

Greater New Lodge Community Magazine

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As we head into the winter of 2022, the cost of living crisis is causing huge levels of worry. Rising gas, electric, food, petrol, rent and mortgage costs are all making life unbearable for many local people.

Strategic Cooperation

Here in the New Lodge, community groups that work under the umbrella of the Greater New Lodge Community Empowerment Partnership are working together to create a unified response aimed at providing as much additional support and protection as they can for local people most affected.

Anti-Poverty

Joanne Kinnear of Ashton Community Trust said, "Local community groups are already involved in various anti-poverty initiatives. Here at Ashton we have projects like the Pantry, Pop up Clothes Store and the Community Fridge. The demand for these services is huge; with the Community Fridge providing local people with over 100 kilograms (220lb or 15 stone) of food in the first fortnight of its opening. However working with other groups in the district, we hope to provide even greater support to help local people most affected by these unprecedented hard times.

Exploring the Options

By working alongside our partners in the CEP, we are exploring how we can provide additional localised practical responses to the financial, food, fuel and hygiene poverty crisis that we are facing. We also want to address the poverty of isolation and loneliness, as no one in the New Lodge should ever feel that they have to tackle these big issues on their own. We hope to run a range of activities over the winter months where local people can come together to read the papers, watch TV, have a cup of tea, grab a bit of lunch all while having a bit of Craic."

We Need to Look Out for Each Other

Liam Wiggins chairperson of the CEP said "Once the detail has been sorted we will let people know what is available. As it stands, at the moment there is no additional money available to deliver the plan, however by working together, sharing ideas, experience and pooling existing resources we hope to maximise the impact for local people. The message is simple, in these hard times; the people of the New Lodge need to more than ever do what they have done for generations and continue to look out for each other".

Community magazine Supported by Belfast City Council, Newington Housing Association and Ashton Community Trust



Belfast
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ashton

ashton
Kinderkids Daycare

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Henry Place

028 9074 2255

christine.mckeown@ashtoncentre.com
fionnuala.black@ashtoncentre.com

Bridges Sewing Group
Ashton Centre Tel: (028) 9074 2255

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1pm - 3pm**

**ALTERATIONS, CURTAIN MAKING AND
ALL YOUR SEWING NEEDS**

**BRIDGES SEWING GROUP
ASHTON CENTRE
TEL: (028) 9074 2255**

Community Contact Details

174 Trust	9074 7114
Ashton Centre	9074 2255
Bridge of Hope	9074 2255
Bridges Sewing Group	9074 2255
Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain	9032 2409
Camberwell Fold	9096 0552
Cancer Lifeline	9035 1999
Carlisle Day Centre	9023 1227
Carrick Hill Community Centre	9023 1602
Clanmill Housing Association	9087 6000
Community Restorative Justice	02896 210900
Cumann Cultúrtha Mhic Reachtain	90749 688
Friends of St Joseph's Church Sailortown	terryblfst@gmail.com
Glenravel Local History Project	9074 2255
Holy Family Primary School	9035 1023
Holy Family Youth Centre	9087 5150
Indian Community Centre	9024 9746
KinderKids Day Care - Ashton	9074 2255
KinderKids Day Care - Cliftonville	90749146
KinderKids Day Care - McSweeney Centre	90333966
KinderKids Day Care - Cliftonville	95219830
McSweeney Centre	9032 2289
Newington Credit Union	9035 1773
Newington Housing Association	90744055
New Lodge Arts	9074 2255
New Lodge Housing Forum	9074 2399
New Lodge Safer Streets	07564 938276
New Lodge Youth Centre	9075 1358
North Belfast Family Centre	9024 7580
North Queen St. Community Centre	9032 3945
Smile SureStart	9075 6654
St. Patrick's Primary School	9035 1206
Star Neighbourhood Centre	9074 0693
TAMHI	90 747437
Tar Isteach	90746665/90746664

Follow Ashton On Twitter

twitter.com/ashtoncommtrust

Alcoholics Anonymous Antrim Road Group, Belfast

Address: Ashton Centre, 5 Churchill Street,
Antrim Road, Belfast, BT15 2BP

Meetings and times:

Sunday: 12:30	Closed Meetings
Sunday Night: 8:30	Closed Meetings
Monday: 8:30	Closed Meetings
Tuesday: 8.30	Open Meetings
Wednesday: 8.30	Closed Meetings
Thursday: 8.30	Closed Meetings
Friday: 8.30	Step Meetings
Saturday: 8.30	Discussion
Meetings	

Zoom Meetings: Tuesday and Saturday 8:30pm

Ashton Pantry

As the cost of living pressures mount up, the poorest in society face into winter with a great sense of fear and stress. Hopes remain that interventions at a governmental level will help alleviate some of the worst effects. However within communities local groups are taking the lead by organising their own community support initiatives.

Not Simply a Food Bank - One such example is the Ashton Centre's Pantry Project. Yes the project provides food for people but is not simply a food bank. The Pantry operates on a more holistic basis, this includes a weekly membership fee of £5 where members can receive up to £40 worth of groceries for a period of 12 weeks. In addition, mentoring and advice support is offered to help people develop skills such as budgeting, debt management, cooking, and nutrition.

A Hand Up, Not a Hand Out - Joanne Kinnear (Ashton) describes the initiative as a "hand up, not a hand out". She continued, "We aim to ensure that everyone using these services is fully supported, respected and that they retain their dignity. An important part of the process is about choice. For example people deciding for themselves what they and their children want to eat. No one should ever feel embarrassed by asking for help, this is all about community solidarity and providing support for our neighbours at a time when it is most needed".

