

GREATER NEW LODGE CEP MAGAZINE


Ashton Community Trust
December 2013

Ashton Centre, 5 Churchill Street, Belfast BT15 2BP Tel: (028) 90742255 email: leo@ashtoncentre.com

Ashton Winner 2013 Social Enterprise Award



Paul Roberts - Ashton Community Trust Chief Executive, Fiona McCausland - Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment, Pat Boyle - Head of Training & Employment, Ashton Community Trust

Ashton Community Trust has been named **Social Enterprise of the Year** at a glittering award ceremony on Thursday 24th October in the City Hotel, Derry.

Ashton Community Trust Chief Executive Paul Roberts said

"We are delighted to be named as Social Enterprise of the Year and for all of our staff's hard work to be recognised in this way. Ashton's core ethos is to act as a social enterprise and development trust and work towards making North Belfast a better place to live. It does this through a range of social enterprise and labour market programmes which includes: Kinderkids Daycare; Culture and Arts; FabLab; Bridge of Hope; New Lodge Youth Centre; and Employment & Training Services.

"We are grateful to everyone who has worked with us in recent

years as this award is recognition of that collective effort and would not have been possible without such widespread support."

Ashton's policy of reinvesting in the North Belfast community has meant that the majority of the workforce are local people, which in turn has brought stability to an area ranked highly in deprivation and unemployment measures. It currently employs nearly 150 people making it one of the larger social enterprises in Northern Ireland and pivotal in the development of the sector in North Belfast.

Ashton has sought to regenerate the area not only through the creation of jobs but also turning derelict pieces of land into thriving social hubs. Ashton's McSweeney Centre in Henry Place just off Carlisle Circus is now an important one stop shop that offers daycare, complementary therapies, life

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The community magazine is compiled & supported by Ashton Community Trust

Trinity New Lodge

Senior Citizens Night

Every Tuesday Night

8.30pm-12.00midnight

Carrick Hill Community Centre

Everyone Welcome



Community Contact Numbers

- 174 Trust - 9074 7114
- Ashton Centre - 9074 2255
- Bridge of Hope - 9074 6737
- Bridges Sewing Group - 9074 2255
- Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain - 9032 2409
- Camberwell Fold - 9096 0552
- Cancer Lifeline 9035 1999
- Carrick Hill Community Centre - 9023 1602
- Carlisle Day Centre - 9023 1227
- Cumann Cultúrtha Mhic Reachtain - 90749 688
- Edmund Rice Primary School - 9035 1206
- Employment Outreach - 9020 2440
- Glenravel Local History Project - 9032 2892
- Holy Family Primary School - 9035 1023
- Holy Family Youth Centre - 9087 5150
- Indian Community Centre - 9024 9746
- Kinder Kids Day Care - 9074 2255
- McSweeney Centre - 9032 2289
- Neighbourhood Watch - 07564 938276
- Newington Credit Union - 9035 1773
- New Lodge Arts - 9074 2255
- New Lodge Youth Centre - 9075 1358
- New Lodge Housing Forum - 9074 2399
- North Belfast Family Centre - 9024 7580
- North Queen St. Community Centre - 9032 3945
- Smile SureStart - 9075 6654
- Star Of The Sea Primary School - 9035 1478
- Star Neighbourhood Centre - 9074 0693
- Tar Isteach - 90746665 / 90754967

**Mc
Stravick**
i Ltd.

Invites You

To

A Motivational Evening of Group Coaching



Leah McStravick

"McStravick i Ltd is a local Social Enterprise organisation providing coaching services, health and well being support, personal, business development programmes and executive training. We are an exciting and innovative new organisation with the core aim of 'bringing coaching to the masses' in order to dramatically improve individual lives, communities and businesses"

We invite you to join Leah McStravick for our next "i Way of Thinking" motivational workshop. This workshop will focus the A-Z of Successful Living.

EVENT DETAILS

Date: Tuesday, 18 February

Time: 6:00pm – 8:00pm

Venue: NICVA

61 Duncairn Gardens
Belfast BT15 2GB

Cost: £15 - bring a friend for free!

Limited to 40 participants so book early

Email: Admin@mcstravickinstitute.com

Or

Call: 028 9023 2289

Information
Inspiration
Innovation

ECDL Fast Track

Fast track ECDL has been introduced for clients who already have the necessary computer skills (up to level 2) and knowledge of all Microsoft Office packages and would like to complete the ECDL course in half the time. Class structure would consist of theory one week – followed by an exam the next week. This would be an intensive course so only suitable for clients who have advanced computer skills.

To avail of these classes – clients must be:

- Currently unemployed
- Living in North Belfast
- Between 18-65 years of age

To sign up to Fast track ECDL or indeed if you have any questions in relation to the course please contact Debbie on 028 9074 2255

DISCLAIMER: Reasonable care is taken to ensure that the articles in the CEP Magazine are up-to-date and as accurate as possible, as of the time of publication, but no responsibility can be taken by Ashton Community Trust for any errors or omissions contained herein. Furthermore, responsibility for any losses, damages or distress resulting from adherence to any information made available through this magazine is not the responsibility of the Ashton Community Trust. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Ashton Community Trust.

Christmas Celebrations

Each Christmas time local community activists and volunteers set about preparing and organising activities to celebrate the festive period. Every year various events are organised within the community that allow people of all ages to come together as families, friends, and neighbours. One such event is the REAL Annual Christmas Party. Jim Deery of the Ashton Community Trust is the main organiser of this popular event. *“By organising this Christmas Party every year we hope in our own small way that we are helping local families out. That is why we make every aspect of the party free of charge, including presents, photo with Santa, etc. In this way families are not put out of pocket. In past years the party has proven to be a massive success and we are expecting that to be the case again this year. Because of the numbers of people things can get a wee bit hectic, so it is really, really important that all children are accompanied by their parents or an adult guardian”.* This year’s REAL Christmas Party will be on Saturday 14th December from 12.00 – 3.00 at New Lodge Youth Centre in Upper Meadow Street. For Health and Safety reasons ALL CHILDREN MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY A PARENT OR AN ADULT GUARDIAN.

Christmas Party 2013

Ashton Community Trust R.E.A.L. Project

Santa, Photo & Gift Saturday 14th December 1pm – 4pm

New Lodge Youth Centre Upper Meadow Street

Free Family Event
 Christmas Masks, Face Painting, Christmas Decorations Make Your Own Reindeer, Balloon Making, Music

Children Must Be Accompanied By An adult.
 For further information please contact:
 Paul O’Neill or Jim Deery: 028 90742255



Continued from Page 1 Ashton Award

coaching, counselling, essential skills, history programmes and good relations initiatives.

This strategic drive was recently recognised by the global consultancy firm Deloitte who made Ashton Community Trust one of its highly prestigious Social Pioneers.

This award follows on from last year’s handful of star accolades given to Ashton by the Social Enterprise NI Awards panel. In 2012 the organisation won a total of four awards with its Chief Executive Paul Roberts, named as Social Enterprise Leader of the Year. Director of Social Enterprise NI, Juliet Cornford said: “Again we have seen the innovation and excellence of the Social Enterprise sector across Northern Ireland. This year’s award winners have contributed to not only the local economy through job creation for those often furthest from the labour market but through the regeneration of some of our most challenging communities.”

The annual awards are organised and hosted by Social Enterprise NI the representative body for the sector. They provide a central meeting place where the sector can collaborate, share knowledge, information and best practice to create real social change. Social Enterprises are businesses that reinvest their profits towards achieving a social purpose. They operate in almost every industry in the UK, from Health and Social care to renewable energy, from retail to recycling, from employment to sport, from housing to education. Northern Ireland has a vibrant and expanding Social Economy sector, currently employing over 12,200 people. The future is looking bright with 77% of local Social Enterprises reporting plans for future growth.

—The New Lodge Schools’ Cluster—
 Promoting Partnership in the Community

Cake Craft

*****Fun Friday*****
 Decorating Christmas Treats
 Friday 13th December 2013
 9.00am – 11.00am
 Parents Room

Susie Hunt - Parent Support Officer
 Address: 9-25 Pim Street, Belfast, BT15 2BN
 Phone: 07964941510 / 02890351206 Email: newlodgeschoolscluster@hotmail.com
 Also check out Facebook: #New Lodge Schools Cluster

Fablab Team Visit USA Fablabs



Fablab team with Professor Neil Gershenfeld MIT

FabLab is a joint initiative between Ashton Community Trust and the Nerve Centre in Derry.

