



Scrabo Community Plan



Our Vision

"Our vision for the Scrabo Estate is to build upon the sense of community spirit, increase opportunities and to improve the quality of life for all residents through the provision of amenities, activities and facilities in our Estate".



Foreword

The Scrabo Community Plan has been developed from the information gathered by surveys and questionnaires with the residents of the Scrabo Estate and through a series of meetings between the Residents' Association, elected representatives, the council and other public bodies. The support of Ards Development Bureau and Community Network and the help of Community Places were invaluable in preparing the Plan.

However, the Plan is only the beginning, there is much work still to be done to achieve our vision and this can only be accomplished with the help and support of the local community.

David McAlonan
Chairperson - Scrabo Residents' Association

Introduction

Community Planning is about those delivering public services working together with local communities and the community and voluntary sector to identify and solve local problems, improve services and share resources.

This Community Plan provides guidance to those delivering services in the Scrabo Estate on the needs and priorities of the local community and sets out the actions needed to improve the area for all the residents.

Scrabo Estate

The Scrabo Estate is a housing development in Newtownards. The Estate is bordered by the Circular Road to the East, the Scrabo Road to the North and West and the Jubilee Road Industrial Estate to the South.

Windsor Avenue was the first street built in the Estate in 1947. This street, together with the other streets in the estate, was constructed by local tradesmen and labourers, many of whom had served in the Second World War. Several of the original tenants are still living in the same house and over 60% of houses are now privately owned.

In recent years the Estate has lost many local services including the local post office, greengrocers, newsagents and hairdressers together with recreational spaces.



Decline in services in the Scrabo Estate

Key Facts and Figures

	Scrabo Estate	Ards LGD	Northern Ireland
Population	2841	73,244	1,685,267
Households	1319	28,689	686,718
Under 16 %	16.4	21.3	23.6
60 + years %	29.4	18.7	17.6
People living with long term illness %	27.7	19.4	20.4
Lone Pensioner Households %	20.5	12.6	12.8

Table 1 (www.ninis.nisra.gov.uk)

According to the NINIS statistics there are high levels of deprivation in the Scrabo Estate, with the Rathmullan Drive/Tower Court area ranked within the top 10% of most deprived output areas in the region.

Dependency on benefits is regarded as a reliable indicator of poverty and disadvantage. The table below illustrates the dependency rates in areas within the Scrabo Estate in comparison with those for Northern Ireland.

Output Areas	Income Support %	Incapacity Benefit %	Housing Benefit %
Northern Ireland	10.8	10.7	9.7
Rathmullan Drive /Tower Court	22.2	24.6	42.2
Scrabo Glen /Shimna Close	19.6	11.8	32.6
Lisbane Drive /Carmeen Gardens	18.7	21.7	27.6
Dromena Gardens / Donard Avenue	18.3	25.8	18.0
Quinton Park /Armillan Crescent	16.9	17.4	25.4

Table 2 (www.ninis.nisra.gov.uk)

In terms of the living environment statistics, which draw upon information on quality of housing, ease of access to housing and the physical environment, the Scrabo Estate is ranked in the top 10% of most deprived areas.

Scrabo Residents' Association

Scrabo Residents' Association was established in 2004 with the help and support of Ards Development Bureau and Community Network. Since then it has made considerable progress in improving the area and developing new community activities and resources.

The Association works for and is accountable to the residents of the Scrabo Estate. As an inclusive organisation the Association also welcomes people from the adjoining areas of Mill Street, Scrabo Road and John Street who participate in and benefit from the activities and opportunities the Association provides.

Scrabo Residents' Association has been very aware of the decline in facilities in the area and therefore has taken the initiative in developing this local Community Plan for the area, together with the community and voluntary sector and local statutory agencies.



Activities and Achievements

Since its inception the Association has:

- organised community and social activities;
- established a Community Resource Centre in premises leased from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive;

- organised social activities for older people;
- provided a community library in the Resource Centre for residents;
- provided a range of self-help and mutual support opportunities for residents including a Friends and Neighbours Group;
- set up both senior and junior youth clubs which bring young people to leisure and cultural facilities outside the area;
- worked with the Ards Development Bureau and Community Network and Ards Arena in providing training courses and workshops; and
- networked with other communities to learn from them, share knowledge and experience and bring new ideas and contacts into the area.

The Association has also worked in partnership with public agencies to improve the area. Work with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive enabled the Association to establish the Community Resource Centre, as well as assisting in resolving neighbourhood disputes and anti-social behaviour.

The representatives from the Residents' Association's committee meet Housing Executive officers on a monthly basis to discuss issues such as allocation policies, repairs, voids and environmental issues. Progress made has included the demolition of derelict garages which were the location for anti-social behaviour.

The Residents' Association also persuaded the Housing Executive and Roads Service to collaborate in providing environmental improvements to alleviate traffic problems in Donard Avenue. It also successfully made the case for traffic calming in the area and worked with Roads Service during the planning and implementation of the scheme.