Coping with the Challenges of Life - Christine McKeown (Ashton) said, "I have been working at Ashton for over 20 years and have done family support for many years, but I have never experienced anything like this crisis in all my years. We fully understand that if you are hungry and your house is cold it's hard to think of anything other than getting by from day to day. Yet a key principle of this project is that once help is provided to meet the basic need for food, we then encourage and enable people to think about their wider needs. This includes developing skills to cope with the many challenges that life throws at them".

Sustaining the Service - Christine added, "We're aware there's limited resources, so we want to explore how we sustain this.



We were blessed with a seeding grant from Belfast Charitable Society to set it up and delighted to also get some funding from the Housing Executive to get it working for two years. So it's now all about looking at how we can replenish the stock and ensure a continuing wide choice of items to meet the diverse needs of the families that come to us. We would welcome support from any local businesses that feel they can afford it. One way of doing this would be for them to sponsor a shelf. This type of support would be a very helpful element in enabling us to sustain this very important work in the longer run".

To find out more information about The Pantry, you can contact Christine McKeown at Ashton on 02890742255 or at christine@ashtoncentre.com



Garden Grid



Ashton Community Trust has been slowly evolving a strategy to help regenerate problematic and wasted spaces within the local neighbourhood. During 2020 community/residents organisations worked with Ashton to co-design solutions to some of these spaces. The aim is to bring these problem sites into

use and link them into a 'grid' or 'net' of spaces. The idea is to build the community's capacity to respond to and manage problems of blight and neglect at these and other identified locations. We also want to stimulate and support wider planting and growing projects within residential areas, schools, front gardens and the small communal areas of estates. This would include the growing of food for local consumption.

Operational Hubs

Mark Hackett of Ashton Community Trust explains, "To make all of this happen we intend to establish a number of operational hubs. One of these will be at Clifton Street/Henry Place where we now have a store in place to act as a central operational base. We are in the process of clearing this site and transforming it into a larger planting area that will be open to use. We have established a group of volunteers which will increase over the winter involving more people and organisations in the project. This core site will act as an accessible garden resource and base for the wider community equipped with the tools and materials needed."

Pantry

One example of how this could intersect with the local community, is through the Social Supermarket (Pantry) at the Ashton Centre which already connects food provision with community volunteering, training and general family support. Working strategically with this and other local projects we aim to build a significant and resilient network boosting the



capacity of local people to make a real difference to their living environment and quality of life".

Wider Strategy

The site will be well established by next spring with new planting and **will be** more active. We are establishing a core team, in time this could be a base for local training and employment start. We see this as a way to involve local projects for childcare, health and well being, youth and elderly services. Once the site and team is established we would seek public contracts to manage other local spaces in a more intensive way and to roll out outreach from the core sites for residents. There are a wide range of social growing programmes being discussed generally, the Garden Grid can be the local base for this work.

For further information contact Mark Hackett Email: mark.hackett@ashtoncentre.com

www.ashtoncentre.com

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Bringing a Vacant Space Back to Life

Newington Housing Association and Ashton Community Trust have been working in close collaboration on an environmental improvement project for the vacant land space beside New Lodge Youth Centre in Upper Meadow Street.

A participatory budgeting method has been used, this involves citizens participating in decisions about how public monies are used. In this case local people have been involved in agreeing how a £20,000 budget supplied by Newington Housing Association should be spent to improve this site. Local young people are involved in the development, its use and management.



Consultation

The first phase of the project involved intensive consultation with over 100 local young people that use the New Lodge Youth Centre. Their ideas were gathered about how the space could be designed for positive purpose. The agreed design offers a number of uses and allows for adaptation over time. (See Diagram) The next phase of the process entailed a public presentation to residents that live in the general locality in order to get their views.

Moving Forward

Mark Hackett of Ashton Community Trust aided drawing up the design said: *“This project has involved a community collaboration with local young people at the heart of the process enabling them to have a real sense of ownership of the project. The ideas of the young people are now being turned into reality with an implementation plan underway that includes the idea of a small ‘pop-up’ film screening area with benches, and a volunteer built pizza oven. There will be tree planting to enclose the site with the dug up areas converted into raised planters. A small timber pergola will allow a temporary cover to be raised. The enabling work will begin soon and we should see this all planted over the winter for full use in the spring”.*

For further information contact Sean McMullan at: New Lodge Youth Centre, 133 Upper Meadow Street. Tel (028) 90751358 [@newlodageyc](https://www.instagram.com/newlodageyc) Email: sean.mcmullan@ashtoncentre.com



New Lodge Summer Festival 2022

This year's Summer Festival was a huge hit with over 45 events delivered and audiences of over 4000 people! During 14 days, there really was something for everyone. Here are just some of the events that took place.

Matilda Jr – Senior Drama Camp

This year's Senior Drama Camp included a residential to Newcastle and a 2-week programme finishing with 3 performances of Matilda Jr in The MAC Theatre. The performance was outstanding with a hugely talented cast with over 1000 people attending the shows. The artistic team did a phenomenal job on the show and the young people had a ball!

Junior Drama Camp

New Lodge Arts were back in The Recy for our annual Junior Drama Camp who worked on a performance of Buggy Malone. The kids worked their socks off to perfect their performance which took place on Friday 12th August to a packed audience. The children displayed their talents and performed a fantastic show.

Street Party

The New Lodge Street Party took place on Lepper Street again with an array of walkabout acts, circus performers, interactive street games, inflatables, sensory play and arts and crafts. The sun shone brightly and audiences were entertained throughout.

Gloves off at Girdwood

This youth boxing event led by Ashton took place at Girdwood Hub. New Lodge Arts led on the family fun day element which included a mix of entertainment for young people and their families. There were fantastic performances from Babcock and Bobbins, Little Red Riding Hood and Sideshow Sideboard, interactive drama games, bubble crafting, African drumming, music, dance, arts and crafts etc!