FabLab is a digital fabrication workshop which allows anyone to make practically anything. Developed by MIT in Boston, almost any concept which can be designed on 2D or 3D software can be manufactured quickly and cost effectively within the labs and skills developed around IT, Design and Fabrication. The FabLab operates at community, educational and innovation levels, utilising a model of shared and collaborative problem-solving to unlock creative solutions with its users, and also is part of an international, interconnected network of labs. Users have unprecedented opportunity to access state of the art digital tools within a community setting.

Recently four members of the Fablab team Paul Roberts Chief Executive, Ashton Community Trust, Adam Wallace FabLab Belfast Manager, John Peto, Director of Education, Nerve Centre and Eamon Durey FabLab Manager Nerve Centre visited several labs in Detroit, Boston and Providence on a fact finding trip to look at the impact other FabLabs have made on their environment and the communities that they are located in.

The purpose of the trip was to see other labs in practice, look where possible links between FabLab Belfast and established labs in several different US cities can be made. Rhode Island School of Design was also visited where the team discussed the growing STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Maths) movement across the USA in schools and through FabLabs. STEAM is something already being delivered by FabLab Belfast and we will be providing this prestigious design school with valuable experience about how we get young people excited in these areas of work.

Adam Wallace Ashton FabLab Manager said "The team were also able to see the MIT Media Lab the place where the idea of Fablabs were first created and the first Fablab at south End Technology Center in Boston, where young adults are inducted and then taught to teach others how to use FabLab. It was great to be able see other labs in operation and compare and contrast with the projects in Belfast and Derry.

This was a great opportunity to witness the impact FabLabs are making in different communities across America, from the deprived communities of east Detroit where social and economic changes have massively impacted across entire areas of the city. This is where Fablabs are making real and tangible impacts on ordinary people's lives and we are seeing some really important and exciting developments".

Facebook – Fablab Belfast & Twitter @fablabelfast - If you are interested in keeping up to date with what is happening in the lab or take advantage of new workshops for adults and children please like or follow us! We will be using this as our main marketing tool so if you can support us with a like or a follow that would be great – we look forward to your comments!

Culture Night



Culture Night is Belfast biggest cultural celebration with over 30,000 people attending this year's event on 20th September 2013.

For this year's event, New Lodge Arts staged a unique drama performance with four young people from the Fricka Fresh Drama Group. The performance was staged in a 10ft x 8ft shipping container. Audiences were invited to watch the performance inside the container and were locked in for the 8 minute performance.

The script was devised by a group of young people who worked with local drama tutor Sean Mullan and was based on a range of youth issues including underage drinking, stereotyping and violence.

Anne Delaney from New Lodge Arts said 'This was an intense and exciting performance that pushed the boundaries of youth theatre. By inviting the audience into the small and confined space, this hard-hitting script, conveyed the challenges faced by young people. We hope to stage the performance again in the near future.'

New Lodge Arts Academy run a variety of youth art projects across North Belfast. For more information on our projects, please get in touch with Anne Delaney anne@newlodgearts.com or via www.facebook.com/nlarts



<p>Fancy Feet – Hip Hop Nursery – P1 Monday's 5.30pm – 6.30pm Macrory Hall, Duncairn Gardens/ Hillman Street</p>	<p>Fancy Feet – Hip Hop P2-P4 Mondays 6.30pm – 7.30pm Macrory Hall, Duncairn Gardens/ Hillman Street</p>
<p>Visual Arts P1 – P3 Tuesdays 3.30pm – 5.00pm New Lodge Youth Centre</p>	<p>Visual Arts P4-P7 Wednesdays 3.30pm – 5.00pm New Lodge Youth Centre</p>
<p>Ballet Nursery – P1 Thursdays 3pm – 3.45pm North Queen Street Community Centre</p>	<p>Ballet P2-P5 Thursdays 3.45pm-4.30pm North Queen Street Community Centre</p>
<p>Junior Drama P4-P7 3.30pm – 5pm New Lodge Youth Centre</p>	<p>Pop Video Style Dance P5-P7 Mondays 7.30pm – 8.30pm Macrory Hall, Duncairn Gardens/ Hillman Street</p>

Please contact Anne Delaney, New Lodge Arts on 028 9074 2255 for more information.



Ashton Community Bursaries 14 Local Groups Receive Awards



In this the 4th year of the Annual Ashton Bursary Awards, a total of 14 locally based community groups were granted financial assistance by the Ashton Community Trust. On Thursday 14th of November representatives of the groups attended a ceremony at the McSweeney Centre where they received their cheques from the Ashton Board of Directors. The purpose of the Bursary Awards Scheme is to allow the Ashton Community Trust to use some of its hard earned resources to provide assistance to other community led projects especially where there is clear evidence of voluntary input and where resources for a group are scarce. As in previous years the groups that received awards are mainly active in things such as sport, art, music, health, housing, culture, history, remembrance, safety and well being. Over the past four years a total of 53 bursaries have now been granted by Ashton Community Trust to a wide range of groups from the local area. So far this has amounted to £23,000. Chairperson of the Board of Ashton Community Trust is Micky Liggett,

"By providing this financial support we are recognising the fantastic efforts of everyone involved. Each year when the various groups gather at the Awards Ceremony you get a chance to meet with and speak to some of those directly involved in voluntary action on the ground in our community. It always acts as a reminder to me and indeed to everyone here at the Ashton of the tremendous pool of talent, enthusiasm and

energy that exists within this community. It is understandable that sometimes people concentrate on some of the more negative things including the anti-social behaviour of a small minority. As a result people can often forget about the many other positive efforts that are being made at grassroots level. The vast majority of people within our community want a good quality of life and better future for everyone. The representatives from the many volunteering organisations here tonight are a magnificent reflection of exactly that kind of community spirit".

The groups that received bursaries this year were:

- Clifton Athletic
- Dockers Boxing Club
- Friends of Clifton St Cemetery
- Greater New Lodge Christmas Party Steering Group
- Greater New Lodge Irish Historical Society
- Greater New Lodge Memorial Committee
- Greater New Lodge Safer Streets Committee
- Holy Family Boxing Club
- Jim O'Neill & Robert Allsopp Memorial Flute Band
- Newington Amateur Boxing Club
- New Lodge Housing Forum
- Pearse's GAC
- Star St Patrick's FC
- St Patrick's YMFC



**Ashton Community Trust Wishes Everyone
A Merry Christmas And A Happy New Year**

Ashton Community Trust Makes Submission to 'Haass Talks' Process



US Ambassador Richard Haass and Meghan L. O'Sullivan have been appointed by Stormont to oversee talks aimed at resolving issues including parades, protests; flags, symbols, emblems and related matters such as sectarianism, racism and dealing with the past. The stated intention of the process is to bring forward consensus recommendations to the Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister.

Ashton Community Trust Submission

The Ashton Community Trust (ACT) has made a written submission to Richard Haass raising a wide number of concerns relating to;

- Sectarianism/Racism
- Political/Cultural Differences
- Dealing with the Past and Victimhood
- Dealing with Poverty, Deprivation , Urban Regeneration
- Impacts on Young People
- Discrimination and Equality Issues Affecting Political Ex-Prisoners
- Cross Community Engagement Processes

Paul O'Neill of the Ashton Community Trust said, "If this process is to be meaningful it must honestly identify, define and address the core historical causes and motivations of the conflict, sectarianism and racism. It should avoid perpetuating the blame culture but instead concentrate on how we generate a positive societal transformation on the basis of equality and social justice. Although our political problems are rooted in historical injustice and differences over national and cultural identity, they are also fuelled by the continuing failure to address issues of equality, poverty and deprivation. The communities that were most blighted by conflict also endured the worst poverty, yet these communities have benefitted least from any economic peace dividend. Ashton Community Trust contends that poverty is a key determinant to instability and conflict and if not more effectively addressed will continue to obstruct efforts at healing community division and building a better society".

NORTH BELFAST CHRISTMAS PANTO

Auditions for our second North Belfast Christmas Panto took place the week commencing 21st October 2013. Auditions were held in 7 North Belfast venues to a total of 35 participants. Cecilia Heron Good Relations Arts Worker for New Lodge Arts said. "The talent was extremely high and after much consideration the artistic team have decided on 26 young people to take part. We are extremely excited about the Christmas Panto this year. Our young people have been working very hard with a fantastic artistic team to bring you a panto that is fit to be performed in the Grand Opera House. I am very proud of each young person for fully committing to this project."

