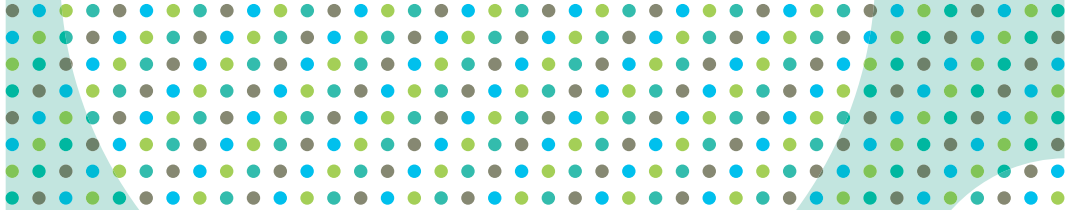


# 2011



## COMMUNITY PLACES ANNUAL REPORT



Community  
**Places**



**COMMUNITY PLACES is a voluntary community support organisation and registered charity. We work with and support disadvantaged local communities and people across the whole region by:**



working with communities to develop local community plans and support community involvement in Community Planning;

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advising disadvantaged community groups and individuals on planning issues, developments and policies which affect them;

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informing Government planning policy making by drawing on our work with communities;

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facilitating community consultation in planning and regeneration issues and policies;

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researching local needs and good practice and informing Government policy making which impacts on local communities; and

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advising community groups on developing and modernising their local facilities and environment.

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All of the advice we give is impartial, independent and confidential. Our work is guided by our commitment to inclusion, targeting need, equality and equity.



# Chairperson's foreword



**Thank you for taking time to read our Annual Report for 2011. In the report you will see the great work we are doing in responding to the needs of communities – whether this is supporting them on planning issues or providing advice on improving community venues.**

Community Places has been at the forefront of promoting the potential of Community Planning as a means by which we can get to the type of integrated planning which gives full voice to those most affected by planning decisions. This year you will see that we have continued to develop our range of services in supporting communities to play a full role in Community Planning. Our hope for the future is that at the policy level we can make progress on instigating new forms of local government and administration so that the full potential of Community Planning can be realised.

The statistics in the report speak for themselves. In what are tough times the staff of Community Places continue to make great use of the resources available and the Board would like to place on record our thanks for their continued dedication. On a personal note I would like to thank the Board itself for its commitment to the organisation.

Stevie Johnston  
Chairperson



# Independent and impartial planning advice

The free planning advice and support we provided during the year was funded by the Department of the Environment and our own resources. Our team of professional planners provided advice to people and groups on a one-to-one basis through outreach community advice clinics, site visits, and local and office meetings and also by email and telephone.

All individuals and communities who were eligible and could not afford a private planning consultant received free advice on planning issues such as:

citizens' rights and community involvement in the planning process;

the operation of the planning system (objections, applications, etc);

preparing letters and written submissions supporting an objection;

the role of local councils and statutory agencies in planning applications;

planning policies and area plan zonings and how these impact on communities;

the appeals and complaints procedures for planning issues.

We also provided support for community engagement in local planning issues ranging from local area planning impact analysis reports to the preparation of community reports outlining the types of development local people need and welcome. Outcomes during the year included:

the success of community groups in preventing a site earmarked for social housing being developed for the private sector;

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a local residents' association successfully opposing apartment development not in keeping with the local environment and community needs;

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a community group persuading a developer to alter plans so that they address the concerns of local residents;

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local residents developing a detailed case for objecting to unauthorised industrial development in the countryside;

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enhanced provision for community consultation in planning issues following our work on the new Planning Act 2011;

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a new planning policy which for the first time will enable serviced accommodation sites for the Traveller community to be provided in the countryside;

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the scrapping of a planning policy proposal which sought to give precedence to economic interests over community, environmental and all other considerations.

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responded to **264** requests from individuals for help on planning issues

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gave planning advice and support to **36** community groups

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helped **52** community group representatives interpret the new planning policy for building in the countryside (PPS 21)

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held **05** outreach planning advice clinics (in Newry, Enniskillen, Omagh, Loughgiel and Castlewellan)

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had **632** visits to the planning advice page on our website

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helped **30** community, voluntary and environmental groups to respond to planning policy proposals

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# Community Planning – making it real

At a time of increasing financial constraints and dwindling budgets the need for Community Planning has never been greater. It provides the basis for local councils, communities, and statutory agencies to assess local needs, agree priorities and negotiate the most effective ways of working together to improve local public and community services for all.

