voluntary work is really rewarding but can be hard work, so it's important to ensure that volunteers are supported and motivated on an ongoing basis. Depending on the person they could be motivated and supported in very different ways, so try to get some understanding of what inspires and motivates each volunteer and try to do some general things which meet these needs. Some examples of things which could help include:

- Agree with the volunteer to have regular planned informal support meetings to check-in and see how things are going.
- Help people do what lights them up – if there are things that the volunteer really doesn't like, want or feel equipped to do, try to avoid (or at least these and assign roles that they are energised by and enjoy.
- Remember to give positive/constructive feedback to volunteers and show them how their time is making a positive impact on people and/or communities.
- Say 'Thank You' this can be in person, or in the form of a celebration event to recognise and acknowledge the value of volunteers.
- Help with expenses (if possible) – some groups/ organisations have a small budget to pay for volunteer expenses, this can be really helpful if it costs volunteers to come to your organisation to help, so please make all volunteers aware of this if you have it in place and the process for claiming.
- Value everyone equally - people always need to feel equally seen, valued and supported to create a good team spirit and carryout tasks and activities, so it is helpful to ensure that everyone is treated fairly and well.

VALUING VOLUNTEERS

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS

There are important similarities and differences between these two roles, for more detailed information go to the Governance section. Both are voluntary roles so are unpaid; and both are aimed at doing good with, and for, communities.

The differences are:

Committee members:

- Are elected to the committee and normally sign up for at least 1 year and attend committee meetings.
- Have responsibilities for the governance, finance, administration, planning and future development of the community group or organisation.
- Can be elected as office bearers to have roles such as: chairperson, treasurer and secretary.

Volunteers:

- Often have a particular role such as wanting to help with an event or project, and should have a clear description of that role and their responsibilities.
- They are often only need to attend meetings related to the particular event or project that they involved in.
- They can sign up to be involved for as long or short a time that suits them.

WORKING THROUGH PROBLEMS OR DIFFICULTIES

Nothing ever runs completely smoothly, so it's better to identify a problem early in order to address and resolve it as soon as possible. Problems can arise with people, processes or other external matters, it's really hard to predict and prepare for. So it's recommended to have a number of important policies and procedures in place to help at difficult times, such as:

- Have a code of conduct for volunteers about how people should behave and communicate, even including some do's and don't's.
- Don't avoid conflict or difficulties because they will grow and become worse.

JARGON BUSTER

ACCESS NI
the safeguarding check needed for many roles

INDUCTION
a short training session for volunteers to help and support them in their role

TRANSPARENCY
the process of being open and honest

HELPFUL RESOURCES TO VIEW:

Leadership
www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action

Power of vulnerability
www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_on_vulnerability

Motivation
www.ted.com/talks/dan_pink_on_motivation

Success
www.ted.com/talks/richard_st_john_s_8_secrets_of_success

NOTES

CAMPAIGNING FOR CHANGE

Changes to society for the benefit of its citizens can sometimes be a challenge. Community groups and organisations have always been central to positive changes and developments in communities, but history shows that often making change can prove difficult and requires determination, commitment and an ongoing campaign to persuade decision makers to implement the changes needed. These changes can be anything from important changes in policies and legislation, through to communities campaigning for more resources to be invested in their areas or communities of interest. It can be tough work, but vital for community development and the improvement of people lives.

Each of the journeys are unique but there are a number of predictable barriers groups are likely to come up against; along with a few tried and tested helpful sources of information and support that could be valuable.

IDENTIFYING THE NEED

Often people are motivated to make change when they see or experience some sort of injustice. It is vital to be clear about what you are aiming to do.

There is no single way of identifying need but often an initial issue, experience or story of injustice can ripple out into other areas. However it is important to develop a wide range of evidence for the need being addressed the change being suggested. This can be done in a range of ways, but often requires research, support from other agencies, research online, meeting with other interested partners, pulling together information (both statistics and human stories) to present the case to the decision makers and those who are stakeholders in a position to help progress the change.

LEARN FROM OTHERS

It's often said that 'there is nothing new under the sun' meaning that it is possible that there has been groups or individuals on a similar path or campaign as yours. Please don't under estimate how happy and willing they could be to share their experience to help others learn from their lessons and avoid the pitfalls they experienced. It's therefore important to do some research and find out who is out there to help. It could be useful to search online, contact council or local community groups, networks and other organisations such as nicva.org for more information. Please see 'helpful people and places' for more information.

ASK AND LISTEN TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

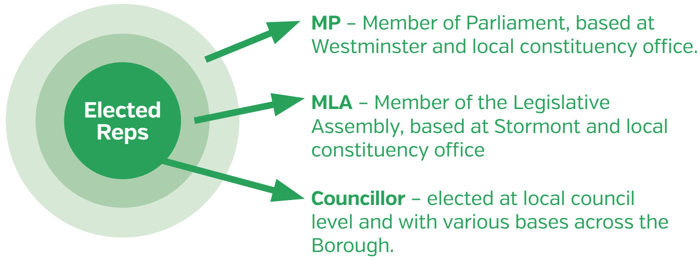
Engaging with the local community to make sure that people are involved in local decision making is really important to making change and improving community spirit. Central to this is taking the time to ask and really listen to people, their ideas, opinions and suggestions.

There will be lots of different views, so it's important to negotiate agreement and try meet the needs and expectations of as many people as possible.

A summary of key things to do include;

- Make sure the community is involved in the planning, delivery and evaluation.
- Identify, manage and communicate (asking and listening) to your stakeholders
- Consult widely - ages, backgrounds, gender, etc.
- Have a plan but be prepared to change it to take peoples opinions on board.
- Keep on communicating what is happening to the wider community to keep people involved and enthused.

Some useful resources can be found online, such as: activedemocracy.net/articles/principles_procedures_final.pdf



Your local political representatives can also be of assistance to you. The diagram above shows the layers of government and where the elected representatives are based.

GET HELP – CREATING PARTNERSHIPS AND CRITICAL FRIENDS

Leaning on people for help is an important part of the process of campaigning for change. Not only will it be very beneficial for people with different experiences and expertise to help inform and guide you, but they can also become valuable partners and champions of your project.

Many hands make light work, so don't be afraid to ask for help from others. The partners can come from a range of interests, experiences and sectors, but can all add value and come up with great ideas to help.

