

TESTIMONIALS FROM LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS

Cushendall Development Group has worked closely with Northern Regional College over many years, but in particular, the past few years with the Community Education Programme. We have been very pleased both with the uptake in the classes within the community and the high quality of teaching provided by the College.

Cushendall is a very rural area with transport to attend classes/courses in Ballymena a major problem. It is ideal to be able to provide the courses in our own building, in our community, and have the lecturers come to us.

The facility has enabled a large number of local people to achieve Level 1 and 2 Essential Skills qualifications in maths and/or ICT. Delivery of these courses has given local people the confidence to take up further courses and communicate electronically with family and friends throughout the world. The people of the Glens are delighted to be able to gain knowledge and experience provided by the very able lecturers.



***Una Rowan, Community Development Officer
Cushendall Development Group***

Ballymena South Cluster was formed in 2010 in response to RPA. This includes the community groups from across Ballymena South working together in partnership to create maximum opportunities for local residents.

As the community Development Officer in Ballymena South it is my role to support the community groups with their individual programmes, as well as collaborating with the groups in Ballykeel Harryville and Ballee on community projects and events. To date this has included: Ballymena Good Morning telephone contact service, Ballymena South Youth Forum, Ballymena South Youth Awards, Health Programmes, 50 shades of Pink women's event, wind turbine social economic project, Keep Warm events and a range of community programmes.

Within the Ballymena South Cluster areas community education has been an invaluable resource. Both Arlene Watson Community Education Co-ordinator and Anne Marie McKenna facilitator have been pivotal in the delivery of the computer courses in particular. They have targeted the programmes to those of all ages with one woman aged 84 receiving her OCN in computers.

“This lady has struggled with arthritis, and was disappointed when she could no longer write to her daughter in Australia, through joining the community computer course not only can this lady communicate via email she can now can Skype as well!!

It is also very encouraging to know that we have a waiting list for the computer courses and with the introduction of other courses within the community we hope to continue to engaging many more local residents, building their self-esteem, confidence and developing new skills.

***Gillian Forrest, Community Development Officer
Ballymena South Cluster***

Working with Northern Regional College has been invaluable to the community of Stranocum. Over the past three years we have ran a variety of courses in our new Community Hall including Internet for Beginners, Jewellery Making, Essential Skills English, Spanish and Healthy Eating. Each course was bespoke and tailored to the needs of the learners.

We have been delighted with the uptake for the courses we have ran so far and learner feedback has been very positive, we feel running courses in our hall is both beneficial to the individuals and the whole community. Due to the flexibility of the College and the efficiency of the Community Education Co-ordinator, Doris Peden, we hope to run many more courses with Northern Regional College in the future.



***Fiona McDowell, Committee Member
Stranocum and District Development Group***

The ongoing partnership working between Focus on Family and Northern Regional College in delivery of Essential Skills courses continues to provide a vital service for local residents within the Ballysally and wider communities. Each year, we receive many interested participants in the course provision. Many of the learners that engage with our centre have limited confidence levels, low educational attainment and previous negative experiences of formal education.

The courses provided by the College within our centre fit perfectly as they are providing much-needed qualifications to assist local people into employment, further learning or simply to boost self-esteem and confidence levels and the way in which they are delivered (in a relaxed, engaging, interactive way) helps our local participants to feel comfortable, valued and ready to engage in the learning. The reality is that without Northern Regional College's community delivery, many of our learners would not undertake these types of educational courses and this would clearly have a detrimental impact on many areas of their lives.



***Brendan Patterson
Focus on Family***