Rehearsals are well underway in St Kevin's Hall.

BRIDGES SEWING

Mon - Fri 1.00pm - 3.00pm
Curtain Making, Formal Dresses, Alterations Etc.

Ashton Centre
5 Churchill Street
Belfast, BT15 2BP
Tel: 90742255



Drawing Classes for Adults

Tuesday 3rd & 17th December 2013
11am - 2pm

@
Culture Shop, Ashton Centre

Please contact anne@newlodgearts.com
02890742255 to register your interest.



NORTH BELFAST LANTERN PARADE AND MAGICAL EVENING

The fourth North Belfast Lantern Parade and Magical Evening was held on Wednesday 30th October 2013. Outreach lantern making workshops began in September and we had a total of 13 local schools, 20 community groups and 3 open workshops held during this period. Overall there were approximately 1,040 young people who used their creative skills to make some beautiful lanterns to take part in the parade.

The North Belfast Lantern Parade is part of the North Belfast Community Pride Programme which is funded through OFMDFM's Good Relations Programme and led by Ashton Community Trust. This programme is delivered by New Lodge Arts and supported by a steering group of various North Belfast based youth and community organisations. Other funders for this project include Belfast City Council, Energy For Children and the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs.

The parade left Crumlin Road Gaol and went along Cliftonpark Avenue, then down Cliftonville Road before going up the Antrim Road and into the Waterworks Park. There were approximately 500 children and adults taking part in this fabulous carnival parade along with performers from The Beat Initiative, Chidambaram and Arts Ekta.

The Magical Evening in the Waterworks was spectacular not only because the weather stayed dry but due to the evening's entertainment which was filled with street performers and music. The night would not have been complete without finishing with a fabulous fireworks display. The whole event was an excellent example of communities working together to promote good relations and maximise the use of shared space whilst being a great showcase for the positive contribution children and young people make to our communities.

Cecilia Heron Good Relations Arts Worker for New Lodge Arts said. "Overall we are delighted at how the event went. This was a challenging year for New Lodge Arts as our funding was received late therefore leaving us under pressure with planning. We also had to ticket the event and operate a one way system within the Waterworks Park too. The feedback has been fantastic and we are delighted with the number of schools and community groups that took part in our lantern making workshops. I would like to extend my thanks to our staff, artists, volunteers, schools, community pride steering group members and the participants of the fourth North Belfast Lantern Parade and Magical Evening."



North Belfast Merge Project



New Lodge Arts recent project saw youngsters from New Lodge, Cliftonville, Ardoyne, Shankill and Whitewell perform 'Merge', an exciting multi-component dance performance fusing contemporary dance with urban street forms in partnership with dance development company DU Dance (NI) and The Bad Taste Cru, Newcastle Upon Tyne.

The performance was staged in the Waterworks Park as part of the North Belfast Lantern Parade and Magical Evening on 30th October 2013 and included the young dancers, a rap choir, fire performers and bmx bikers.

Anne Delaney from New Lodge Arts said: "This has been a great project to be involved with as we're seeing a fantastic response from the young people who are building relationships with others from different parts of north Belfast. The young people have benefitted greatly from the experience of working with professional dance tutors to create this exciting, innovative performance in just 12 workshops.'

Chloe McLaughlin, 14, who took part in the latest dance project, said: "Never in my life did I ever see myself doing something like this – but I'm glad I did it. I've made lots of new friends, the supervisors there are amazing. You learn something new every day which in my mind is just incredible. These past few days have been awesome. I hope I can do it next year.'

Belfast Community Acupuncture at Newington Credit Union

Affordable Acupuncture is now on your doorstep. Belfast Community Acupuncture have opened an Acupuncture Clinic at Newington Credit Union. The clinic runs from 2.30pm to 7.30pm on Mondays.

For further information or an appointment call Mary on 07505371535, or visit our website www.belfastcommunityacupuncture.com



Ashton Community Trust
Employment & Training Services

THE WOMEN'S TRAINING PROJECT
174 DUNCAIRN GARDENS

IS OFFERING **FREE** TRAINING TO
UNEMPLOYED WOMEN LIVING IN NORTH BELFAST

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT 16TH & 23RD JAN 2014 – 9.30-1.30

PAEDIATRIC FIRST AID 16TH, 23RD & 30TH JAN 2014 – 9.30 -1.30
Limited childcare spaces available

INTERESTED? CALL IN TO REGISTER YOUR INTEREST

Training is subject to change. Criteria apply.

CALL Tracy or Gemma ON **028 90751934**
OR EMAIL: tracy.mcwhinney@ashtoncentre.com
Or gemma.ralston@ashtoncentre.com







supported by the Northern Ireland Executive through the Department for Social Development



O'Neill & Allsopp MFB

Now Open For New Members



Are you interested in joining a Republican flute band
No experience necessary. All tuition and instruments will be provided.

If you would like to know more, you can visit our Facebook page.
<http://www.facebook.com/oneill.allsopp>

We practice every Thursday night in The Recy (North Queen Street Community Centre) New Lodge 7pm-9pm. Call in and have a chat.
Or contact us on 079 122 746 47



National Memory, Local Stories



Joe Baker Ashton Community Trust with local teenagers

Teenagers from New Lodge in North Belfast have been praised by artist Ursula Burke and the learning team at the Ulster Museum for their role in National Memory – Local Stories, a UK-wide creative participation project, led by the National Portrait Gallery, London and funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. The project is designed to connect young people more directly to the First World War in the run up to the centenary commemorations.

Eleven young people aged 13 – 16 years old from New Lodge Arts took part in the project, with workshops based at the Ulster Museum and New Lodge Arts. The workshops, led by digital production company Media 19, enabled the young people to explore personal stories and related objects from the Ulster Museum's collections.

The young people took photographs out in the community and learned about local history with historian Joe Baker. With the help of Media 19, the teenagers then combined pictures and words using digital imaging and produced their own panel, which forms part of a collective jigsaw-style to reflect their thoughts about the First World War.

Thomas Poland, one of the participants, said: "The diary of George Hackney was very interesting. The diary was so small – even my phone is bigger! I didn't know that much about the First World War before I did the project, but I know a lot more about it now. I find it interesting, learning what happened and why people would think of going to war. I would never think of going to war myself."

Colleen Watters, Head of Learning at the Ulster Museum, praised all the young people involved, "It was a pleasure to work with the teenagers – their enthusiasm and energy for this project was remarkable and their superb panels reflect how much they themselves put into it. Their interest in the subject was matched by their talent and I warmly congratulate them."

Ursula Burke worked alongside the participants in the role of artist-in-residence. Ursula set up a formal portraiture studio, similar to those used in the First World War, where the young people modelled for a series of portraits. They also looked at wartime diaries of young soldier George Hackney as well as recruitment posters, uniforms, weapons and a German soldier's cigarette case, which still contains 2 ½ un-smoked cigarettes from the Ulster Museum's collections.

The panels are currently on display in the Belfast Room at the Ulster Museum until 17 November 2013. Admission is free. For opening times visit www.nmni.com/um

The project was part of a UK wide programme led by the National Portrait Gallery, London. The exhibition will be on display in the National Portrait Gallery in Spring.

Young Leaders



New Lodge Arts newly formed Young Leader's Programme has been up and running for around 8 weeks now. We have had great feedback from the young people. They are enjoying the programme and have learned a lot about the basics of leadership in youth work. The group have recently been on a team building residential on the 8th and 9th November. During this residential they completed a section of their OCN, participated in several outdoor activities and took part in team building activities. The young people learned a lot and had a ball! When the programme finishes in March 2014 the young people that participated will receive an OCN in Youth Leadership (level 2) which is recognised across the country. This is a programme we would be keen to continue delivering as part of our annual programme.

Youth Advisory Group

Our Youth Advisory Group continues to meet every fortnight. The group have completed their accredited Governance training with the Belfast City Council and New Lodge Arts, therefore they are now actively playing their roles as members of our young people's advisory board. At the minute the group are designing questionnaires that can be distributed to young people throughout North Belfast, to see what they are interested in doing and to see what New Lodge Arts can do to cater for their needs. Once the research has been completed and gathered, the Youth Advisory Group will feed back to the Board of Directors at a board meeting.