Developing Scrabo Community Plan

Between January and May 2008, Scrabo Residents' Association participated in a number of workshops facilitated by Community Places, through its Supporting Communities in Community Planning Project. The workshops provided knowledge and support to the Association on Community Planning and assisted in bringing the key statutory agencies and the Residents' Association together.

This partnership working has identified and agreed the key issues and actions which are outlined on the next pages. The Partnership consists of representatives from the following organisations and statutory agencies:

- Ards Borough Council;
- Ards Development Bureau and Community Network;
- Department for Social Development: Areas at Risk Programme
- Investing for Health;
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive;
- Police Service of Northern Ireland;
- South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust;
- South Eastern Education and Library Board - Youth Service; and
- Scrabo Residents' Association.

To make better use of resources, the Partnership has established two working groups to take forward the actions identified. The Facilities, Amenities and Environment Working Group will deliver on actions 1-8, while the Programmes Working Group will deliver on actions 9-16 in the Action Plan.



Work with Ards Borough Council has focused on good relations initiatives including:

- moving the bonfire site and environmental education on the impact and dangers of burning tyres on the bonfire;
- provision of a community fun day, trips and activities to better manage the bonfire event;
- a tour of the Council chambers and talk by PSNI officers on community safety issues in the estate.

A Re-imagining Project proposal was developed with assistance from the Council's Good Relations Officer and supported by the Arts Council. The aim of the initiative was to improve the local environment and create a more welcoming community for all.



Completed Mural Project

Agreed Issues and Actions

The table below provides an outline of the issues and actions which the partners have all agreed to address. A detailed Action Plan is being developed on an ongoing basis by the partners to ensure all the issues are tackled.

People and Issues		Actions for the Facilities, Amenities and Environment Group
1	Need for a community centre to accommodate activities and projects	(a) Develop medium-term proposal for extension to Community House (b) Develop long-term proposal for new centre
2	Play area and Community garden	(a) Consult with residents of the Green (b) Develop proposals (c) Identify funding sources
3	Bus Shelters	(a) Survey level of bus usage (b) Present case to Council, Translink and Roads Service
4	Environmental Improvements	(a) Identify locations in need of minor environmental improvement schemes (b) Identify possible sources of funding
5	Recycling	(a) Raise awareness of need to re-use and re-cycle (b) Identify need for recycling point in the estate
6	Community Transport	(a) Identify, through Ards Network, the need for a community transport scheme in Ards Council area (b) Meet Community Transport Association to learn about other schemes elsewhere and options for Ards
7	Traffic Calming on Circular Road	(a) Discuss with Roads Service
8	Community Newsheet and Noticeboard	(b) Publish with news of community activities and work of agencies

Agreed Issues and Actions

People and Issues		Actions for the Programmes Group
9	Young People	(a) Build up existing activities
		(b) Link up with other areas
		(c) Plan personal development support (on stress, debt etc)
		(d) Improve access to Youth Service facilities
		(e) Involve more young people in planning activities
		(f) Develop meaningful inter-generational links
10	Older People	(a) Extend Good Morning Scheme to Scrabo
		(b) Friends and Neighbours Group
11	Disabled People	(a) Promote disability awareness
		(b) Winter programme
12	Families	(a) Parent and children programme (Sure Start)
		(b) Extend Sure Start into area
13	Health and Wellbeing	(a) Promote healthy nutrition
		(b) Identify support for coping with stress and building confidence
		(c) Identify and support socially isolated
		(d) Set up Healthy Walking Group
14	Poverty and Unemployment	(a) Improve access to advice on benefits, training and accessing jobs
		(b) Find out about Bridge to Employment and similar job schemes
		(c) Find out about training and further education opportunities and help people to access them
15	Good Relations	(a) Build on previous Good Relations to improve relations between communities
		(b) Provide Community Festival and similar events
		(c) Neighbourhood Watch Scheme
16	Community Support	(a) Enhance the Scrabo Residents' Association's Open House Information Morning
		(b) Training for volunteers

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Working Groups will hold regular meetings and the convenor of each group will report back to the Partnership.

Each household will receive information on the issues and actions and updates on the progress of the Plan through a range of methods including:

- Scrabo Estate Newsletter;
- Community Noticeboard;
- Community Resource Centre; and
- Local media.

A report on the progress of the Community Plan will also be presented at the Residents' Association's Annual General Meeting.

Acknowledgements

Scrabo Residents' Association would like to thank all who contributed to the Scrabo Community Plan and those who are working to ensure that the issues and actions that have been identified are being addressed in an efficient and effective manner.

The Association would also like to thank Community Places for its work in pulling together this plan and for facilitating the initial meetings with all partners.

A special word of thanks must go to the Ards Development Bureau and Community Network for its constant support and advice since our establishment in 2004.

We are indebted to those who share our vision of ensuring that all sections of our community have greater access to opportunities and experience a better quality of life.

Scrabo Residents' Association

Contacts

For more information on the Scrabo Community Plan, please contact those listed below:

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