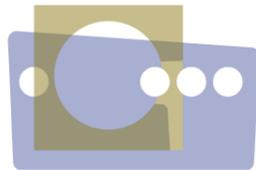


[www.communityplaces.info](http://www.communityplaces.info)

[www.communityplanningtoolkit.org](http://www.communityplanningtoolkit.org)

[www.communityplanningishere.org](http://www.communityplanningishere.org)

[www.participatorybudgetingworks.org](http://www.participatorybudgetingworks.org)



**£: 2017-2018**

In	£	Out	£
Department for Infrastructure	116,000	Staffing Costs	171,558
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation	20,000	Other Costs	53,475
Building Change Trust	26,411		<b>225,033</b>
Project Income	24,280		
	<b>186,691</b>		

**Board of Directors**

**Ann McNickle** (Chairperson) - Causeway Rural and Urban Network

**Murray Watt** (Treasurer) - Supporting Communities NI

**Conor Corr** - Cookstown and Western Shores Area Network (until October 2017)

**Michael Graham** - Forward South Partnership

**Austin Herron** - Carrickfergus Community Cultivators

**Raymond Jackson** - Confederation of Community Groups Newry and District

**Stevie Johnston** - Individual Member

**Cathy Polley** - Ards Development Bureau and Community Network

**Staff**

**Colm Bradley** - Director

**Fiona Conroy** - Planner and Engagement Officer

**Claudine Doherty** - Planner (until November 2017)

**Claire Duffy** - Planner and Engagement Officer

**Celine McCart** - Administrator

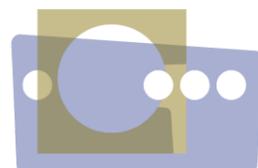
**Louise O'Kane** - Planner and Engagement Officer 

**Doreen O'Neill** - Projects Secretary

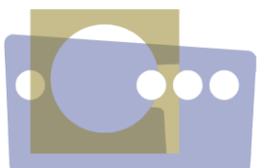


# Annual Report 2018

**Community Places**



Community Places  
2 Downshire Place  
Belfast BT2 7JQ  
t: 9023 9444 f: 9023 1411  
e: [info@communityplaces.info](mailto:info@communityplaces.info)



## Planning Advice for People and Communities

Our region-wide independent planning advice service is for people and community groups who cannot afford to pay a consultant. In this year's report we focus on the help we give community groups with 'regionally significant' complex planning proposals by providing a range of services, including:

- preparing detailed and site-specific technical information to support objections to planning applications;
- undertaking site visits and planning history searches;
- guiding people through the complaints and appeals procedures; and
- mentoring and supporting people at planning appeals.

We are helping a small rural group in Kells (Co Antrim) which is presenting substantial objections over a prolonged period to a proposal for a large scale **solar farm**. This is a 'regionally significant' application which was assessed by the Department for Infrastructure and recommended for refusal. The applicant is appealing this and we're helping the group prepare its case for the appeal hearing. If the appeal fails, the solar farm will be one of the largest of its kind - and will stretch over 90 hectares in a rural residential area.

We're also helping Save Our Sperrins (near Omagh) which is campaigning against a proposal for an extensive large-scale **gold mining plant** in the Sperrins. The local community is concerned that, if approved, this development will cause irreparable damage to the environment, natural habitat, rivers, ecology and protected species in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

In west Belfast we are advising a residents' association on planning policy issues associated with a revised planning application for a **sports stadium**. In 2014 we guided the association through a successful judicial review (which resulted in the quashing of planning permission granted for the 38,000 seater stadium a year earlier). Presented now with a reduced scale proposal, the residents' concerns remain largely the same as they continue to call for a smaller stadium for their residential area.

These and other large-scale regional planning proposals fall within the remit of the Department for Infrastructure which is assessing and processing them in its usual way.



However, they require a Minister to be in office to take a final decision.

## Strengthening Community Representation

The meaningful engagement of communities in all aspects of Community Planning is crucial to its effectiveness. During the development of Community Planning processes we worked in partnership with each of the new councils in designing community engagement opportunities.

Building on this and with the support of the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation we have been encouraging and facilitating community sector representation in the new Community Planning Structures.

New models for representation have been put in place by Community Planning Partnerships in a number of council areas:

- In the Derry and Strabane Council area the community sector is represented in both the Strategic Community Planning Partnership and the eight locality partnerships;
- In Mid Ulster and in Fermanagh Omagh community groups elected their representatives to the Community Planning structures;
- In Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon a Community Sector Panel is being set up through a nomination and selection process. Panel members will participate in the governance structures of Community Planning;
- In Newry, Mourne and Down community groups are involved in DEA Forums and sector representatives are members of the Partnership Board.

Across all of these models the challenge for the community sector is how it can sustain involvement in demanding governance structures without capacity building during a period of ever scarce resources. The challenge for Community Planning Partnerships is in delivering projects and programmes which have a positive impact for communities. We are grateful to the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation for resourcing us to facilitate and support the sector to the extent that we have been able to.



However, more in the way of support and resources for real community participation and representation is needed.

## Widening Civic Participation

Over the last year we have been working on two projects that have focused on widening civic participation. This work has been supported by grant funding from The Building Change Trust.

We collaborated with pupils from Abbey Community College to create a card game designed to help younger people think and talk about place from their viewpoint. Pupils participated in design workshops to create the game content and shape how the game would be played. They identified 14 place qualities which they used to discuss and consider what is important to younger people about place, to rate the chosen place and to suggest how that place could be improved. Pupils also made suggestions and agreed a name for the game: **'My Place'**.

Pupils who took part in the process commented: "It allows us to see the flaws and positives of areas around us" and "Makes you think more in depth about certain areas and what they provide for people." The card game can be used to encourage younger people to get involved in local place shaping processes.

We are also co-ordinating a regional **Participatory Budgeting Works** project to raise awareness of and create a supportive environment for Participatory Budgeting. PB can be described as 'local people deciding how to allocate part of a public budget.' It is a way for citizens to have a direct say in how public funds are used to address local needs. PB provides opportunities to engage in non-traditional ways that can reach out to people who do not often have a voice.

We are supporting three PB Projects and are delighted to be working with: Rathlin Development and Community Association; Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and Community Planning Partners; and Parent Action CIC, Downpatrick. The support will be tailored to each project to facilitate the planning and implementation of their PB grant making processes. This will result in practical examples of PB on the ground with opportunities for local people to get involved in shaping and having a say on how resources are allocated in their areas.

All the projects are excited to be involved and looking forward to the challenge.