Critical friends are often people who can't be around too often but can offer advice from a distance or if a particular crisis or issue arises.

KEEP BUILDING AND KEEP GOING!

Not only tough, at times emotional and even exhausting, a top tip is to keep pressing on. It's important to remember that even a slow or small step forward, is a step closer to the goal. Change takes time, so it's important to balance working towards the goal with rest and time to reflect.

HELPFUL PLACES AND PEOPLE:

Contact your local councillors on: ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/about-the-council/find-my-councillor/
Contact your local MLA's on: niassembly.gov.uk/your-mlas/
Contact your local MP on: parliament.uk/get-involved/contact-your-mp/
Communicating better with people: ted.com/talks/celeste_headlee_10_ways_to_have_a_better_conversation
Creating positive change: southuniversity.edu/whoweare/newsroom/blog/6-easy-ways-to-create-positive-change
How to campaign: knowhownonprofit.org/campaigns/campaigning-and-influencing
How to fail forward: failforward.org/

CAMPAIGNING FOR CHANGE

NOTES

SOCIAL MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS

Letting people know what your group is aiming to do or achieve is very important; often referred to as 'PR', 'Communications' or 'Marketing'. These activities are important because they are often being used to; increase your group membership or supporters, to increase the number of people benefiting from your services, number of people attending your events, or indeed to help possible funders or supporters understand the value and impact of what your group does.

There are a range of different things that can be used to create a positive and informative message about why your group exists and what it is aiming to do. They include:

- People to people communication
- Hard copy information – booklets, leaflets, posters etc.
- Social media

Because person to person and hard copy information have been around and used for a long time, the focus of this section will be to give an overview of the types of social media available and then some useful tips and hints about social media and how best to make it work for you.

COMMUNICATE – USE SOCIAL MEDIA WELL

Social media can be very important, but it must be updated often and used to promote the change you would like to create. There are a range of options available:

Facebook is a social networking website where users can post comments, share photographs and post links to news or other interesting content on the web, chat live, and watch short-form video.

Twitter is an on online news and social networking site where people communicate in short messages called tweets.

Instagram is a social networking app made for sharing photos and videos from a smartphone. Similar to Facebook or Twitter, everyone who creates an Instagram account has a profile and a news feed. When you post a photo or video on Instagram, it will be displayed on your profile.

YouTube is a video sharing service where users can watch, like, share, comment and upload their own videos. The video service can be accessed on PCs, laptops, tablets and via mobile phones.

1 SET SMART GOALS

Groups should set goals that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound. An example of a good SMART goal for social media marketing would be something like *"We'll increase our Twitter response rate by 10% by the end of the next quarter."* An example of this broken down into SMART goals could be:

Specific:	*We've specifically identified the social channel (Twitter) and a measurement (response rate).*
Measurable:	*The response rate can be measured from the social media platform (Twitter)*
Achievable:	*The goal isn't too big and seems possible i.e 10%*
Relevant:	*Our goal will have an impact on our overall social media presence, so is relevant*
Time-bound:	*The goal has a deadline – end of the next quarter*

2 IDENTIFY YOUR PEOPLE (AUDIENCE)

After you've outlined your goals, you need to think about who the people are that you are trying to communicate with or 'speak to', this could be local residents, funders, government departments, other community or voluntary groups etc.

Once you know who are you communicating with, then think about the methods that they use to communicate, i,.e Twitter, Facebook, Instagram etc and what are the times that they tend to post most?

Then target your posts in terms of times, content etc which will make it more likely to get the attention and interest of the people you are targeting.

An example could be a Friday evening post about your weekend event just as parents and families are settling for the evening to plan their weekend activities.

3 BE HUMAN

This is very important, because one of the worst mistakes to make on social media is coming across as faceless without a heart, face or personality.

Remember people love the ability to connect to other people, so make sure your communications feel genuine, caring and connect to people. Seek relationships, not just 'followers', because it's supposed to be 'social' so treat it like a relationship with a friend. Do things like: answer the questions people ask and reply when people mention or share your information; even just saying "thanks". Don't just retweet or share other peoples or group content; make a comment or start a conversation. Humour, so long a appropriate is a great tool for connection and relationship building.

4 USE IMAGES

People are drawn in by a clear and simple message, particularly if there is a good visual and relevant visual along side it. Images with people, animals, food and humour are some of the most viewed, so make sure you take lots of photos of what you are doing and use them wisely.

Add relevant keywords in your posts or tweets as this will help increase the likelihood of your group's name popping up on a search.

Make sure you share content that is relevant to the people and other organisations in your area of interest. Social media is social after all, so don't be afraid to follow others and share their information too, because connecting with popular accounts that are doing well with also help promote your group or organisation.

5 STAY ACTIVE

Keeping the energy and motivation going is vital to ensure that social media and your other methods of communication are effective. It's better to do a little, often, than to do a lot for a short period of time but then have lengthy gaps in between. People will not stay connected or interested if you aren't reaching out to them on a regular basis. So make sure your SMART plan includes how often you will regularly post, tweet, share etc.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS

NOTES

EVENT PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

However big or small your event is going to be, good planning is the key factor. The following is a general checklist for the successful delivery of community events.

MAKE SURE YOUR OBJECTIVES ARE CLEAR

- Discuss what you want your event to achieve – will it raise the profile of your group? Will it bring people together? Are you aiming to raise money or just to have fun?
- Who are you hoping to attract to the event? Will there be activities for a range of different people? Will the event be a public or private invitational event?

MAKE SURE YOU HAVE PLENTY OF TIME

Start planning your event well in advance to give your group/organisation enough time to organise everything.

PLAN OUT THE WORK – AND WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WHEREVER POSSIBLE TO SHARE THE WORKLOAD!

Working together on a timetable with all the main dates and deadlines on it can help clarify how much work there is to do, and when. You may want to establish an event planning group to organise the event, with additional volunteers and marshals to help out on the day. Be clear about what the roles and tasks are, and who is doing what.