Waterworks Summer Fun Day

The annual event led by young people took place in the Waterworks Park on Saturday 13th August. The family friendly event included drama games, treasure hunt, live music, inflatables, drawing workshops and arts & crafts. This event is hugely popular during the Summer programme.

Bike Rave

The North Belfast Bike Rave is becoming a hugely popular event with over 50 people taking part in the event this year. The Bike Rave took a 5 mile cycle route from Girdwood Hub to the Crumlin Road, Antrim Road, Landsdowne, Shore Road and New Lodge and brought a fantastic atmosphere to the streets. We are hoping to return with a Christmas Bike Rave in December.



See Me Not My Label

On Tuesday 9th August, we held a film launch of 'See Me Not My Label' – a short film produced in partnership with the 174 Trust Youth Disability Group. The film was produced and directed by James Rea JR and ventured into the lives of some of the young people and their families. The film launch was packed with families/friends of the young people and there wasn't a dry eye in the house!



New Lodge Summer Festival 2022



Community Restorative Justice Ireland (CRJI)

Working in Partnership

Since establishing a base in the New Lodge area, CRJI has been working in close partnership with Greater New Lodge Community Empowerment Partnership, New Lodge Housing Forum and New Lodge Safer Streets Committee to help in the delivery and promotion of our activities and programmes. Some of this partnership working is highlighted in this article.

New Office Open

In the aftermath of our official opening at 14 New Lodge Road (Pinkerton Flats) CRJI embarked upon a project, in association with North Belfast Housing Executive, and in consultation with residents who live there. Our intentions were to improve the surroundings within Pinkerton Flats, and enhance the social space of the Community Garden.



Feile

Works began in the immediate aftermath of the official launch of our new office on 4th August 2022. We scheduled our launch date to coincide with the positive activities which were ongoing around our office which were all part of New Lodge Feile, and what an amazing success the Feile was. Like others involved in the New Lodge area, it is our intention to organise an event for Feile 2023.

Community Garden at Pinkerton

Within the Community Garden at Pinkerton, there are raised flower planters, seating area, with benches provided for residents to sit and take in the new surroundings. One tree was removed to provide a lighter space for the newly planted shrubs, allowing the light to flood into the garden making it a much more inviting space to occupy.

Looking Ahead

In the time ahead, the unsightly green steel gate will be removed from Pinkerton, the new router has finally arrived to our office. This will allow residents to control who enters the complex from intercoms within their homes. There are more proposals to mirror the works currently completed inside Pinkerton complex, to the front facing green space, adjoining Pinkerton Flats onto New Lodge Road.

Taking Pride in Our Surroundings

In the past many issues have plagued the Pinkerton Flats, today residents are working to ensure living conditions within the complex are maintained to a standard they aspire to. For our part, we are assisting in funding applications to provide equipment to enable residents to maintain the space going forward. The space will still be maintained by Housing Executive, with residents advising of their preferred choices for amendments to design, and rolling their sleeves up to do their bit taking pride in their surroundings.

In conclusion we would like to take this opportunity to thank all who assisted in bringing this important project to reality. Special mention to Housing Executive, they weren't found wanting to improve Pinkerton, and they aren't done yet. Onward, upward. Better to light a candle, than curse the darkness.

CRJI (Community Restorative Justice Ireland)
14 New Lodge Road, Pinkerton Flats.
Phone number 02896 210900. Website: www.crji.ie



Age Friendly - Belfast Safer Homes Service

Belfast Safer Homes Service is aimed at people aged over 65 (or vulnerable adult) living in the Belfast area.

Accident Prevention

You can get a free home safety check and where necessary you will be given free accident prevention equipment. The home safety officer can also make onward referrals to agencies such as Fire and Rescue Service, Occupational Therapy, National Energy Action and Environmental Health. Some examples of topics covered during the home safety check includes things like falls in the home, fire safety, home heating.

Repairs

If the home safety check highlights any repair work needed to protect against slips, trips or falls, you can get a subsidised rate to have the repair work carried out. Those on benefits will be charged £5 per hour for repairs. Those who do not receive benefits will be charged £15 per hour for repairs. Some examples of repairs include fixing loose floorboards, clearing paths, installing handrails, fixing doors, installing carbon monoxide alarms.

Please Note

Repairs do not include any electrical, painting or plumbing. All materials must be supplied by the occupant. General consumables such as nails, glue, sandpaper are free of charge. The service is available Monday to Friday 9.00 am – 5.00 pm (excluding public holidays). All work will be carried out by Bryson Energy staff who have been trained, police checked and carry ID.

To make a referral you can free phone 0800 14 22 865 or email: handyman@brysonenergy.com

For more information on home safety visit: www.belfastcity.gov.uk or phone 028 9027 0428



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)

<https://www.facebook.com/newlodgesaferstreets>

The poster for the Age-friendly Belfast Charter features a smiling elderly man with a white beard and hair, wearing a blue shirt. The background is white with green leaf-like shapes. At the top left is the 'Belfast' logo, and at the top right is the 'Age-friendly Belfast' logo. Below the man's photo, the text reads 'Age-friendly Belfast Charter: Information for organisations' and 'A city where older people live life to the full'. At the bottom, there is a colorful pattern of leaves and the logo for 'Making life better, together' with the text 'Belfast Strategic Partnership'.

Ashton Family Support Programmes

Community Family Support Programme

Empowering People

The Community Family Support Programme is a part of a consortium that is available across Belfast designed to empower people to make positive decisions and improve the quality of their lives. During the programme families receive help from professionally qualified family support workers to address the health, social, economic, educational, employment and training issues that impact on their daily lives. The programme is delivered by community family support organisations based in the heart of the community.

