

## **TESTIMONIALS FROM LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS**

Cushendall Development Group has worked closely with the Northern Regional College over many years but in particular the past few years on the Community Educational 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 accommodate 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 bring the tutor to us. This facility has enabled a large number of people to learn Basic Computer skills which has given some of them the confidence to take up further courses and helped others to communicate with family and friends throughout the world, The people of the Glens are delighted to be able to gain the knowledge and experience provided by a very able tutor and would like to take this opportunity to thank the Arlene Watson from the Northern Regional College and Shirley Dickey for their continued support.

***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 women 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 the NRC has been invaluable to the community of Stranocum. Over the past 2 years we have ran a variety of courses in our new Community Hall including Internet for beginners, Jewellery making and Essential Skills English. 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 the NRC in the future.

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