Most events are too much work for two or three people. Try to get more people involved by:

- Advertise planning meetings widely on social media, local papers, word of mouth;
- Think about the timing and location of your planning meetings, and asking potential volunteers what suits them best, For example – working people might only be able to attend meetings at night time.
- Producing early publicity for the event, which also serves as an appeal for volunteers to get involved or put forward ideas/suggestions.
- Collate a checklist of all jobs to be completed and agree who is doing what and set a timescale.
- Send a letter asking local people, volunteers, businesses or community support organisations/agencies if they could pledge resources or a small amount of time on the day. Other in-kind contributions include venues, transport, specialist expertise, contributions of food, entertainment, raffle prizes, etc.
- Work in partnership and think about asking other local groups/organisations to get involved. They may have the expertise to assist in organising a major aspect of the event.

Make sure everyone knows what is going on. Reporting regularly to the other people organising the event and to the whole group is good practice and can prevent an individual or a planning committee from making costly mistakes.

Be clear about how, when and what you are going to communicate with each other as a group. Will you email a list of organisers and volunteers? Will you meet on a weekly basis? How will people know when you've completed a task?

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Health and safety

Take care to do what you can to avoid accidents and injuries at your event. It is good practice and often a contractual requirement set by funders/statutory bodies to conduct a risk assessment and forward copies of the risk assessment plan, to help make sure your group/organisation have thought things through systematically.

First aid

Decide who will be responsible for first aid on the day. For large events, you could ask a first aid organisation to attend. For example – St. Johns Ambulance. Even if you are just using your own volunteers, you need to have a visible first aid point at the event and people who are taking the role of first aiders. Some of your volunteers may already have first aid training. If not, you may need to arrange first aid training.

Transport and Traffic Management

How will people get to the event? Make sure your publicity gives details of public transport and parking. Will you need to organise a road traffic management to apply to the Council for a Road Closure Order? Does your group need to hire a road management company to develop a traffic management plan and erect signs in the surrounding streets?

Access

You should do what you can to ensure that disabled people can take part in your event. For example, if possible, choose a venue which is accessible for wheelchair users, and provide an interpreter for speeches and performances if any special needs are identified. Put information on your publicity about how accessible your event will be, so that people will know in advance if their needs are going to be catered for. You could also invite people to contact you in advance if they have a particular access need, so that you can adjust your plans to make the event accessible for them.

Children's activities

If you plan to have children's activities, be clear in your publicity whether you are providing care for unsupervised children, or whether children need to bring an adult to look after them.

Photography

Do you want or need to photograph or film your event? You should put up signs informing people if they might be photographed, and you should gain parental consent before photographing children.

Insurance

Consider if you need to take out public liability insurance for the event.

Bookings, Permissions and Licences

Make sure any venues required are booked and confirmed in writing. Think about what equipment you will need to hire and check everything is working well in advance. Check with entertainers/speakers what they expect you to provide and what they are bringing.

EVENT PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

Find out about the regulations for all venues/spaces early on – the licensing process can take months before being granted by the Council. You may need to consider:

- Temporary event notice
- Street collection licence
- Road closure permit
- Permission to use public land

Please contact Ards and North Down Borough Council Licensing Department for more details and further information.

MAKE A BUDGET FOR THE EVENT

Take into account all your costs and allow for unexpected costs, so that you can cover all aspects of the event. For example:

- Venue hire
- Publicity
- Hire of equipment
- Decorations
- Entertainers/speakers/facilitators
- Licenses, road closures, traffic management
- Prizes, refreshments, face paints, art materials
- Transport
- Phone bills, postage and other admin
- Insurance
- Volunteer Expenses
- Childcare
- Catering
- First aid personnel and equipment

Plan how you are going to cover them:

- Entrance fees?
- Grants or sponsorship?
- Raffle?
- Sale of refreshments?
- Money-making stalls?
- Charging stallholders or catering suppliers?

PUBLICITY

- Who do you want your publicity to reach?
  Think about where those people are most likely to see your publicity and what will attract them to the event.
- How will the posters and leaflets be distributed?
  Who will do it?
- Will you be using social media?
  You could set up an event on Facebook and invite people to it. You could also use Twitter to send out reminders about your event in the weeks and days running up to it.
- You could also try to get something in the local media, such as your local community newsletter, or ask the Chronicle/Spectator or local radio station to promote the event.

It is best to get publicity out early, even if this means that it can't include all the final details of the event. You might want to do one piece of publicity as early as possible, a save the date which outlines the date of the event and basic information about it, and another closer to the time, which includes more detailed information.

PLAN IN DETAIL

- Shortly before the event, you need to run through the day in detail with everyone involved:
- Where will everybody be on the day? What will each person be responsible for doing?

EVENT PLANNING CHECKLIST

- ✓ Are all the jobs covered, or do you need to do a last-minute ring round to make some additional arrangements or changes?
- ✓ Have you set up all the admin (forms/paperwork/attendance sheets) that will be needed on the day? e.g. forms for writing down money you take in, photo consent forms, health and safety, risk assessments, licenses etc.
- ✓ How will equipment and volunteers get to and from the venue?
- ✓ Will you be able to take hired equipment directly to and from the event, or will it need to be stored?
- ✓ Who is responsible for money on the day?
- ✓ Will you need a lot of change? If so, contact your bank at least a week in advance and ask them to put some aside for you.
- ✓ What will happen if your group/organisation are hosting an outdoor event and it rains? Is there a back-up venue?
- ✓ Do you have enough time, materials and staff/volunteers for setting up and clearing up?

ON THE DAY

- Take photos and record feedback from participants, stallholders and volunteers.
- Give staff and volunteers support and encouragement, and make sure everyone gets a break.
- Keep track of money in and out. Agree and operate an effective money management plan.

AFTERWARDS

If you've organised a fundraising event with different stalls or activities, you might want to count takings separately, so that you know which activities made money and which didn't do so well. This will help you make a more accurate budget for any future events.

Remember to thank your staff, volunteers and helpers, and report back to and thank funders, sponsors, etc. For example, if you have held a community fundraising event, you may want to let people how much your event raised on the day.

It's always worth having a brief discussion with your group/organisation after an event is over, to talk through what went well and badly on the day, and draw lessons for future events.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING/ENGAGING WITH STATUTORY AUTHORITIES

There are many different types of partnerships, and many different reasons that you might want to develop one. Partnership working is increasingly common – and still very challenging but in times of limited resources and funding, it can help with the following:

- Ideas Generation and develop project content, helping you to design future engagement activity
- Partnership members can share their skills, knowledge and resources to ensure activities are a success.
- Partners can also help you develop relationships with different groups, areas and build on existing relationships with local and regional agencies and statutory authorities.