Economic Crisis

With the current economic crisis we realise that people are experiencing difficulties across a range of areas. The programme continues to support families living in North Belfast in a creative way, offering practical supports, stress awareness, behaviour support and a range of employability skills to help enhance learning and ensure that people are ready and prepared for employment. We are currently delivering a healthy eating programme for families which includes advice on cooking for your family on a budget.

Learning and Developing

In Ashton Community Family Support Programme we can offer training to individuals to allow them to keep learning and developing, these include personal success and well-being, managing personal finances and social media skills. We hope to continue to support the people of North Belfast over the challenging months ahead.

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for the programme you must live in North Belfast and not be in education, training or employment. If you are interested in becoming part of this exciting programme please contact eileen.oprey@ashtoncentre.com alana.mckeown@ashtoncentre.com or caroline.mcilwee@ashtoncentre.com or phone 028 9074 2255



Ashton Early Intervention Family Support Project

Ashton has been fortunate to receive funding from Belfast Charitable Society to provide a one to one Family Support Service that takes referrals directly from both of the Family Support Hubs in North Belfast.

Home Visitation in Demand

Home Visitation was the most demanded service through Hub referrals and this is a fabulous asset that compliments the numerous other services we can offer to families. The funding also allows the team to provide supermarket vouchers to families who accepted services through the Hub but who also were experiencing financial difficulties.

Experienced Support Workers

The project continues to go from strength to strength in providing one to one family support in the family home. Our two highly experienced family support workers, Caroline and Alana, are there to support and help you implement new strategies and tips around the challenging behaviour of children and young people, or the emotional health and well-being of your family and indeed with any issue within the family setting that is causing you concern.

Contact Details

Should you wish to avail of this service please contact Caroline or Alana by email at caroline.mcilwee@ashtoncentre.com or alana.mckeown@ashtoncentre.com or call them on 02890 742255



Alana and Caroline Early Intervention Family Support Workers assisting a family within the Ashton Pantry

Lower North Belfast Family Support Hub

Connecting Families to Services

It has now been over seven years since Ashton Community Trust (ACT) was awarded lead responsibility for delivering the Lower North Belfast Family Support Hub. Since August 24th 2015, ACT has been co-ordinating and receiving referrals and working to connect families to the services they require at a time when they need them throughout North Belfast.

Early Intervention

The Family Support Hub provides early intervention services to families and young people requiring support. The Hub brings together organisations that deliver services to children/young people (0-18 years) and their parents/carers and this includes community, statutory and voluntary family support services.

Dealing with Challenging Behaviour

The Family Support Hub can work with your family to deal with challenging behaviour of your child or young person by providing one-to-one family support in the home setting and can also work with your son or daughter to help manage their emotions and provide strategies to deal with low level anxiety.

Young People and Families

There are also services available to provide young people with mentoring support especially if they are socially isolated or dealing with bullying or anxiety which has been heightened during the pandemic. The Family Support Hub can also support families who are suffering from stress/depression by providing counselling or emotional support through talking therapies.

Financial Stress Supports

There are also services available to support families in financial stress, including debt management and budgeting. We are aware that with the increase in household bills that families may be struggling so please reach out if you need help.

How to Make a Referral

Any adult family member can refer themselves and their family to the Hub simply by completion of a referral form. The Hub Co-ordinator will then contact you in order to help match appropriate services to your family's needs. Your information will only be shared with the organisations who you feel will be of help to your family.

Here to Help You

There is now no need for families to struggle through life's difficulties because the Lower North Belfast Family



Support Hub is here to help through these times and work in partnership with families to improve outcomes for all the people who live in Lower North Belfast.

Contact Details

Should you have any queries about the Hub or should you wish to refer your family to the Hub please contact Edith McManus, the Lower North Belfast Family Support Hub Co-ordinator at the Ashton Centre 02890 749986.



Food Values Course

Are you interested in eating better, feeling better and having more money in your pocket? If so our Food Values Course is for you!



Learn how to cook on a budget, shop smart to make your money go further, understand the link between food and mood and how to "fakeaway a takeaway".

Free course starting in October 2022 - limited places available

This programme is being delivered in partnership with New Lodge, Duncairn Community Health Partnership.

Email: eileen.oprey@ashtoncentre.com, caroline.mcilwee@ashtoncentre.com, alana.mckeown@ashtoncentre.com or call (028) 90742255 and ask for any of the team.

This project is part funded through the Northern Ireland European Social Fund Programme 2014 - 2020 and the Department for the Economy.



www.ashtoncentre.com



FAMILY SUPPORT

Ashton Training and Employment Jobs Fair

It is great to be back in business! From Employers, Jobs, teamwork and politicians what a way to get back into our local community.

After being away from the office over the past 2 years throughout the COVID Pandemic, it is finally good to be back working face to face within the local community again!

The CORE and Belfast Works Employment Engagement Officers worked together with our employability support teams to organise and market a highly successful Jobs Fair, which was held at the Duncairn Arts Centre on the Antrim Road in September 2022.



The carefully planned event was aimed to specifically reconnect with both employers and the local community directly. There has never been a better time for employment opportunities to be made available. These include sectors such as, Health & Social Care, Hospitality, Catering, Customer Service, Office, Construction and Warehousing. We liaised with a range of employers who were actively recruiting in both the North Belfast and City Centre areas to ensure jobs were easily accessible via public transport.



Additionally the employability teams reached out to local community organisations, Job Centres and current clients they are supporting to ask if they would like to attend.

We were very pleased to see local MP John Finucane supporting the event and he spent the day chatting with our teams, employers and members of the public. It was great to have his support.

As part of Ashton's evaluation on the Jobs Fair, it was established that a variety of people aged 18 to 65 years old attended, with a massive 47% applying for the employment opportunities available with attendees stating how much they not only enjoyed the day but that this was very much needed .