Job Club Services New Lodge Youth Centre

Every Monday 10 -12pm

- Lemis Employment Programme
- Are You Unemployed?
- In Receipt Of Benefits/not Claiming
- On Jsa More Than A Year
- Live In North Belfast

We Are Offering

- One To One Support And Advice
- Cv Skills
- Job Search
- Help Filling In Job Application Forms
- Interview Skills
- Free Training Subject To Availability
- Benefits Advice

CONTACT MAIREAD (02890 742255)

STOREHOUSE

Fighting Food Poverty in Belfast and Beyond

Community Groups in Inner North Belfast are working with the Storehouse Charity to address some of the hardships that people are facing in relation to putting food on the table and heating their homes. Storehouse is based in Belfast City Centre and its stated aim is, "To be a real answer for those families and individuals throughout the Greater Belfast area and beyond who have no safety net". Storehouse provides emergency food packages for a set period of time. By partnering with established and skilled charities and bodies, Storehouse says it is able to provide opportunities, "for long term solutions that see lives changed". As well as providing emergency food bags on a one-off basis or six food bags over a period of six months, Storehouse also offers clothing and furniture. The community based groups that can be contacted in Inner North Belfast include Ashton Community Trust, Star Neighbourhood Centre, Tar Isteach, North Belfast Advice Partnership, St Vincent de Paul and FASA.

Local residents can only benefit from these services via a referral process with any one of the partner organisations. Christine McKeown who is the Head of Childcare Services at Ashton Community Trust said, "We got involved in this because we think it is a very worthy initiative. It offers

practical help at a time when we are seeing ongoing poverty affecting families and individuals to the point where people are going hungry because they can't afford enough food. With this initiative, groups based here in the New Lodge including the Ashton Community Trust are able to directly refer local people. Anyone contacting us must come to our centre to complete a very basic referral form, which they then take to the Storehouse. All requests will be treated with strict confidentiality".

Community Contact Details for Greater New Lodge Ashton Community Trust- Christine McKeown, Paul O'Neill. Phone 028 90 742255

Star Neighbourhood Centre- Maria McCafferty, Marisa Conroy. Phone 028 90 740693

Tar Isteach- Agnes Frazer, Kathy Stanton. Phone 028 90 746664 (5)

The Storehouse is based at 17 Castle Arcade, Belfast, BT1 5DG

Opening hours: Monday 10.00-12.30pm, Wed 1-00 3.30pm and Fri 6.00-7.30pm

Welfare Reform

The Conservative led reform of the social welfare system has caused widespread fear and uncertainty particularly amongst the poorest and most vulnerable in society. These reforms, including the so-called 'Bedroom Tax', which targets those in social housing who do not use all the bedrooms in their homes, have already been implemented with devastating effect in some parts of England. Closer to home the Stormont Assembly has delayed their introduction, however the Tory government has recently been warning that our existing block grant funding from the UK Treasury would be reduced and penalties imposed if the reforms are not enforced. Despite reassurances particularly from DUP politicians about meaningful concessions from Westminster there are great fears that the worst aspects of welfare reform might eventually be forced through creating a very bleak future for many thousands of people.

The Tories argue that this is all about creating a simpler system that makes work pay and that reduces the benefits bill. To hammer home their point they constantly play on the fact that a minority of people take unnecessary advantage of the welfare system. Yet what they can't answer is how people are expected to come off benefits in the absence of real jobs, paying decent wages that allow them to make ends meet including covering their housing costs. The reality at this point in time is that real jobs are still scarce, pay is too low and housing is in short supply and unaffordable. In fact this is the worst possible time to be raiding the welfare budget and introducing measures such as the 'Bedroom Tax'. However this doesn't seem to bother the Tories because cutting welfare is politically attractive to them. Indeed it has long been part of the right-wing, neo-liberal dream to dismantle the welfare state and with it the public or social housing system.

The welfare state was built as an essential safety net for those who fall on hard times, or cannot work. After decades of relentless consumer capitalism the rich and powerful have used their wealth to consolidate their position and now enjoy almost unassailable control to exploit society for their own greedy advantage. As part of their ideological agenda the very idea of welfare has been repeatedly ridiculed and undermined by the right wing press. Meanwhile the structures and protections of the welfare state have been gradually eroded and a privatisation agenda has been promoted. In this so called modern age people have come to be increasingly regarded as a resource or as just another aspect of the market place rather than as living, breathing human beings with real social needs. However if the political motivation and democratic strength could be found it would still be possible to reverse this iniquitous trend and to bring society back to the basic principle that every citizen has the right to a standard of living that is adequate for their health and well being, including food, clothing, housing and medical care. Despite the obvious pressures involved it is imperative that our local politicians resist the coercion of the Tories. They must do the right thing and make it clear that these so called welfare reforms will not be implemented under their watch. **Paul O'Neill**



Ashton Community Trust Calling All Employers



Are you an employer seeking to employ someone on a part/full time basis?

Would you like to receive a wage subsidy until end March 2014?

We can help find you employees that meet your criteria and also pay half the wages for 24/30 hours a week so technically you are only paying for 12/15 hours per week. The North Belfast Works programme is designed to help employers and employees, we still have places left so get in touch to find out more and find your next team member

Simply call Lorraine/Conor on 028 9074 2255 or you can email us:

lorraine.black@ashtoncentre.com
conor.hamilton@ashtoncentre.com



Ashton Community Trust
Employment & Training Services

THE WOMEN'S TRAINING PROJECT AT THE ASHTON CENTRE
IS OFFERING **FREE TRAINING TO UNEMPLOYED WOMEN LIVING
IN NORTH BELFAST FROM APRIL 2013**

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OR EMAIL: tracy.mcwhinney@ashtoncentre.com
Gemma.ralston@ashtoncentre.com



Supported by the Northern Ireland Executive through the Department for Social Development



Ashton Community Trust
Employment & Training Services

Learner Access Engagement Programme

- **ARE YOU OVER 19 YEARS OF AGE?**
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- **NOT ON ANY OTHER FUNDED COURSE?**
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Beginners



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028 90 74 22 55
or email: corinna@ashtoncentre.com



PIPS
*Remembering Our Loved Ones
At Christmas*
You are invited to join us for our Christmas Service and remember those dear to you who have died by suicide on Sunday 15th December 2013 at 4pm. We would like to invite family, friends and the community to join us.
Refreshments provided
Tel: (028) 9080 5850
Guest speaker Lynda Bryans
PIPS
279-281 Antrim Road, Belfast BT15 2GZ
Office No: (028) 9080 5850

Ashton Community Trust Train

Over its 20-Year history the Ashton Community Trust (ACT) has worked hard to address the many training and employment needs of the local community. At all times ACT has maintained a community development ethos, with an emphasis on building skills and securing paid employment prospects for local people within the Greater North Belfast area.

North Belfast experiences not only high levels of unemployment but suffers from a range of skills shortages that act as a further barrier to finding employment. It is within this context that ACT Training & Employment Services operates. To achieve the maximum results we use a person centered development approach which supports all participants to reach their full potential. This includes working towards building and transferring skills sets through accredited qualifications on the QFC Framework. In this year alone ACT Training and Employment Service has worked with approximately 1080 members of the community, with 190 having secured paid employment, 153 offered long term contracts and 18 entering DEL Programmes. 432 participants have also received accredited training on subjects such as Word Processing – ECDL – Sage Accounts – Health and Social Care – SIA – Warehouse Training - Personal Development – Childcare – Pediatric First Aid.



ACT Training and Employment Services has gathered extensive experience in managing projects that develop well-being, employability, and pre-employment course's in various trades. All of this helps contribute to socio-economic regeneration and helps improve the lives of the people in the area in a way that is very practical and measurable. The training and employment team deliver a diverse number of training and employment programmes see below;

LEMIS - This offers one to one tailored Help & Support. This is made available at a time that suits you and at a place nearest to you. Priority clients for this are people on:

- Income Support
- Employment Support Allowance
- Incapacity Benefit, Non Benefit Claimant
- Out of work partners of the unemployed that have multiple barriers to employment and that live in the North Belfast Area.