You usually don't have to look too far to find relevant people to work with and widen participation including:

- family, friends and local residents
- colleagues you work or socialise with
- groups and volunteers doing similar work in other areas to widen participation levels
- outreach work with community organisations, resident groups, networks, schools, housing associations, libraries, colleges, local council community development teams and arts centres venues – there are lots of people who might also be looking to partner up on a project

Before you get started it is important to think through why you want to work in partnership – and why your partners might want to work with you.

BENEFITS OF HAVING A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH?

Successful partnerships are crucial to developing engagement projects, particularly when you are looking to sustain activity over a longer period of time with other organisations. These partnerships can be a catalyst for innovation, ideas, resources and attract new funding opportunities.

Partnerships can:

- Inspire great ideas – involving partners can help with the creative process. It can also be enjoyable working as part of a team.
- Add another dimension and share their experiences – colleagues from a different area, group or organisation can add more interest, energy and insight. Working with people who have previously taken part in other engagement activities can provide invaluable experience and assist with the development of partnership projects and activities.
- Provide essential insights – partners may have expertise in a host of relevant things such as understanding the needs of the local people, timings and logistics, and suggestions of others people to team up and work with.
- Increase capacity – partners can help reach a wider audience. For example – a key contact within the Councils Community Development team could enable the partnership to access joint funding to run an event and the Community Networks could provide support and practical assistance for the event.
- Provide an opportunity – Partnership working helps promote joint working to support a common goal, rather than 'reinventing the wheel.'
- Help you reach new audiences – partners may already have existing relationships with members of the local community in surrounding towns and villages, such as schools, residents' associations, networks, libraries, charitable organisations.
- Provide a venue – if you need a physical venue a partner may be able to help e.g. Network Centres, resource bases, community centres, councils, businesses, museums, libraries or other shared spaces. Partners may also help with hosting the event, access requirements, advertising and be able to provide other equipment or resources.
- Provide expertise – partners can be crucial in providing expertise and valuable experience. For example, if you want to build a website you may find partners with specialist technical knowledge and skills.
- Strengthen relationships – working with partners can deepen and strengthen your relationships as well as introducing you to new people and new ideas. This may lead to other projects in the future.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Partnership management begins even before any project gets off the ground. There are a number of things you should agree upfront, in order to avoid problems later:

- Invite involvement at the start - when you are developing your ideas. Partners may be able to identify potential difficulties, the logistics of certain aspects of your activity and may have solutions and good ideas. Getting partners involved at the start ensures that everyones needs and expectations are taken into account in any future activities or events.
- What's in it for each partner? Ensure all partners have a frank conversation about right from the start as misperceptions can lead to problems later down the line.
- Establish leadership, roles and responsibilities early on. Agree on key points of contact for all partners and agree who's doing what and when.
- Communication. Make sure that the key points of contact within the partnership organisations are kept informed and ensure contact details are shared.
- What happens if nothing happens? In the first 'storming' stage of a new partnership it is hard to imagine anything will ever go wrong – but it is important to establish what should happen if partners do not keep their end of the bargain? Check who will take responsibility for a project or wind the partnership work up if needs be.
- Plan, plan, plan. Once you have agreed aims and objectives, set key milestones and deliverables for each partner. It is advisable to draw up written agreements to ensure everyone is clear (whether in the form of formal written contracts, or meeting minutes/actions which have been circulated and approved via email).
- And plan again. Timelines are invaluable ensuring each partner knows what they are doing and when. A detailed plan will enable the partnership to manage the process effectively, ensuring that responsibility for each step has been assigned to the relevant partnership member.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING/ENGAGING WITH STATUTORY AUTHORITIES

- Agree a clear joint vision at the start – and try to make it manageable. It can be a good idea to start small and deliver something really good – than take on something too big and fall at the first hurdle.
- Be flexible. Try to stick to the aims and objectives, whilst remembering to be flexible and be prepared to adapt and make changes.

STAYING IN TOUCH

Lack of communication is the most common reason partnerships falter. Effective communication can help to build relationships, keep things working well and make people feel included:

- Maintain regular contact with each of your partners. If things change, communicate these changes.
- Schedule regular opportunities to check in. This way, you will monitor progress while at the same time making your partners feel included and supported.
- Don't just circulate information to the person in charge – copy in all those involved.
- Schedule regular planning meetings, identifying a project board with key representatives, or using structured feedback mechanisms.
- Find out your partners' preferred methods of communication – are they "tech savvy" and love twitter or do they prefer face to face meetings or emails.
- What are their time constraints? Some partners may be out of contact at certain times, and may have capacity issues that you should be sensitive to.
- Reflect – monitor your progress continually and adjust where necessary. Work out what is working well, what is not working and whether milestones will be achieved. This is essential in managing your project and meeting your deadlines but will also inform you on the best way to manage partnerships in the future.

RESPECTING PARTNERS' NEEDS

Your partners will each have their own reasons for getting involved. They will each have their own ideas about what they would like to take from the project.

Make sure that you are aware of what each partner wants to get out of the partnership and agree on shared priorities. Ensure that a partnership is mutually beneficial – that way everyone will pull together to make it a success. Other things to consider include:

- Take time to get to know your partners and their style of working, take their methods into account when planning their involvement.
- Respect differences in style.
- Make sure that all partners are credited on any branding and publicity (and if you are using their company logo, find out about and adhere to their branding guidelines. Don't just grab the logo from the website – ask them for a high res copy).
- Respect the fact that your partners have other constraints and responsibilities within their own organisation – and that your project may not be their top priority.

HOW TO AVOID CONFLICT

Poor management can lead to the breakdown of partnerships, where partners feel they are not listened to, under-appreciated or are carrying more than their share of the workload. But there are a number of things you can do to avoid these problems before they arise:

- Build relationships with your partners, keep them in the loop and allow them to communicate any feelings of dissatisfaction rather than letting them bubble under the surface.
- Don't choose partners whose interests conflict with your own (or with the interests of other partners). Ensure that you are partnered with the right person. Do they have the right kind of expertise? Are they in a position to agree to what you want them to deliver?
- Don't dismiss other partners ideas – they may know things that you don't know or highlight avenues you might not have explored.
- Make sure that everybody is happy with decisions made (and that the reasons behind certain decisions are fully communicated).
- Treat all partners equally – don't allow other partners to 'pull rank'. Create space for all partners to be heard.
- Finally – there comes a time when a partnership has run its course. If attempts to resolve conflict or stir up action have been unsuccessful it may be necessary to dissolve the partnership on good terms and go separate ways.

GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR BUILDING POSITIVE PARTNERSHIPS:

Partnerships between local groups and organisations are common across Ards and North Down Borough Council. Working in partnership can reap huge rewards and deliver extensive and surprising results, however partnerships aren't always plain sailing so here are a few good practice guidelines for a good partnership:

1 Be clear and honest from the start about what you want to get from a partnership and ask your partners to do the same. Share any uncomfortable truths and manage expectations, it will make things much easier in the long run.

2 Never agree to something that you know you can't deliver or which makes you feel uncomfortable just to get a partnership off the ground.

3 The best partnerships build on each partner bringing their strengths to the table. If you think you could do everything better than your partner, then why are you partnering with them? Equally, if they are better placed to deliver the whole project, why are they partnering with you?

4 Don't form a partnership solely for the purpose of attracting funding as it may not have the desired outcome.

5 Put something about the partnership project in writing – an email will do. State what you have agreed each partner will do and when they will do it by.

6 Review the partnership regularly – if something isn't working, say so. If responsibilities need reassigning, reassign them. Be flexible.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING/ENGAGING WITH STATUTORY AUTHORITIES

7 Be aware of changes to partner groups and organisations – e.g. staff changes meaning you may need to brief new members on the partnership background and any current activities/projects.

8 Most problems are caused by how organisations work differently day to day – e.g. delayed decision making, invoicing, things needing to be approved by a chain of command, use of logos, language in publicity materials. It helps if all partners give as much warning as possible and encourage them to do the same for you.

9 Accept that some projects and partnerships might never work – however it's better to stay on good terms and stay in touch as there may be other ways to work together in the future.

10 Most importantly, have fun and enjoy being involved in partnership working.

EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS

Nowadays we call it Networking. The questions it raises are: Why? With whom? How?

Why Network?

- To acquire and exchange information and skills
- To gather support
- To enable, or increase, our capacity to act as a catalyst
- To market our profile and range of work
- To maintain openness
- To stimulate new ideas
- To develop a balanced strategic approach to our work

With whom should we Network?

- Other local groups who are also involved in the development of our area
- Regional groups who may be able to provide support, training and ideas
- Similar groups from other areas. They may already have done it; they may have done it better!
- EU-wide networks. For the daring and those with plenty of travel expenses. Perhaps not a realistic option for all, although one that is coming increasingly within our reach through technology.

How?

- By bringing people in instead of sending people out. This is inevitably more inclusive, and will often help outside agencies come to a better understanding of the situation in which you are functioning

MANAGING THE RELATIONSHIPS WITH STATUTORY BODIES

In recent years new relationships have been developed between statutory and community bodies.

When a community or its representative engage with statutory bodies, most likely, two agendas will have collided around a particular theme – that of the community and that of the statutory body. The challenge for both parties is in bridging the gap, ensuring that the liaison has positive outcomes.

- This arrangement should be based on an ethos of equality, recognising the community's strengths, abilities and value.
- There should be a clear medium to long-term strategy that takes an overall view of the community and avoid becoming ensnared in single issues.
- Relationships should either be of shared responsibility or community led, with full participation in agenda-setting.
- In community-initiated links, the community or group should attempt to target key and sympathetic personnel within the statutory agency
- There should be a clarity of objectives and/or a recognition and acknowledgement of differing objectives and agendas.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING/ENGAGING WITH STATUTORY AUTHORITIES

NOTES

FORMING A COMMUNITY GROUP FACTSHEET

Community Groups generally form in answer to local needs, this can be within an Estate, Village or Town or it can be broader in terms and be across the Borough or Northern Ireland. The common issue/s will determine if your group will be geographical or thematic based. For example addressing street cleansing or dog fouling likely to be local (geographical), alternatively tackling Suicide Prevention could be local and/or be regional and would be seen as thematic. This guide sets out some simple steps to follow if you wish to form a community group, such as:

- Who are the people you wish to reach to be part of the group?
- What is the need/issue to be addressed?
- Where is be best place to engage people?
- When, as in what time/day best suits to engage people?
- How, what method will see you engage the most number of people?

ENGAGING PEOPLE

Generally, although not exclusive, many organisations use the simple model of holding a public meeting to facilitate the formation of a community group. Other models may include holding a Community Drop-In session, making personal contact by going door to door, piggy back other community activities ie Family Fun Day, organising a focus group on an identified theme.

Once you have identified your model to engage the community for example a public meeting it is important to consider some simple facts, you should, where possible, ensure the venue chosen has good disabled access, decide on the most suitable date and time– check within the local community that your meeting does not clash with other community activities, and advertise the event through a range of methods–posters, social media, church notices, word of mouth, local press.

JARGON BUSTER

GEOGRAPHIC
based in a specific area

THEMATIC
based around a theme and can be across boundaries and areas – not location based

GETTING THE WORD OUT

To ensure your groups starts out with it best foot forward it is important at the stage of forming the group that you create publicity that will encourage people to get involved. Remember publicity should always be inclusive.

- **Posters**
  It is helpful to start by designing a poster advertising the public meeting–this should include in prominent position date, time, venue and subject matter. Also there should be contact details–email/telephone number, logos if applicable. The poster should be brief and to the point as people may only glance it in passing it should catch the eye. They should be put in up in shops, health centres, community buildings, Churches, if you are really keen consider dropping posters through peoples' doors as it is a very effective way of engaging people and making them aware of your public meeting.
- **Social Media**
  Social Media through Facebook is an excellent method of raising awareness of your public meeting, again you can put up a post or create an event encouraging people to like and share your post.
- **Press Release**
  You can design a simple press release similar to the poster above, and arrange for it to go to the local press and into Church notices.
- **Word of Mouth**
  Always an effective means of communication, contact can be made with local community and political representatives asking them to pass on the information about the formation of a community group.