The event also led to a further 33 new clients who were interested in registering with us to access the Training and employment support available.



Ashton Training and Employment Jobs Fair

Special thanks!

The Management team would like to thank, Clyn Group, Inspire, Hasting Hotel Group, McDonalds, Precision Cleaning, Mercury Security, Belfast City Council, Musgrave Market Place, Falcon Green Construction, Concentrix and First Source for supporting the event with an extensive range of jobs available, also our Training and Employment staff for all their hard work and special thanks to local MP John Finucane who not only attended but demonstrated a genuine interest and support to all.



Training currently available:

- SIA
- CSR Card
- Driver Theory classes
- Beauty Masterclass

Please keep an eye on our social media channels below for new and upcoming training courses.

We also offer one-to-one careers advice and mentoring services to include CV building and all aspects of Employment Support, Wellbeing, Mental Health and one-to-one Confidence Building.

Our Jobs Fair event can be viewed online using the following link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tGNgTKZZtgQ>

f <https://www.facebook.com/AshtonTrainingEmployment>

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f <https://www.facebook.com/coreproject1/>

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ashton
Training & Employment

Would you like help or support to find a job?

- ✓ Help with creating a CV or interview skills
- ✓ One to One mentoring, Job Search
- ✓ Essential Skills & Training

Get in touch: (028)90742255

training@ashtoncentre.com

www.ashtoncentre.com

facebook.com/AshtonEmploymentServices/

Essential Skills Classes Restart at the Ashton

CALL/ICT Ashton's Essential Skills project is currently trying out new short courses in English, Maths and ICT. These courses are delivered in two morning or afternoon sessions and are designed to be tasters for our full Essential Skills courses that take four months to complete. Completing a short course will help you in your everyday life and improve your employability if you are looking for a job.

Short Course Menu

The short courses cover:

English - reading, writing, and speaking and listening skills, including grammar and using formal language.

Maths - operations, including addition and subtraction, fractions, decimals, percentages and metric measurement.

ICT - using computers, word processing, spreadsheets and email.

Brush Up On Your Skills

All our courses are available to anyone living in the BT14 and BT15 postcode areas. Maybe you've been thinking about doing an Essential Skills course for a while? This is your chance to see what you would learn in a full course, to help you decide if you would like to enrol on a full course, while at the same time brushing up your skills in English, Maths and ICT. It's all about UPSKILLING!

Contact essentialskills@ashtoncentre.com or message us on our Facebook page [facebook.com/ashtonessentialskills](https://www.facebook.com/ashtonessentialskills) for more information.



Ashton Essential Skills Tutors Hilary and Mairead

ashton

Essential Skills

Do you have the Essential Skills for Work?

English + Maths + ICT = Essential Skills





Make 2022
the year to
gain essential
employability
skills to help you
find the job you
want!

New **short** English, Maths and (ICT) computer courses are starting in your area.

Courses cover:

- ✓ Maths skills for the workplace
- ✓ English skills for the workplace
- ✓ Using computers in the workplace

Courses are **LOCAL + FREE** + lead to a recognised **QUALIFICATION**

Phone: Hilary or Mairead on (028) 90742255
Email: essentialskills@ashtoncentre.com
Message us at: <https://www.facebook.com/ashtonessentialskills/>
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Communities
www.communities-ni.gov.uk



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Google: <https://g.page/ashton-centre>



Check out Ashton Community Trust's profile on Nextdoor.
nextdoor.co.uk/g/u79kwpgqw/

Paddy Benson - Sailortown Stalwart

Sailortown Regeneration will greatly miss our long time Chair Patrick Benson.

Pat was a proud Sailortown man who led the campaign to revitalise Belfast Docks community for over 20 years.

His family along with many others was displaced by the travesty which was the building of the Urban Motorway through the centre of Belfast 50 years ago. They were promised that their homes would be rebuilt, but it was not to be. Then 21 years ago the closure of St Joseph's reignited a campaign to save it with Paddy at its helm. His driving passion was to re-establish an urban village in this historic city centre area. He was a founder of St Joseph's and St Patrick's Housing committee and was in close contact with Tony McGann who established the Community led Eldonian Village in Liverpool.



Paddy with wife Mamie standing in front of their wedding day photo

Paddy found the love of his life in Mamie of Mamie's shop in the Short Strand. Mamie passed away just over a year ago and his life was not the same. However, supported by his loving family, he fought on to drive through his vision to recreate Sailortown as a thriving community. He was proudest of the fact that he was instrumental in having the first social housing built in Sailortown in a hundred years and was on the cusp of bringing in more city centre family homes.

The reopening of St Joseph's Church could not have been achieved without him as a strong committed trustee and chair. It still stands as a beacon for ex and current residents of Sailortown and is a testament to the passion and spirit of Paddy and his community.

There is still a way to go, but he can rest easy in the knowledge that he fought the good fight for his community and the generations to come.

Sailortown Regeneration extend our deepest sympathy to his family and friends and can be reassured that his life's work will be continued to bring Sailortown back as a thriving urban village with St Joseph's Church and House at its heart.

Rest easy with Mamie Paddy. Vaya con Dios Amigo



New Lodge Housing Forum

Who we are:

A committee of volunteers and one community housing worker based in the New Lodge to support the improvement of the quality lives of the tenants living in the Greater New Lodge.