For further information contact:
 bernie.toner@ashtoncentre.com
 Or 02890742255

Community Access to Life Long Learning

- Basic Computer Classes
- Digital Fabrication
- Multi Media
- Drop-in
- ECDL
- Word Processing

For further information contact Debbie on 02890742255
 or debbie.mcquillan@ashtoncentre.com

North Belfast Works – This offers you a weekly wage, training to improve your skills, potential to secure a permanent job at the end of six months.

For further information, contact:
 lorraine.black@ashtoncentre.com
 Phone: 02890 742255

Women's Training - The Women's Training Project offers accredited training to unemployed women living in North Belfast. Courses include:

- ECDL
 - Word Processing Level 2,
 - NVQ Level 2 Childcare
 - Sage Accounts Level 1
 - First Aid
 - Basic Food Hygiene
 - Sage Payroll and Book keeping
- Free Childcare Places (Subject to Availability).

For further information contact:
 tracy.mcwhinney@ashtoncentre.com;
 Or 02890 751934

Progress to Employment - Our Employer Liaison Officer and Mentors are here to help jobseekers avail of pre-employment training courses to meet the specific requirements of job vacancies. Clients will receive support with CV writing and job application forms, job search assistance, interview skills, training and preparation to get the job they want and keep it.

For further information contact:
 maneka.tohani@ashtoncentre.com
 Or 02890742255

ICT/Essential Skills

The Ashton Centre offers FREE courses in English, Math's & ICT. Classes are available at Entry Level up to Level 2 (equivalent to Grade C at GCSE)

For further information contact: Hilary Adair on 028 9032 2289
 E. hilary.adair@ashtoncentre.com

ing and Employment Services

Four new programmes were introduced to the community this year. Community Family Support Programme > Threshold Programme > SWEET Programme > Learner Access and Engagement Programme.

The **Community Family Support Programme** is the first of its kind in North Belfast. The aim of the Family First Programme takes a holistic approach to improving outcomes for children, young people and their family members. This is done through the development of a cohesive, joined up 'family' support plan across a number of core strands of work namely, family support, children and youth support, health and well being, education and learner support. All interventions and approaches have been designed to support the development of families and to address the individual needs of the families. Families on the programme will participate for 26 weeks in activities such as

- Weigh to Health
- Sexual Health
- Cook-It
- Walking Group
- Drug & Alcohol Awareness
- GOALS Self-Esteem/Motivation Building
- Money/debt Management
- Relationships, Love & Sexuality
- Managing Emotions & Handling Conflict
- Nutrition & Exercise
- Positive Parenting

Incentives will be built in to the Programme and are agreed in advance with families and, while not exhaustive can include:

- Family cinema tickets with transport to/from
- Family meals with transport to/from
- Mobile phone top-ups
- Food/utility vouchers
- Family activities (picnics, visits to zoo, museum etc.)

For more information, please contact Jeanette Burns, (Family Liaison Officer) by Telephone on 02890 742255 Or alternatively by email: jeanette.burns@ashtoncentre.com

SWEET > The programme involves a 10 week course of both educational and creative training. Topics such as essential skills and employability will be covered, alongside more hands-on training, such as digital fabrication, cookery, music and web-design. The 10 week course will see clients receiving 8 accredited qualifications. The motivation behind this is to make the programme as enjoyable as possible for the young people. There will also be an opportunity for the youth to be part of the programme creation; this will hopefully inspire the clients to make life changing decisions.

For further information contact:
nadine.fay@ashtoncentre.com; kerry.johnston@ashtoncentre.com or 02890 751934

Threshold Programme

The Threshold Programme is an innovative support programme to help young people aged 16 – 24 progress to, participate and succeed in education, training and most importantly improve their opportunities for paid employment. Threshold is a 12 week programme where participants take part in 2 weeks 1-1 support with a key mentor, 8 weeks in Belfast Met gaining experiences in various careers, followed by a 2 week work placement.

For further information contact:
eileen.oprey@ashtoncentre.com
Or 02890 751934

Learner Access and Engagement Programme

The Learner Access and Engagement Programme is an Essential Skills Programme delivered in partnership with the Further Education Colleges, Belfast Metropolitan College and Northern Regional College. This programme offers free Essential Skills in,

- Entry Level Award in Using IT (18 Weeks x 2.5 hours)
- Essential Skills Math's, English & ICT
- ES Levels 1 & 2 (equivalent to GCSE Grades) (18 Weeks x 3 hours)
- Introduction to Counselling Skills (15 Weeks x 2 hrs).

For further information contact sarah.rafter@ashtoncentre.com or 02890742255

Young Man's Group

A young men's Youth Engagement Programme has recently been established within the Ashton Community Trust to work with young men 16-24 years of age who are not in education, employment and training and from North Belfast.

This service aims to provide support to young people and help to break down the barriers that they come up against when exploring ways of getting into education, employment or training.

It also offers young men a one to one mentoring service; supporting them in job searching, CV building, interview skills, helping them to gain opportunities in training or employment.

We provide an outreach facility in a location close to you, such as a local community centre and at a time that is convenient to you. Great networks with other organisations have been created within the programme and other training providers so that the needs of the young men can be met.

The programme has already had a couple of successes such as some of the young men gaining employment and we are now offering a training opportunity where the young men will get the chance to gain a Level 2 in Fitness Instructing qualification, as well as some other accredited training during the 4 week long programme.

There will be the opportunity to avail of more of these exciting training opportunities in the New Year, but in the meantime if you would like any more information please get in contact and see what is on offer.

For further information contact conor.hamilton@ashtoncentre.com Or telephone 028 9075 3868/ 07851164534

New Lodge Youth Centre

Centre Opening Hours:

Project of Ashton Community Trust

Days	5 – 7 years	8 – 11 years	11+ years (secondary school)
Monday - Thursday	6 – 7pm	7 – 8.30pm	8.30 – 10pm
Friday			7 – 10pm

New Lodge Youth Centre will soon be extending its provision in to the weekend for senior club members. New staff have joined the team and are currently outreaching to young people on the streets on a Friday night. If you see them in their blue jackets please stop and say hello.

Ireland Jordan Culture and History Project

Young people from Jordan travelled to Belfast on 14th November to take part in a one week Culture and History project with young people from New Lodge Youth Centre. The project aimed to teach young people about each other's cultural traditions, history and explore divisions within both societies.

They travelled around the North visiting some of the local landmarks such as Cave Hill Country Park, North Coast, Giant's Causeway and Carrickaree Rope Bridge. They also visited local organisations including Tar Isteach, Ashton Centre and Fab Lab and Groundwork and local primary and secondary schools. A visit to the City Hall included a presentation of gifts from the Lord Mayor and Cllr Tierna Cunningham.

The Project challenged perceptions about different cultures and promoted respect of difference while also drawing on the similarities between traditions and youth culture. The young people from Jordan enjoyed their time in Belfast so much that many said they would like to return in order to study here.



Jordanian visitors at the Ashton Centre

The next stage of the project will hopefully see young people from New Lodge Youth Centre travel to Jordan in summer 2014. The Project will take place both in New Lodge Youth Centre in Belfast and in the Youth Spirit Centre in Jordan.

NLYC Connect Four Programme

The Connect Four Programme is a cross community/cross border programme in youth development involving young people from North Belfast and North Dublin. The aim of the programme is to build and maintain partnerships between the North and South. The young people involved have had a fantastic experience and have built genuine friendships with the young people from Dublin.

Everyone involved spoke about issues which affect them in their communities and quickly realised that these issues were similar. They then discussed how they could make a positive contribution to their communities and dispel myths that all young people are bad. This programme is now in its final stages, but



the connection between the New Lodge Youth Centre and Saint Monica's youth centre will remain strong. Through this programme one of the workers from the centre will be visiting Saint Monica's youth centre for a few days where she will be working and promoting all of the work the New Lodge Youth Centre offers and setting the foundations for more cross border projects.

Youth Facilitation Project



The Youth Facilitation Programme is the second phase of a youth and community programme, where young people tackled issues surrounding anti-social behaviour, under-age drinking and drug misuse.

This phase of the programme encourages and develops these young people to deliver the programme to their peers and other youth groups. The young people are actively involved in sessions covering team building, session planning, and programme design. This has been a year long programme and everyone has given one hundred percent. We are now looking to extend this programme in the New Year.

Tell Me Your Story

'Tell Me Your Story' is an ongoing cross community programme involving young people from the HUBB on the Shore Road and New Lodge Youth Centre. This programme focuses on our history and tragic past. The young people recently organised and facilitated their own conference which took place in Derry and Donegal.