PUBLIC MEETING

The public meeting itself should have an agenda, signing in sheet to get contact details of local community. If possible bring in an independent facilitator to oversee the process of forming a community group. The meeting should undertake:

- Discussion exercises on the needs/issues for the group to address.
- Discussion and agreement on the broad objectives of the group.
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Management Committee
- Nominations for election onto Management Committee for Community Group
- Questions and Answers
- Future meeting/s

FORMING A COMMUNITY GROUP FACTSHEET

NOTES

GOVERNANCE FACTSHEET

WHAT IS GOVERNANCE?

Governance is the process of overseeing an organisation and provides a legal structure through which the objectives of the organisation are set and the means and powers of attaining those objectives are achieved. This is done through adoption of a Governing document.

SEVEN PRINICIPLES OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

Selflessness: Decisions should be taken in the interests of the organisation, not the benefit of the person or their family, friends, other organisation etc.

Openness: Information should be shared and reasons for decisions made clear.

Integrity: Management Committees should never put themselves under any obligation to outside individuals or organisations which might influence their role.

Objectivity: Carrying out their role Management Committees should make decisions completely on merit, regarding awarding contracts, appointing staff, etc.

Accountability: Management Committees have a duty to comply with the law and are accountable for decisions and actions to funders, public and service users.

Honesty: Management Committees have a duty to disclose any private or personal interests which may present a conflict of interest and take steps to resolve conflict to the benefit of the organisation.

Leadership: All principles should be supported through leadership while respecting the role/s of others within the Management Committee.

JARGON BUSTER

CONSTITUTION/ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION
set of rules governing your organisation.

OBJECTIVES
aims of your organisation reason you've set up.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
people elected by the members of your organisation to act on its behalf.

STATUTORY CONTROLS/REQUIREMENTS
returns required by Government who have delegated to regulatory body ie Companies House.

GOVERNING DOCUMENT

A governing document is important for community groups as it sets out the objectives for the organisation and details the rules for its management in a written document. The governing document should cover:

The objectives of the organisation, what has it been established for.

- The powers of the organisation to act to address the objectives.
- Who is eligible to become a member.
- The rights of the members.
- How the Management Committee and Office Bearers are elected and their powers.
- How decisions are made.
- How the finances are managed and controlled.
- How and when general meetings of the members are called.
- How the document can be altered.
- How the organisation may be dissolved.

TYPES OF LEGAL GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

When individuals in a community get together to either address a local need or undertake a particular activity, one of the first things they need to consider is the legal nature of the group they are forming. When acting together to carry out a task they may have legal responsibilities in law to each other and to the community who will be their beneficiaries.

Below details several different types of legal governing structures. Organisations should choose the structure which best suits their needs for the foreseeable future. The organisation should also consider if their actions are going to be charitable and if so they must register with the Charity Commission for NI, their governing document should reflect charitable objectives.

UNINCORPORATED ASSOCIATIONS

This is the most common form of structure for voluntary and community organisations and is favoured by new and small groups. The governing document for this type of organisation is called a Constitution.

Advantages

- Flexibility – the Constitution of the Association can be tailored to fit the many different types of Associations. The Association is free from the statutory controls which govern the limited company.
- Cost – an Unincorporated Association is cheap to set up and run.

Disadvantages

- No Separate Legal Identity – an Association has no separate legal existence. This means an Association cannot enter into contracts in its own names, instead these activities are carried out by individuals within the Association.
- Property – an Association cannot own property in its own name and therefore it must make provisions for individuals to be appointed as Trustees to hold the assets of the Association.

- Personal Liability – both members of the Association and the Management Committee may incur personal liability. For example, a contract authorised by the Management Committee is entered into and the Association's funds are inadequate, the individual members of the Management Committee would be liable to pay the debt.

The Management Committee of an Association should ensure that the Constitution is complied with, that reasonable care is taken in dealing with the Association's affairs and that commitments are only entered into if sufficient funds are available. Proper insurance should be taken out to cover foreseeable risks.

COMPANY LTD BY GUARANTEE

A Company Ltd by Guarantee is the most common type of incorporated body used by groups in the voluntary and community sector. Its governing document is called Memorandum and Articles of Association.

Advantages

- Flexibility – there is power in the Companies Act 2006 to alter both the the objects of the company and the regulations which govern administrative matters. However, a charitable company will contain a provision that no alteration will be made which would cause it to cease to be a charity at law. Prior written consent must be obtained from the Charity Commission before the objects can be changed.
- Corporate Identity – the company is a legal person capable of owning property and entering into contracts.
- Limited Liability – the company is a legal person and its debts and contracts belong to the company itself and not to its members. A member or officer of the company is not personally liable if the company is sued or owes money. In the event of the company being unable to meet its debts and going bankrupt, members are limited to the amount that they guaranteed when becoming a member. This amount is usually £1.00.
- However, the protection from liability is not absolute. If an officer or director acts negligently, or not in the best interests of the company, they may not be able to avoid personal liability.
- Involvement of Members – the company is a democratic structure where members have ultimate control over those managing the company. Directors are elected and answerable to the members for the conduct of the company's affairs and are capable of being removed from office by a resolution of the company. New members can join the company and can also be expelled from the company.

Disadvantages

- Cost – the cost of setting up a Company Ltd by Guarantee is higher than setting up an Unincorporated Association. For example a fee is usually charged for drafting the Memorandum and Articles of Association (governing document). There is a fee when registering the company with Companies House and an annual fee for making annual returns to them. Also producing accounts in company format may cost more.
- Public Accountability – companies details are stored in the index of company names which is open to the public. For a small fee anyone can look up the details about an individual company. This may not be seen as a disadvantage in organisations which believe in openness and accountability to the public.
- Bureaucracy – companies must comply with the statutory requirements of the Companies Act 2006 which sets out detailed rules for its administration.
- Dissolving the Company – Winding up the company is a complex business and usually involves time and expense.

COMMUNITY INTEREST COMPANY

The Community Interest Company (CIC) was introduced in 2007 as a new corporate structure for non-charitable social economy enterprises that what to use their profits and assets for the public good. The CIC may be a Company Ltd by Guarantee, a Private Company Ltd by Shares or a Public Limited Company by Shares and is subject to company legislation.

Its governing document is a Memorandum and Articles of Association, in addition when registering with Companies House they must provide a Community Interest Statement to confirm that they company will provide benefit to the community. It does this by describing its proposed activities, who the company will help and how. CICs are regulated by the UK wide CIC Regulator.