Assist Tenants On Issues Relating To:

- Repairs
- ECM Schemes
- Environmental Issues
- Sign Posting
- Service Suppliers
- Housing Campaigns/ Redevelopment
- Computers for Residents Use

How you can get in touch: Drop in to our housing office between the hours of:
9am - 2pm Mon to Thurs
9am - 1pm Friday

New Lodge Housing Forum

23 New Lodge Road, BT15 2BU

Phone: (028) 90 742 399

Email: thenewlodgehousingforum@gmail.com

<https://www.facebook.com/newlodgehousingforum/>

Community Fridge Launched at Ashton

The first Community Fridge in North Belfast, New Lodge was officially launched in October by Ashton Community Trust, supported by the environmental charity Hubbub. This is part of a new partnership with Co-op to fast-track the expansion of Hubbub's Community Fridge Network across the UK. The Ashton Community Trust Community Fridge, which is located at Ashton Centre, Churchill St, is one of 100 new community fridges that will be opened over the next year, which are expected to save 6.8 million meals per year from going to waste.

Open to All

Community fridges are open to everyone in communities - without any need to be referred or having to prove eligibility - to access fresh food that would otherwise have gone to waste. The food is donated by businesses - with Co-op donating surplus food from its stores.

Connecting With Each Other

As well as improving access to food, the fridges go beyond this by empowering communities to connect with each other. The fridge will be open from Tuesday to Friday to enable residents and local businesses to share surplus food and for anyone to help themselves to quality food that would otherwise be wasted.

Food Donations Welcomed

The fridge will be run by Ashton Community Trust, which main aim is to support people living in North Belfast. The group will welcome donations of unopened, packaged foods within their use by date and raw fruit or vegetables, which will then be available to anyone in the community to take. As well as reducing food waste, the group will use the fridge to strengthen community relationship and promote the other work Ashton is involved in throughout North Belfast.

Since opening the Community Fridge has distributed over 100 kilograms (220lb or 15 stone) of food to the local community.

For more information, please contact:

Christine McKeown or Fionnuala Black, Ashton Centre, 028 9074 2255 or email christine.mckeown@ashtoncentre.com or fionnuala.black@ashtoncentre.com



Health & Wellbeing Department - Social Isolation

ashton Bridge of Hope



Ashton's Health & Wellbeing Department were delighted to secure PEACE IV funding through the Victims and Survivors Service to deliver some projects and events for individuals affected by Social Isolation. The Social Isolation Programme aims to address loneliness and social isolation and to promote the health and well-being of victims and survivors.

The team at Bridge of Hope worked hard to organise a range of successful events throughout the summer aimed at people of all ages. These included trips to Kilmainham Gaol in Dublin, Fishing Trips, a Teddy Bears Picnic, Willow Sculpting classes, a trip to Eden Pottery, trips to Streamvale Open farm, a day trip to Rathlin Island and Ballycastle, wreath-making workshops, photography lessons and a subsequent exhibition, an 80's Roller Disco and two visits to Dublin Zoo. This range of events proved very successful, with many events oversubscribed. Participants' feedback was extremely positive; many welcomed the opportunity to learn new skills and engage in activities they wouldn't have tried before. The team at Bridge of Hope were delighted

with the creativity and skills of the participants and are hoping to have some of their artwork hung on the walls within the Ashton Centre.

The programme of events was based on the TAKE 5 approach, Connect, Keep learning, Be active, Take notice and Give, which contributes to improving wellbeing in its fullest sense, both physically and emotionally. As well as allowing people to be active and learn new skills the programme of activities also allowed connections and friendships to be made and many common interests to be identified.

To wrap up the Social Isolation Project for 2022, Bridge of Hope have some further events organised for October 2022. We will be running some wreath-making classes, another of the highly successful photography workshops, some movie evenings and a planting and growing greenspace morning. If you are interested in participating in any of these events, please get in touch with Mary Stanton on 02890742255 or via email to mary@ashtoncentre.com



ashton
Bridge of Hope

Building a healthy resilient you

irene.sherry@ashtoncentre.com
mary.stanton@ashtoncentre.com

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- ✓ Counselling
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Get in touch:
facebook.com/bridgeofhope.org/

<https://bridgeofhope.support/>

New Lodge Arts – Creative Voice’s TBUC Camp

New Lodge Arts has recently started a new TBUC Camp in partnership with a group from the North Belfast Area Project. The young people from the New Lodge and Shankill/Woodvale area have been coming together now for the last few weeks and have enjoyed getting to know each other and building relationships. Our programme ‘Creative Voices’ is an intergenerational social action project. The young people on our project will be working with older people in each other’s community to find out their ‘stories’. The groups will interview the older people and from the information they gather they will recreate and retell the stories in a range of artistic ways. There will be a showcase event at the end of the project to celebrate the work. So far as part of the programme the group have been to Belfast Activity Centre for a full day of team building and have met for ‘getting to know you’ sessions at Girdwood Community Hub. We are looking forward to continuing the project and partnership right up to Christmas and hopefully beyond!



Busy! Busy! Busy! With New Lodge Arts

After an extremely busy, fun and successful summer we are back with a bang with our Arts Academy programme. We listened to our community and have expanded the range of programmes therefore there is “one for everyone in the audience”!

Guitar Lessons

We are excited to introduce Guitar Lessons for children and adults and hope to have them running in a few weeks in the New Lodge Arts Studio. Who knows we might have our very own School Of Rock very soon!

Parent & Toddler Sessions

We have also brought back due to popular demand for a 2nd term our Parent & Toddler sessions. Within the busy hour the young children have sensory play, art, socialise with other peers and snack. It is a jam-packed session filled with lots of fun and usually a lot of bubbles.

Stepping Stones

Stepping Stones is continuing for its third year. This creative class allows for children who struggle with their emotions and behaviour to come together with like-minded children and be in an environment that is suited to their individual needs. The successful programme is one of its kind in North Belfast and gives the children an opportunity to develop and flourish at their own pace.



Thank You

We would like to thank you all for continued support towards all our events, classes etc, without you none of this is possible.