The speakers on the panel came from a range of backgrounds which included Victim Support, a Nationalist Councillor, a Loyalist Councillor, The Garda and PSNI.

These young people openly engaged with the panelists asking some hard hitting questions and getting honest answers. This programme has seen genuine friendships develop between the young people from the two centres.



Macmillan Coffee Morning

A very successful Macmillan Coffee morning was held in New Lodge Youth Centre in September. Over £900 was raised to support this wonderful cause which included a raffle with prizes from Tesco, O'Kane's Off Licence, Vivo New Lodge, Fluffs Corner Shop, Jonathan Green Medium, JK Autos, JK Fuels, Day To Day New Lodge, Deborah Kane Face, Paul Green Photography, Natalie McErlean Jewellery, Ajshairdesign Falls Road, Party Central, Jewellery & Fashion Gallore, O'Kane Butchers, Hair Accessories, Clare O'Brien,

We would like to thank our volunteers and young people for all their hard work to make the event a huge success.

Knife Crime Seminar



In October a Knife Crime Seminar was held in New Lodge Youth Centre. The seminar, delivered by the PSNI, taught young people about the dangers of carrying a knife and the repercussions if caught with one.

Upper Long Streets Vesting Approved

At long last we have received confirmation that the vesting order for the lower half of the Upper Long Streets has been placed on the desk of the Housing Executive (H.E.) District Manager allowing him to proceed with the redevelopment of this section of the area. This has been a long and often frustrating journey beginning way back in late 1998 when, at the request of the H.E., a committee was elected to monitor the continuance of the redevelopment above Lepper Street. It's hard to believe, since it was the H.E. who asked for a committee, that it has taken this long to arrive where we are and unfortunately the delay and the subsequent collapse of the housing market has had a negative effect on a few of our residents, however, the vast majority of people will welcome this result, especially since the H.E.'s decision to transfer their own tenants has resulted in growing levels of dereliction. It is now hoped the process will continue smoothly and as quickly as possible.

What will happen now is that a series of meetings will take place with the development group to finalise the phases and layout and public meetings with those in each phase. In the meantime the H.E. will write personally to each resident informing them of progress and the takeover of private properties will begin, it is hoped that by mid January homeowners will begin paying a nominal rent and will become tenants allowing redevelopment to progress uninhibited. For years now I have been issuing these bi-monthly updates in this magazine, so no one knows more than I how frustrating the process has been. At times it felt as if I would never be able to say yes, so at long last I am happy to be able to say we've got there. So in wishing everyone a very merry Christmas and a happy new year we can say that 2014 will be when it all happens.

Liam Wiggins Secretary. Upper Long Streets Residents Association



United Nations Official Highlights Housing Inequality in North Belfast



DSD Minister Nelson McCausland and UN Special Rapporteur Raquel Rolnik

In a recent visit to Belfast as part of a fact-finding mission on the right to adequate housing the UN Special Rapporteur Raquel Rolnik has said that the housing need in the Catholic community clearly is greater and that Catholics continue to face significant housing inequality in North Belfast despite a previous UN report in 2009 calling for action to be taken on the issue. The Rapporteur expressed concern that government departments and statutory agencies have failed to take effective action to tackle inequality in housing, despite an obligation to do so under existing policies already in place. Raquel Rolnik said that while the Catholic community remained the single largest sector in need of social housing there were other sectors of society here who also faced major difficulties in housing. *"I would say people with disabilities; I would say people with multiple needs, mentally ill people. Those who are very vulnerable also have a lot of problems."* The Rapporteur also said that the lack of social housing for members of the Travelling community remains a major area of concern. *"The government have targets, declarations, legislation that commits (them) to address the questions and the problems, but the problem is that there is not that much action in practice. The problem here is clearly implementation in terms of the commitment towards the most vulnerable and in some specific groups (there are) no clear benchmarks, no clear targets."* During her visit Raquel Rolnik met with senior Government officials, housing experts and the Human Rights lobby group Participation and the Practice of Rights (PPR).

DSD Confirms Minister Did Not Meet With UN Rapporteur

Ms Rolnik said that a meeting between herself and Minister Nelson McCausland was cancelled. A deputy director and other DSD staff were sent instead. Ms Rolnik said she regretted that the meeting had not happened. In a statement a DSD spokeswoman confirmed that Mr McCausland had not met with the UN Special Rapporteur, citing "diary commitments".

Equality Can't Wait – Equality Denied

In August 2012, in reaction to the Girdwood political deal announced in July, North Belfast families from the Seven Towers visited the office of the Department for Social Development with over 1000 signatures from the people of the New Lodge. The petition asked that the Minister for Social Development, Nelson McCausland, build and allocate houses for the people who need them, in particular Catholics in housing stress in North Belfast.

Such is the extent of religious inequality that the Housing Executives' own figures predicted that by 2012 95% of new builds in North Belfast needed to be targeted at the Catholic community.

Since then, those same families and many more have been campaigning daily to hold government to account – asking why their rights and the rights of their children to a home that is safe, warm and comfortable is being denied.

Since then, the Girdwood deal, brokered between Executive parties, against which the families were protesting, has been 'clarified' in the courts resulting in 60 homes instead of the promised 200.

Since then, PPR launched its 'Equality Can't Wait' report which provided comprehensive evidence of a ten year failure to tackle religious inequality in housing and worrying new shifts away from building housing based on need – the core principal upon which the Housing Executive was established in 1971.

Since then, the Children's Commissioner, whose job it is to protect the rights of children, visited the Towers and Harbourview Apartment's to meet with families and said; 'it is not good enough in the 21st Century for children to have to live in this type of inappropriate accommodation with all the associated risks.'

Since then, those same families and more have been visited by the most senior housing official in the world – the UN Special Rapporteur on housing, Raquel Rolnik. After visiting the Towers and Harbourview Apartments in Pilot Street with resident's she said;

"Other population groups, highlighted by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 2009, which continue to face inadequate access to affordable housing are Catholics in Northern Ireland, specifically in North Belfast.... I remain concerned that full equality has not been achieved yet."



Residents protest outside DSD office

Since then, the President of Ireland, Michael D Higgins and the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights have publicly lauded the work of the Seven Towers residents as a best practice example of how people can push for their rights.

Since then, Minister McCausland has written to families in North Belfast simply saying; "The department does not accept your statement that there is religious inequality in social housing." Last week at Stormont the Minister elaborated that the residents group 'made reference to religious inequality in social housing, no evidence was supplied to support this statement'

Since then, the Minister has launched a housing new-build programme – called 'Housing Led Regeneration' – which seeks to build new homes in areas which have "experienced a decline in housing demand", instead of targeting new housing in areas of chronic need.

As the residents prepare to launch their latest human rights campaign, the question must be asked - What is the legal basis for the Minister's decisions and why is he allowed to deny the rights, ignore the voices, and condemn families to inter-generational poor housing on behalf of the Executive?

North Belfast Participation & Practice of Rights (PPR)

HELM and the Gt. George's St Housing Site Fiasco

In 2007 Helm Housing Association received public funds amounting to £9.7m to purchase land in Belfast to provide social housing. Helm's proposal at the time was for 200 homes on the site at Great George's Street but nothing was ever built. Despite the huge housing waiting lists in North Belfast it is understood that HELM never even bothered to submit a planning application for the much needed homes it originally pledged to deliver. Instead HELM decided to lease the site to a car park operator. At the time of the land sale the previous owner was reported to have sold the Great George's Street site to a property group in the Isle of Man for £6.5 million who then immediately sold it on to Helm on the very same day for £9.7million thus making a profit of over £2 million at the tax-payer's expense. Today the land is worth considerably less. The Department for Social Development who has responsibility for Housing Associations told the Audit Office it was "unable to obtain any explanation for these transactions". The undeveloped land at Great George's St. has since been

the subject of several investigations and it is now understood that the government is to seek the return of £8million of public funding from HELM. In 2011, HELM was barred from obtaining public money to build new homes. However following a recent review by the DSD, Helm was reinstated on the government's social housing programme. Although HELM is now being asked to pay back the public monies this episode has exposed a sorry tale of bad practice, profiteering and inadequate governmental over-sight. Moreover within the context of North Belfast where there is already severe housing shortage and inequality of provision affecting the Catholic community, any financial payback from HELM will provide cold comfort for those still on housing waiting lists. Despite the signing of the Good Friday Agreement fifteen years ago and obligations on government to actively tackle inequality, when it comes to housing in North Belfast there has been little improvement. Meanwhile the housing shortage crisis continues.