The same advantages and disadvantages apply to a CIC as are listed previously for a company.

Additional Advantages

- Payment to Directors – as the CIC is not a charitable organisation, it doesn't have the same restrictions on paying directors. Directors of a CIC can be paid therefore this type of structure is attractive to social entrepreneurs who what to establish an organisation which benefits the community also want to receive payment for their work
- Asset Lock – one of the key characteristics of a CIC is that it has an asset lock which ensures that the company retains its assets for the benefit of the community, as stated in the Community Interest Statement.

The CIC regulator has produced very detailed guidance and information on the CIC and this can be downloaded from its website:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-interest-companies-how-to-form-a-cic.

GOVERNANCE FACTSHEET

TRUSTS

A public Trust is the traditional structure for a charity and many older charities are Trusts. A Charitable Trust is usually governed by a Trust Deed which sets out the objects of the Trust, names of the Trustees and provides for the administration of the Trust.

A Trust is usually established by a group that does not require a membership structure for a example a grant making trust or a small overseas aid organisation or a group wishing to settle property on charitable trusts. Trustees have statutory duties and powers under the Trustees Act (NI) 2001.

Advantages

- Continuity – when the Trust is established, the Trustees are chosen by the founder or founder group. Trustees are not subject to election and usually remain as a Trustee until they retire or die. Although some Trusts are less rigid in their structure eg by providing means for Trustees to stand down after a fixed period. When new Trustees are appointed they are appointed by existing Trustees. This could be a disadvantage where a Trustee is for some reason unsitable or has behaved inproperly and is not willing to retire voluntarily. Trustees should encourage that there is power to remove a Trustee in the Trust Deed.
- Confidentialty – the deliberations of Trustees are usually private. Trustees are answerable for their conduct only to the Charity Commission and the courts. They need not give reasons for the way they have exercised their discretion. They need not disclose any documents or details of their deliberations. However, if they can outside the terms of their Trust Deed they can be taken to court in an action for breach of their Trust, otherwise their decisions cannot be questioned.
- Cost – a Trust is cheap to set up and run. There are no annual fees to be paid as there is no company structure.
- Control – Trustees do not have a membership to hold them to account, they may act as they consider right without the fear of being removed because their actions are not approved by others who are involved in the work of the charity.

Disadvantages

- Inflexibility – if Trustees consider that the objectives for which the Trust was set up are now outdated, they must apply to the Charity Commission for a cy-pres scheme. Therefore, Trust should make sure the Trust Deed is carefully drafted in the beginning to contain the power to vary the administrative powers of the Trust and that the objectives clause is drafted as widely as possible.
- Personal Liability – Trustees do not have the advantage of limited liability. Trustees, like the members of any Unincorporated Association, are responsible for contracts entered into on behalf of the Trust or actions against the Trust. If these contracts are not honoured, or the Trust is sued, it will be the individual Trustees who must pay the debt or who may be sued. The Trustees are entitled to be indemnified by the Trust, ie they can claim any monies rightfully due from the Trust's bank account. The problem arises when there is no money in the account.
- Trustees should ensure that the activities of the Trust are carefully supervised and that there is adequate control of all financial matters.
- Transfer of Assets to New Trustees – when new Trustees are appointed or when old Trustees retire, the property of the Trust will have to be transferred into the new names.
- Lack of Accountability – as a Trust is composed only of the Trustees, if it does not normally have members, Trustees are not accountable to anyone for their decisions and are only answerable to the Charity Commission and the courts for their actions.

If a charitable organisations considers membership by the local community and democratic involvement and control over the actions of the Management Committee, then the Trust structure is not suitable.

CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION

Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) is a new form of legal entity designed specifically for charities in the United Kingdom.

CIOs status became available to Charities is Scotland 2011 and to England and Wales in 2013. However, it is not yet possible to set up as a CIO in Northern Ireland at present as that section of the Charities Act (NI) 2008 is not yet in force and it is not yet known when this will happen.

Advantages

- CIOs are similar in some ways to a Limited Company in that it has legal personality, the ability to conduct business in its own name and limited liability offering protection of Trustees and members from personal liability.
- CIOs unlike Limited Company however only need to register with the Charities Commission and not Companies House thereby reducing bureaucracy for the Charity.

Recommendation would be that those Charities interested in this option incorporate as a Company Ltd by Guarantee and then convert to CIO when it is available.

CHARITABLE STATUS

The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland (CCNI) established the register of charities in December 2013 and is now calling on all charitable organisations to come forward and register.organisations that might be charitable MUST make the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland aware of their existence.

It is compulsory for all organisations which are charitable and operating in Northern Ireland to apply for charity registration when called forward by the Commission to do so. They must also ensure that the Commission knows that they are operating here, so that they can be called forward in due course. This applies even if the organisation has not been previously recognised as a charity for tax purposes, for example, having an HMRC tax number.

GOVERNANCE FACTSHEET

HOW TO REGISTER AS A CHARITY WITH THE CHARITY COMMISSION

Extensive support and information is available to all charitable, including those recognised as charities by HMRC on registering with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland on their websites at www.charitycommissionni.org.uk.

To help charitiable organisations to see whether or not they are already on the Commission's list, they have published the names of all the organisations the Commission is aware of on their website.

Firstly organisations should check if they are on their 'Combined List' this is a register of all charitable organisations that the CCNI are aware of. Charitable organisations who do not appear on the 'Combined List', need to complete an 'Expression of Intent Form'. By submitting a form you are providing the Commission with your contact details so that your organisation may be called forward by the CCNI as part of a future registration tranche and so that can be placed on the 'combined list'.CCNI will then call organisations forward from the 'Combined List' when it is ready to register them.

It is not known how long this process will take, however, it could take from 3 months or several years before an organisation is called forward to register, note that it may take a further 3 months for the Commission to assess an application once submitted. If you are in urgent need of charitable status then let the CCNI know this in the circumstances box on the 'Expression of Intent Form'.

The Charity Commission issued guidance on registering as a Charity which gives detailed information about the online process and preparing for charity registration. It has also devised a very helpful online tutorial on their website which demonstrates on how to complete the online application. Once your organisation successfully registers as a charity with the Commission you can then apply for charitable tax exemptions with HMRC.

In order to complete the registration with the Charities Commission you will need to have a governing document – constitution, trust deed, memorandum and articles of association – written in charitable form.