For more information, get in touch with Anne Delaney on 07736389968 anne.delaney@ashtoncentre.com or via:

<https://www.facebook.com/NewLodgeArtsBelfast/>

<https://www.instagram.com/newlodgears/>

<https://twitter.com/NewLodgeArts>

<https://www.newlodgears.com/>

Romania Project 22'

In September 2022 a group of young people from New Lodge Youth Centre and Ardoyne Youth Club travelled to Baraolt, Romania as part of a voluntary trip. Due to Covid-19 the programme was impacted with the trip being postponed for a two year period, however, the group maintained a high level of motivation in continuing to take part in the project. As the project is fundraised in its entirety, the group led initiatives to fundraise such as coffee mornings, sponsored walks, bag packing and ballots. Additionally, they committed to a group work night for the two year period during Covid-19 and many different voluntary activities for people within their communities e.g. elderly.

During their time in Romania the young people led voluntary work supporting young people with disability, young people in care and in local schools. The group also got to experience what is it like to live in the local community and gained an insight into the medical care with visiting the town hospital. One of the participants on the project, Ella, reflected on her experience stating *“Thinking back to my Romania experience, two words that come to mind is life changing. Before going to Romania you do not know what to expect but when you are there at the different organisations and meeting all the people the happiness you feel is unmatched. Everyone is so welcoming and kind, although we went to Romania to make a small impact on their lives I can 100% say that they have made a huge impact on mine. For people to have so little but still manage to be so happy and make everyone else around them feel so happy is amazing. Baraolt is a place that I will never forget, it has taught me to always be grateful for everything I have in life and how truly lucky I am. I will continue to use all of my learning of the Romania Project in my life back home and use my experience to help others in our communities”.*

The Romania Project will continue to run this year in partnership between NLYC and AYC to provide an opportunity for young people from North Belfast to travel, meet new people, develop themselves and support the community of Baraolt.

For more information contact New Lodge Youth Centre 028 90751358 or message them on Facebook: [@newlodgeyc](https://www.facebook.com/newlodgeyc)



New Lodge Housing News



General Update

Time for an update on what's been happening in the area on the housing front. Obviously the two big issues concerning residents are the redevelopment of the long streets and the future of the tower blocks. In reality, in some areas with ample space, these issues can be dealt with together, but unfortunately in the New Lodge with our lack of new build space this is not possible. Whilst the Housing Executive (H.E.) remain committed to the demolition of all 33 tower blocks in the North it is safe to say our high rise will be with us for the foreseeable future, we will discuss the towers further in the article.

Long Streets

In regards to the long streets it is expected that the vesting application will be lodged before the New Year as a final decision on the demolition has been reached. Those few dwellings which were in doubt have been clarified and residents will be informed very shortly.

The H.E. have proposed changes to the status of residents following vesting and the committee have asked for a meeting with the relevant people in the Department for Communities for clarification. We will be demanding that all residents receive the same treatment that was afforded previous redevelopment projects. To avoid rumour and speculation it is imperative that the H.E. keep all residents informed and to this end we have requested they do a leaflet drop of the area. If necessary we will organise a public meeting in the near future to ensure everyone can have their say.

Seven Towers

As referred to earlier the Seven Towers in the area will probably be the last to go in the H.E. tower block strategy. As a result it was agreed major refurbishment was needed to improve the quality of life of tenants.

Finn, Fainna and Oisín have had new kitchens and bathrooms installed under an internal maintenance scheme which will be finished in the next few weeks. This scheme has necessitated the containers and skips in the barracks area lately and while they have caused some problems with illegal dumping and anti-social activity, our housing worker Gerry, has managed to remain on top of things and has negotiated closed skips and regular inspections. These skips and containers will be removed very soon.

The effects of the pandemic are still causing mayhem and the H.E. are only recently able to tackle the backlog of schemes which has built up. The cladding scheme for Grainne House was to begin in the financial year 2023 but unfortunately has had to be postponed



Housing officials on walk about with Housing Forum

until 2024, however engineers have been contracted to hopefully solve the ongoing problems at Maeve House. This involves the roof and water entering flats on several floors.

Duncairn Parade Maisonettes

A second economic appraisal on the future of Duncairn Parade maisonettes is almost complete, this will determine if major investment, 35,000/40,000 pounds per dwelling, is feasible or it may recommend demolition. This of course is not imminent and we have a long way to go in negotiations with homeowners to look at the possibility of a grants scheme if the work is proposed. The flats in Victoria Parade, at the Recy, are now complete and are in the process of being allocated.

Housing Forum Benefits and Debt Clinic

Having come out of lock down and then entered the present financial crisis some residents are facing the dilemma of how to make ends meet. As we move into colder weather the age old problem of heat or eat returns. The massive rise in the cost of living has led to an increase in rent arrears and several threats of eviction have been narrowly avoided. The Housing Forum runs a benefits and debt clinic in our office at 23 New Lodge every Wednesday from 5.30-8.00.

If you are struggling please avail of this service before things become insurmountable. This service is completely confidential and offers hope in the face of despair. To find out more contact Gerry O'Reilly on 07804506903 or call into the office 9am to 2pm Monday to Friday.

Clinic in the Recy

We also participate in a clinic on the first Monday of every month at 10am in the Recy. Here residents can bring issues directly to City Council, C.R.J.I., housing solutions, housing providers and ourselves. Because of numbers it is advisable to contact Gerry as above before attending.

Carlisle Insulation Scheme

42 dwellings in the Carlisle area have benefited from an external insulation scheme which included new windows. Some issues arose around positioning of scaffolding but ongoing consultation with residents resolved these and it is expected the contract will be completed in the next month.