## LOCAL COMMUNITY PLANS

Decisions on local government restructuring and new legislation for Community Planning have been delayed but where there is a shared will and determination to work together Community Planning at a local level is effective in improving the quality of life in local communities. Funded by the Big Lottery Fund our Supporting Communities in Community Planning Project has achieved real and practical improvements to services, facilities and environments in neighbourhoods and villages across the region from Bushmills to Braniel and from Comber to Craigavon.

## PILOT PROJECTS

During the year we were commissioned by the Big Lottery Fund to work with three new pilot community planning projects and to develop a web-based Toolkit for Community Planning. The Toolkit will be completed next year and will provide guidance and resources for community and voluntary groups and others across the whole region in the years ahead.

## ON THE INTERFACE

Working in partnership with the Belfast Interface Trust enabled us to apply our Community Planning expertise to work with interface communities in four areas of the city. Drawing on funding provided by Belfast City Council through its Peace III Programme the Trust appointed us to facilitate local community needs and visioning processes leading to the production of community action plans in each of the areas. The plans are seen as a model for engaging with interface communities and issues and are now informing the development of new interface initiatives within the Council.

## PLANS FOR VILLAGES

Our work with communities in three villages (Cushendun, Mosside and Ballintoy) resulted in the publication of village community plans which identify an extensive range of environmental and social developments for improving the quality of life for local people. Funded by Moyle District Council and the Rural Development Programme the processes involved a range of community engagement techniques and collaboration with community groups and the Council members and officers.



consulted with **34** community and voluntary groups in the north coast villages of Cushendun, Ballintoy and Mosside to develop Village Plans and identified **30** proposals to help shape the future development of the villages

organised a conference on “putting the community into community planning” for **100** Community Development practitioners from the community, local council, health and housing sectors

have **45** people testing and reviewing our draft Community Planning Learning Toolkit

distributed our Community Planning Information Pack to **458** people active in their communities

provided advice and support on Community Planning to **15** rural and urban networks across the region

prepared **03** Local Community Plans (in Comber, South Down and Braniel)

engaged **271** individuals (representing **189** groups) with our Big Lottery-funded Supporting Communities in Community Planning Project

partnered with **15** community groups and consulted with over **300** people throughout Belfast to prepare four interface area community action plans

# Supporting modern and efficient community facilities



Throughout the year we worked with Co-Operation Ireland to provide advice and guidance to groups seeking or in receipt of funding from the £15 million Capital Modernisation Fund (Department for Social Development) and with the Big Lottery Fund in helping groups to access its £3 million Energy Efficient Venues Programme.

Our support to groups has incorporated issues ranging from energy efficiency measures and sustainability to building control and accessibility and from tendering procedures to managing contractors.



responded to **705** queries from community group representatives who want to improve energy efficiency in their community venues

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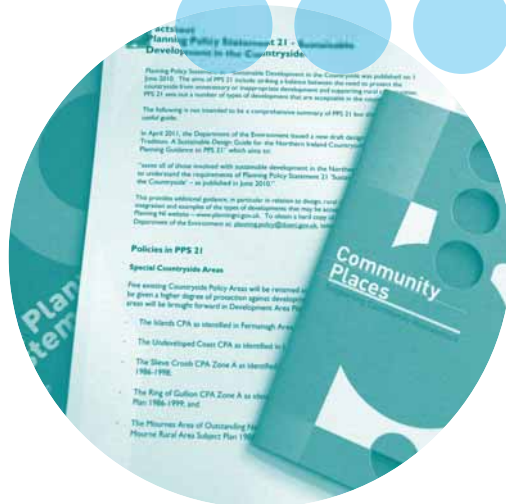
had over **3500** visits to our Energy Efficient Venues website page

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advised groups seeking and in receipt of funding from the Modernisation Capital Fund - **53** of these groups now have modern community facilities and equipment to provide their community services and activities