Once registered all charitable organisations MUST make an Annual Return to CCNI on their performance,

OTHER GOVERNING DOCUMENTS

In addition, as your organisation develops, you may need to set out additional policies, below is a list of some policies it is not exclusive:

- Safeguarding Children
- Vulnerable Adults
- Volunteer Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Equal Opportunity Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Finance and Fraud Policy

GOVERNANCE SUPPORT AVAILABLE

Ards and North Down Borough Council
Community Development Team
South Street
Newtownards BT23
Tel: 0300 013 3333

Ards Community Network
43-45 Frances Street
Newtownards BT23 7DX
Tel: 028 9181 4625

County Down Rural Community Network
43-45 Frances Street
Newtownards BT23 7DX
Tel: 028 9182 8884

North Down Community Network
Flagship Centre, Main Street
Bangor BT20 5AU
Tel: 028 9146 9615

NOTES

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT FACTSHEET

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

In accordance with the Governing Document (Constitution/ Articles of Association) Community Organisations have a legal responsibility for financial management of the Organisation. Financial records must be kept so that organisations can:

- Meet its legal and other obligations;
- Enable the Management Committee to be in proper financial control of the organisation;
- Enable the Management Committee to meet the contractual obligations and requirements of funders.

The Governing Document also states:.

- A bank account must be opened in the name of the Organisation and all money must be held in their bank account.
- All money and property must only be used for the organisations' purposes;
- Management Committee members cannot receive any money or property from the Community Organisation, except to refund reasonable out of pocket expenses;
- Management Committee must keep accounts, which must be audited or independently examined annually. The most recent annual accounts can be seen by anybody on request
- Specify the financial year under which the organisation finances will operate ie 1st April–31st March;
- Treasurer must keep cashbook or spreadsheet recording all transactions of the organisation, column headings should include; date; supplier, purchase description, cheque no.; income, expenditure and balance, etc.
- Treasurer must keep a petty cash book if cash payments are made;
- Bank account signatories– the Treasurer and two unrelated Management Committee members should be authorised bank account signatories.

JARGON BUSTER

CONSTITUTION/ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION
Set of rules governing your organisation.

BANK MANDATE
List of people in your organisation who can authorise bank account transactions.

BANKING AND ACCOUNT SIGNATORIES

- The bank mandate, should always be approved and minuted by the Management Committee, including any changes to it.
- The Organisation will require the bank to provide monthly statements and these will be reconciled with cashbook or spreadsheet of accounts at least quarterly.
- The Organisation will not use any other bank or financial institution or use overdraft facilities or loan without the agreement of the Management Committee.
- Treasurer will be responsible for holding the cheque book, etc which should be kept under lock and key.
- Each Cheque/Bank Transfer payment MUST be authorised by at least two bank account signatories.
- Blank cheques will NEVER be signed
- The relevant Payee's name and amount will always be inserted on the cheque before signatures and the cheque stub will always be properly completed.
- No cheques should be signed without original document.
- A cheque should not be signed by the person to whom it is payable, eg out of pocket expenses for Chairperson, cheque should not be signed by Chairperson.

SMART FINANCIAL MANAGMENT

Income and Expenditure

Treasurer should be responsible for the recording of all income and expenditure of the organisation, this should be independently verified by the Management Committee or a nominated representative.

Receipts/Income:

- All monies received should be recorded promptly in the cashbook or spreadsheet and cash banked without delay.
- All original documentation in respect of monies received will be held in file/s.

Payments/Expenditure:

- Organisation must ensure that all expenditure/purchases on their behalf is properly authorised.
- Management Committee should set out and record details of expenditure approval limits, this should be recorded in minute of Management Committee meeting.
- All expenditure should be recorded promptly in the cashbook or spreadsheet.
- All original invoices/documentation including details of payment method will be held on file.

Payment Documentation

Every payment on behalf of purchases made by the Organisation will be evidenced by an original invoice. Invoices should detail:

- Date of invoice;
- Name of Organisation;
- Details of goods/services received including price and VAT;
- Name, address and telephone number of supplier; and
- VAT number if applicable.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT FACTSHEET

QUOTATIONS

Where necessary for some purchases in excess of budget limits quotations should be acquired. The Management Committee should agree budget limits and number of quotations required, this should be recorded and minuted at Management Committee meeting.

In cases of grant aid funding being provided the Management Committee must comply with the letter of offer quotation conditions where applicable.

FINANCIAL REPORTING

In order for the Management Committee to be in proper financial control of the Organisation the following reports should be provided to them:

- Annual budget – breakdown of budget forecast for the coming year, prepared by Treasurer;
- Monthly financial report – breakdown of income and expenditure, matched against bank statement, prepared by Treasurer; and
- Annual Accounts – complete record of organisations income and expenditure and any fixed assets in year, prepared by Treasurer and Independently Examined.

FUNDRAISING

To undertake any local fundraising the Management Committee of a Organisation must ensure they are registered with the Charity Commission for NI as a Charity and comply with their regulations. They are required by law, to act prudently, with due skill and care, and at all times solely in the best interests of the Organisation/Charity. This means ensuring that fundraising carried out by the charity, or on the Charity's behalf, is done lawfully, in a way that promotes, public trust and confidence, and does not put the Charity or its reputation at undue risk. Therefore Charities must:

- Comply with all relevant legal requirements;
- Ensure that all funds which are raised are properly accounted for;
- Only spend donations on the purposes for which they were raised.
- Check out the Charity Commission for NI website for more information at: www.charitycomissionni.org.uk

BE FRAUD ALERT

The Management Committee of Organisations should at all times be aware of the potential for fraud to happen and should put in place processes to ensure no one person has access to funds without proper procedures and supervision.

The term fraud is used to describe a whole range of activities such as deception, bribery, forgery, extortion, corruption, theft, conspiracy, embezzlement, misappropriation, false representation, concealment of material facts and collusion

Management Committees are therefore required to act honestly and with integrity at all times to safeguard the resources for which they are responsible. The Management Committee of Organisations are responsible for:

- Developing and maintaining effective controls to help prevent or detect fraud;
- Ensure that agreed procedures are followed;
- Ensure that public funds, its reputation and assets are safeguarded;
- Carry out vigorous and prompt investigations if fraud occurs;
- Review and implement new policies and procedures to prevent fraud as required.

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