Tar Isteach Ex- Prisoners Visit Basque Country



Tommy Quigley Tar Isteach 3rd from right

Members of Tar Isteach Republican Ex-Prisoners Project went along on a 6 day fact finding trip to the Basque Country in October. Political ex-prisoners from Belfast and South Amagh travelled to Bilbao to meet with human rights activists campaigning on behalf of Basque political prisoners. The highlight of the trip was a meeting with the political prisoners' support organization Herrera and relatives of some of the Basque prisoners. Tommy Quigley Manager of Tar Isteach likened the situation to how the British Government punished the families of Irish political prisoners in England. Tommy spent 20 years in prison including 11 years in English jails. He said, "The Spanish Government has a policy of placing its political prisoners as far away from their families as possible. Consequently, while the prisoners face harsh conditions within the prisons, their families are punished as well. The prisoners are scattered all over Spain and France, hundreds of miles from their loved ones. Relatives often arrive at a prison only to find that the prisoners have been moved without warning or the visit is refused without explanation. This is reminiscent of the Irish prisoner experience in England. There were others comparisons between the Basque Country and Ireland, the breathtaking beauty of the country, the generosity and friendliness of its people, their struggle for independence and the repression of a colonial power.

The Spanish Government has some of

the most repressive all encompassing powers in Europe, in fact anywhere. The powers are similar to the Special Powers Act of the old unionist regime. Political activity of any kind can be deemed as supporting or glorifying terrorism. Campaigning for political prisoners, supporting demands for their human rights, almost anything in the support of prisoners and their families, can land you in jail. We visited the building which houses the offices of the political prisoners' support organization 'Herrera'. Their offices had just recently been raided and all 18 workers arrested. All the office doors remain sealed with police tape. Breaking the seal would result in imprisonment. All the workers are on bail and face a legal process that can take up to four years before coming to trial and the possibility of prison sentences of 6 years and more if convicted, basically for campaigning to secure humane treatment for their loved ones in prison. Incredibly all the workers and relatives are determined to carry on their work with the threat of imprisonment hanging over them.

During our stay we were mostly based in Bilbao, the largest city in the Basque Country. We visited various groups and projects there. The Basque's are just irrepressible, every time the Spanish change the rules and the law to make groups or organisations illegal, the Basque get right back up again and build a new organisation. During our trip we participated in a 10,000 strong rally through downtown

Bilbao in support of the retention of the autonomous Basque education system. Our Irish flag prompted many smiles and greetings. All the Basque people we meet knew a great deal about our history and struggle.

Our trip to Gernika give us an understanding of what a real Peace and Reconciliation Centre looks like and the role it plays in healing and reconciliation. Those people opposed to the Peace and Reconciliation Centre at Long Kesh should visit this centre. Built by local people, opposed and obstructed by the Spanish Government at every turn, this centre and museum is a perfect example of how a site of injustice and sacrifice can be used to exemplify how true peace can only be built on the basis of equality and justice.

Overall, I can say that our tour has whetted the appetites of 17 Irish people to maintain contact with the Basque Country and to try to highlight the situations faced by the Basque people, their prisoners, their political exiles in the North and beyond, and the fact that any political activity practically guarantees them at least six years in jail." Tommy Quigley Irish Republican Political Ex-Prisoner (Tar Isteach)

Mayor Congratulates Bridge of Hope Mental Health Training Graduates

Staff and therapists working at Bridge of Hope recently received certificates for completing training in Mental Health First Aid (MHFA). The Mayor of Belfast Máirtín Ó Muilleoir presented the team with their certificates at a special reception in the City Hall on Friday November 1st 2013. The MHFA training is aimed at people who may come into contact with those experiencing mental health difficulties and crises and involves teaching participants how to recognise the symptoms of mental health problems such as depression, anxiety and psychosis. In real life terms, such first aid would be given until professional help is available or until the crisis is resolved. Mayor Ó Muilleoir said, "I would like to congratulate everyone. It is important that as many people as possible collect this vital qualification and are well equipped with the tools to help those living with mental illness. Individuals and families who may be going through a hard time need to know that there are people out there they can talk to".

The course was delivered by accredited MHFA trainers Irene Sherry (Bridge of Hope) and Philip McTaggart (PIPS). Philip who is the Manager of PIPS said, "The more education, information and awareness that we can provide can only help to make the community a safer place to live, and where people can recognise the signs of a person in distress and offer them help".

Irene Sherry, Head of Victims Services at Ashton Community Trust, said at least one in five people experience mental health problems here but the stigma that still surrounds this can prevent people seeking help. "Across Belfast, mental health is a significant issue and this is illustrated not least by high suicide levels and rates of people using anti depressants to cope with stress and anxiety. In North Belfast for example we know that poor levels of mental health are compounded further by socio-economic conditions and the legacy of the conflict. So we do feel that it is important to get this Mental Health First Aid training delivered at grassroots level for those staff and practitioners who are working with communities experiencing these difficulties".

About Bridge of Hope

Founded in 2001, Bridge of Hope is a community based victims and survivors service that works with individuals, families and communities affected by the conflict in North Belfast and beyond. Our goal is to tackle the legacy of the conflict through a variety of holistic approaches to trauma recovery. We do this through the delivery of complementary therapies, legacy and conflict analysis, as well as accredited training and personal development courses geared at managing and reducing stress, learning how to relax and ways in which to boost confidence levels.



Mayor of Belfast Máirtín Ó Muilleoir with Graduates

If you would like to refer yourself, a family member or friend into Bridge of Hope for therapies, life coaching, stress management training or counselling please do get in touch at one of our clinics below where a member of our team will be happy to assist you.

Contact Details:

Bridge of Hope McSweeney Clinic - Henry Place Belfast BT15 2BB Tel: 028 9543 8707

Bridge of Hope Ashton Centre Clinic - 5 Churchill Street Belfast BT15 2BP Tel: 028 9022 1022

Bridge of Hope is a project of Ashton Community Trust

PIPS SERVICES

PIPS Services offer practical advice on what to do if you, a family member or a friend have suicidal thoughts or are self-harming. We would like you to talk to someone first! In PIPS we have a wide variety of Counsellors' and Befrienders who would like to support you and will know how to help you, your family members, friend and colleagues! We have specialists in relationships, bereavement, debt, benefits, drink & drugs support, complementary therapies, victim support and home visits. PIPS advise you to stay away from alcohol and drugs because they leave you feeling depressed and anxious!

Contact us at our office @

Tel (028) 9080 5850

0800 088 6042 (Free Telephone Number)

info@pipscharity.com

PIPS New opening Hours commencing on Monday 29th July

Monday	9am-9pm
Tuesday	9am-5pm
Wednesday	9am-9pm
Thursday	9am-5pm
Friday	9am-9pm
Sat	10am-2pm
Sun	10am-2pm

Philip McTaggart
PIPS Charity
02890 805850
PIPS House
279-281 Antrim Road
Belfast, BT15



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For further information contact Christine McKeown at the Ashton Centre on 90742255 or via email christine@ashtoncentre.com




High quality Daycare and After school services in North Belfast



Course Enrolments at the Ashton Centre

At the Ashton Centre we are now delivering a new range of computer classes. Enrolment is now taking place for the following classes:

- ECDL
- Word Processing Level 1 or Level 2
- Web Design Level 1 or Level 2
- Digital Fabrication Level 1

To register your interest for any of these courses, please contact Debbie at the Ashton Centre on: 02890 742255 or Email: debbie.mcquillan@ashtoncentre.com

For 1:1 classes in Literacy or Numeracy – please contact Hilary Adair on 02890 322289 or email hilary.adair@ashtoncentre.com



Ashton Community Trust

Ashton Centre

Retail and Offices units available
Affordable Prices



5 Churchill Street, Belfast

McSweeney Centre

High Quality Finished Units & Office Space To Let Near City Centre



25-31 Henry Place, Belfast
(Off Clifton Street)

For further information contact:
Ciara Rea on (028) 90 742 255

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Bridge Of Hope Programmes and Services



Bridge of Hope offers life coaching, counselling, therapies and stress management programmes to victims and survivors of the conflict.