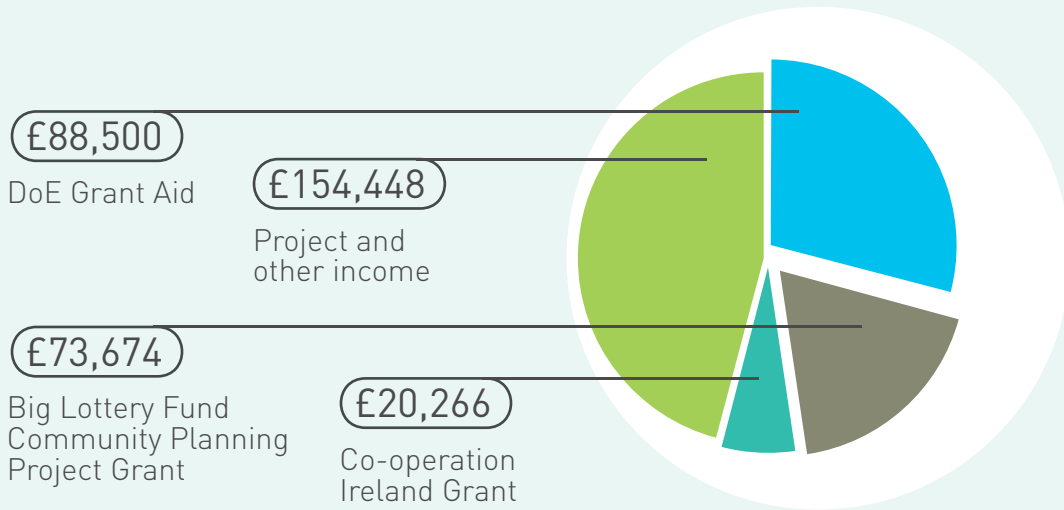
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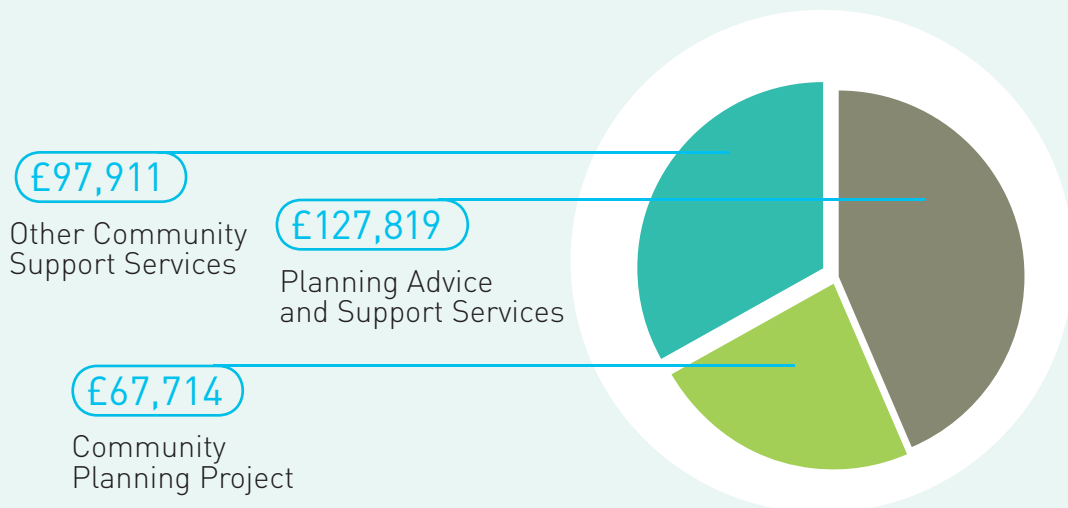


# Income and expenditure

## INCOME



## EXPENDITURE



# People

## Staff

Colm Bradley  
Director

Annie Clarke  
Community Planning  
Support Worker

Elaine Devlin  
Planner

Celine McCart  
Administrator

Clare McGrath (FROM DEC 2010)  
Planner

Louise McNeill  
Planner

Doreen O'Neill  
Projects Secretary

## Board of Directors

Stevie Johnston (CHAIRPERSON)  
Individual Member

Murray Watt (TREASURER)  
Supporting Communities  
Northern Ireland

Michael Briggs  
East Belfast Community  
Development Agency

Jennifer Cornell (UNTIL NOV 2010)  
Friends of Woodvale Park

Conor Corr  
Cookstown and Western  
Shores Area Network

Raymond Jackson  
Confederation of Community  
Groups Newry and Mourne

Matthew McDermott (FROM NOV 2010)  
The Rainbow Project

Ann McNickle (FROM NOV 2010)  
Causeway Rural  
and Urban Network

Cathy Rice  
Ards Development Bureau  
and Community Network

Gerry Tubritt  
Ballynafeigh Community  
Development Association

Geraldine Wilkins  
Individual Member



**Community Places**

2 Downshire Place, Belfast BT2 7JQ

**T** 028 9023 9444

**F** 028 9023 1411

**E** [info@communityplaces.info](mailto:info@communityplaces.info)

**[www.communityplaces.info](http://www.communityplaces.info)**