Succession of Tenancy Issue

An issue has arisen lately regarding succession of tenancy, this can occur when the legal tenant of a property passes on and a family member has been living there, in some cases looking after the tenant. In this event it is essential that the housing provider has prior knowledge of the circumstances. Anyone living with a parent as a result of, for example a marriage breakdown, should contact their provider immediately. If you think you might be in this situation you can contact our office for advice.

Illegal Dumping

Finally a word on anti-social behaviour, illegal dumping has become a major problem, in fact city council have resorted to opening bags and issuing fines as a result. There is no excuse for illegal dumping and nothing brings an area down more. Bulky items and white goods can be collected by arrangement with council.

In the past few weeks groups of young people have been gaining access to the high rise and using the back stairs for anti-social activity including drug taking. This can happen when the culprits concerned notice a block without a concierge. Residents should be vigilant and in this event ring the senior concierge at Grainne House, the phone number is 02890740199. It is imperative incidents are reported as they happen not days later.

If you have any questions in regards to any issues in this article or in fact any queries at all please feel free to call to our office at any time during working hours, Gerry will be happy to accommodate you or if necessary put you in contact with myself or other members of the forum.

Liam Wiggins, Chair, New Lodge Housing Forum.

[@newlodgehousingforum](https://twitter.com/newlodgehousingforum)



Multicultural Family Fun Day in Alexandra Park

The North Belfast Transform for Change project supported by the EU Peace IV programme organised a multicultural festival 'Celebrating Diverse Communities in North Belfast' on Saturday 8 October in Alexandra Park. The Multicultural Family Fun Day showed a real appetite for holding future multicultural events in North Belfast. The Family Fun Day received very positive feedback with approximately 800 people in attendance.

Families from all ethnicities and cultural backgrounds living in North Belfast came together in Alexandra Park to celebrate their diversity and to learn more about each other through music, dance, food, art and storytelling. People from all walks of life were warmly greeted at the entrance by bubbly stilt walkers who welcomed them to the Multicultural Family Fun Day. They spent an enjoyable afternoon immersing themselves in the colourful and vivacious cultures experiencing the rhythms, tastes and sights that make up multicultural life in North Belfast.

The marquee was the epicentre of the entertainment. It hosted a range of beautiful and exotic dances including Mexican, Estonian, Chinese Fan and Bollywood dance. Parents participated with their children in an interactive drumming workshop, as young children played the tambourine, maracas and drums alongside Wilson, the drum artist with an infectious love for music.

The marquee thrived with the bustle of those queuing for the sumptuous food tasting sampling foods from China, India, Poland and Africa as the tent filled with sounds of the Irish musician and Dhol Drummers. Children learned about culture through art as they watched artist demonstrations in Japanese Origami and Mexican Piñata making demonstrations. Outside the marquee, families explored the arts and crafts tables leaving with samples of Chinese calligraphy or Islamic Name Painting. Parents and children shared the enjoyment of having beautifully Indian Henna painted on their hands.

Blessed with sunshine and uncharacteristically good weather for October, children gathered in a circle by a

tree in a quieter location with the LGBT storyteller. They enjoyed stories about diverse families, inclusion and cultural diversity. The children were very engaged and enjoyed listening to the story books and asking lots of questions. The children's interests were further peaked when we were joined by our local neighbourhood policing team and their police car. As part of their outreach programme, the neighbourhood policing team engaged with parents and children. One of our most sought after children's activities was becoming a member of the police for the day. Children got to dress up and sit in the driver's seat in the police car hitting the siren and horn like in a 999 situation, as parents took photos and videos.

We invited North Belfast political representatives to the multicultural festival and were heartened by their response as they shared the invitation and encouraged local residents to attend on social media. We were pleased to welcome some of our elected representatives and their families to the event as their presence reflects a real desire to welcome new families to our growing and changing cultural landscape in North Belfast.

Happy children walked around with beautifully painted faces holding balloon masterpieces after bouncing on the inflatables and watching the magician juggle and do magic tricks. They waited for the finale which started with loud bangs of the Dhol Drums and pulsating Bollywood music as children joined some of the young at heart adults on the grass area for a Holi Paint Party. The Holi Festival (the Indian Festival of Colours) is known across the globe as India's most energetic and vibrant holiday which celebrates springtime by throwing coloured powder. Everyone was given bags of coloured powder which was thrown in a multi-colour frenzy set against a backdrop of music and laughter.

Alanna Mc Garry
Inner North Neighbourhood Renewal Coordinator





York Street Interchange Update

The York Street Road Interchange was paused two years ago, its brief was to be reviewed and revised to address concerns about its scale and road dominant design. An options report has recently been published.

In order to shed light on the choices facing the local communities and residents living near the proposed road scheme the Ashton Community Trust is planning to hold engagement events in North Queen Street Community Centre (the Recy) and at St Joseph's Church during November/December 2022. The areas around the planned Interchange will be leafleted door to door with more precise details.



From a local community perspective some of the concerns still arising include:

- Unnecessary physical disruption and hardship for local communities
- Increased traffic will be forced onto North Queen Street
- The motorway over North Queen Street will be widened considerably making it more dominant with the underpass becoming darker and even more ominous looking
- Landscaped areas shielding housing along the road will be removed and the road moved closer
- Dock Street underpass will also be widened
- In the current scheme another new bridge on Dock Street will create a new dark underpass

Ashton have evolved an alternative solution which avoids these negative impacts however these ideas are not being actively considered by the Department for Infrastructure.

We are concerned that the recent options have many flaws and will fail to solve residents long voiced concerns. If the Interchange design is not amended then adjacent neighbourhoods will face four years of damaging disruption. It will also mean that the local improvements that could be made to help mitigate these damaging effects will not occur. For further information contact Mark Hackett Email: mark.hackett@ashtoncentre.com

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