We are always seeking to reach out and support individuals with our services which are all designed to alleviate stress. Stress is the result of a mismatch between the challenges you experience and your belief in your ability to cope which actually or potentially leads to ill health.

At Bridge of Hope we take a holistic approach to trauma and have designed our stress management and personal development courses to help people develop the skills they need for a healthy body and mind.

There are no previous skills or qualifications required for any of our services and our highly qualified tutors facilitate a bespoke course every time.

We also offer Life coaching on a one to one basis which is a practice based on the grounded principle that everyone is resourceful and resilient. Life coaching helps people identify and achieve personal goals using a variety of tools and techniques. It centres around three core issues: positive thinking, changes in attitude and positive actions. Taken together these represent a powerful methodology for moving forward.

We are funded by the Victims and Survivors Service to support people who have been affected by the conflict and in this way we can offer our services at no cost to people who meet this criteria. If you are interested in any of Bridge of Hope's services please contact Mary Stanton at the McSweeney Centre on 028 9032 2289. You can also refer yourself, friend or a family member into us through our website www.thebridgeofhope.org

Are you aged 16-24, not in Employment, Education or Training?



Ashton Community Trust

If so you may be eligible for Threshold – a programme being run by the Ashton Centre in partnership with Belfast Metropolitan College. This 12 week programme will help you;

- Gain new skills
- Get formal qualifications
- Gain work experience

Topics include:

- Local History
- Cultural Identity
- Conflict resolution
- Citizenship
- ICT
- Employability Skills
- Media Studies
- Construction/Trades
- Beauty
- Playwork
- & more available

TRAVEL / LUNCH / CHILDCARE COSTS ALL PROVIDED!!!

EMA also available if eligible – get an extra £25 per week on top of your current benefits!

INTERESTED?

For more information and/or to apply contact

Eileen O'Prey

Threshold Mentor

Ashton Centre, Churchill Street, Belfast,
BT15 2BP

028 9074 2255

eileen.oprey@ashtoncentre.com



Ashton Community Trust
Employment & Training Services

Employment and Training Services

gain qualifications and job skills to secure employment

- 6 Months Paid Employment
- Job Skills Training
- Pre Employment Training
- Essential Skills Qualifications/Support
- Computer Training
- CV, Application & Interview Techniques
- Job Search Skills
- Benefits Advice & Guidance
- Access to Job Vacancies
- Personal Development Training
- Childcare Support
- One to One Mentoring
- Womens Training Program

02890 742 255
for more information





Are you suitable for our Programmes?

If you are unemployed and seeking employment, living in North Belfast and receiving benefits or a non benefit claimant, then you are eligible!



Greater New Lodge Safer Streets Committee

If you are the victim or the witness of crime, drug dealing or anti social behaviour you can contact the number below. If no one is there to answer always leave a message on the voice mail. Remember If You Don't Report Then We Can't help You. Do Not Suffer In Silence



Greater New Lodge Safer Streets Committee - 0756 493 8276
Another community number you can ring is, Community Restorative Justice Ireland (CRJI) - 028 90 753043

If possible provide the following details;

- Your name and contact number (If you feel comfortable doing so)
- The nature and location of the offence
- The date and time of the offence
- The name/details of the offender (If known)




Are you interested in working in childcare?



Do you have a childcare qualification (Minimum NVQ level 2 or equivalent) if so

Kinderkids Daycare is currently recruiting flexible workers to cover staff sickness, holidays etc.

For further information contact: Christine McKeown at the Ashton Centre, 5 Churchill Street, Belfast, BT15 2BP or telephone 02890742255



Ashton Motors

M.O.T. REPAIRS & SERVICE WORK

UNIT 3 ASHTON CENTRE CHURCHILL STREET, BELFAST

TEL: 028 9020 0320 028 9074 2255 EXT 17

Greater New Lodge Safer Streets Committee Anti-Social Behaviour Concerns – PSNI Response

The Greater New Lodge Safer Streets Committee has raised serious concerns with the PSNI and other statutory agencies about the ongoing levels of anti-social behaviour in the area. In response to requests from the Safer Streets Committee as to what the police are doing about this, they have been provided with the following written response from Brian Caskey (PSNI Sergeant) Neighbourhood Policing Team.

Police Statement

New Lodge Neighbourhood Police officers are aware of ongoing community concerns regarding anti-social behaviour by a small group of youths particularly in the area of Pinkerton Walk and the North Queen Street steps. We have been working in partnership with the community and other statutory agencies to identify offenders and agree an action plan to deal with offences and improve the quality of life for residents in these Hot-Spots.

We continue to engage with the New Lodge Safer Streets Committee and the North Belfast Community Safety Initiative to feedback to the community on what action the Police are taking to address this issue.

In recent weeks the following has been actioned

- Increased mobile and foot patrols in the area
- Number of arrests for Burglary and Assault
- Joint leaflet drop with BCC and Housing executive to inform residents of how best to report incidents and identify which agency is best placed to deal with a particular concern
- Crime prevention audit of Pinkerton and the steps has been carried to improve security in the area on a short, medium and long term basis. This includes increased lighting, graffiti removal and long term area and home security. Bricks have already been removed from the North Queen Street steps with other measures to follow.
- Pro-active gathering of evidence to prosecute offenders and also to support applications for anti-social behaviour

orders, Harassment Notices and Acceptable Behaviour contracts. We have already served harassment notices on individuals and explained the consequences of breaking these orders which can lead to immediate arrest and potential prosecution of offenders.

- Multi-agency approach to offenders. Neighbourhood Police, Reducing Offending Unit PSNI, Housing Executive, Youth Justice working together to support victims and deal with offenders. We are engaging with Parents and Social Services as we feel that a partnership approach to all aspects of offending has the best chance to make a successful long term impact on this behaviour
- Request for increased reporting to Police as every call adds to the potential to identify repeat offenders and increase community confidence around this issue. We also want to encourage the use of the crimestoppers number and the Safer Streets community mobile number.
- Social media. Neighbourhood Police continue to promote concerns through social media to encourage parents and young people involved to stop this behaviour before the young people enter the criminal Justice system

Neighbourhood Police understand the real impact of this anti-social behaviour and are working hard to address all the issues to improve the quality of life for residents. Crime in the New Lodge area has fallen in recent years by the community and police working in partnership and the community taking the lead on policing priorities in their area. Only a small number of young people are involved in this activity and Neighbourhood Police are totally focused in dealing with Anti-social behaviour and its consequences

Brian Caskey Sergeant
Neighbourhood Policing Team

New Lodge
07764638464
Brian.caskey@psni.pnn.police.uk

Useful Numbers

Greater New Lodge Safer Streets Committee works along with CRJI, NIHE, BCC and the PSNI to tackle and prevent anti social behaviour in our community.

In an emergency

If the incident is an emergency that requires immediate attention please contact the **Emergency Services on 999 PSNI 0845 600 8000 or York Road station 028 9065 0222**

When reporting a complaint of anti social behaviour, please give clear details of the incident or your concerns and the location. The Neighbourhood Policing Team of Sergeant Caskey, Constables Jones, Patterson, Jackson, Ramage are responsible for this area and can be contacted at York Road PSNI station on the above numbers. Their contact details and methods of contact are also available on the PSNI Web page

Northern Ireland Housing Executive, North Belfast Office 03448 920 900

Make complaints to your District Office, either in writing or by calling in, or by phoning and asking to speak to your Housing Officer or Neighbourhood Warden.

Belfast City Council (main number) -028 9032 0202

Make complaints regarding illegal dumping, graffiti removal, dog wardens and pest control on this number. You can also contact the Community Safety team and Parks managers on this number for advice.

Noise Hotline -028 9037 3006

Belfast City Council provides a dedicated team for the investigation of noise complaints. If you are bothered by noise, such as music, parties, television or dog barking from a neighbouring property, at any time, please call the Noise Hotline for advice.

Crime Stoppers -0800 555 111

Is a registered charity that you can use anonymously to report crime and antisocial behaviour, again please leave as much detail as possible.

New Lodge Safer Streets – 07564938276

Local volunteers offer advice on community safety issues

New Lodge Housing Forum - 02890742399

Advice on a range of issues including housing and community safety issues

CRJI - 028 90 753043

is a mediation service with a broad community safety remit. We aim to make our areas safer through restorative dispute resolution and working with residents and a range of statutory and community organisations to address issues of crime and anti-social behaviour.

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