



URBAN VILLAGES

# FOCUS

MAGAZINE

ISSUE

05

DECEMBER

2018

*Christmas  
Edition  
2018*



IMPROVING AREAS | STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES | LIVING BETTER TOGETHER

# Welcome to the FOCUS Magazine Christmas Edition

There have been some great seasonal events happening across the Urban Village areas recently, so we have put together a special edition of FOCUS Magazine to share them with you.

Why not tell us what you think on [Twitter @urbanvillagesni](#) and [Instagram - @urbanvillagesni](#)



# Season's Greetings

**Linsey Farrell** Programme Director,  
Urban Villages Initiative, The Executive Office



Welcome to this special Christmas Edition of the Urban Villages FOCUS Magazine.

In this mini compilation you will see the many and varied Christmas events, and a throwback to the Halloween events that have happened this year across Urban Village areas.

These events have not only brought communities together from different backgrounds and cultures, but also, they have welcomed visitors from outside their areas. It has been great to see communities fostering positive identities as they celebrate the season together.

Events have also focussed on specific groups, for example, the seniors in South Belfast and in Derry-Londonderry have crossed traditional divides to have fun and enjoy Christmas dinner together in their Urban Village areas. (p4 & p5/6).

In Derry-Londonderry young people from four youth clubs worked together to develop a unique outdoor Christmas storytelling event, the Bogsides Nativity. It created an opportunity to build capacity across the groups while producing this fantastic event.

I was delighted to be with the Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service, David Sterling and Dr Mark Browne from the Executive Office at the first ever event to be hosted at the Colin Connect Transport Hub and new Colin Town Square. It was great to celebrate the first official Christmas tree light switch on, but also the investment by the Urban Villages Initiative of £1.75m in this a quality community shared space.(p8/9)

Seasonal greetings from me and all of the Urban Villages team and we look forward to continuing to work with you all in 2019 as we develop **#thrivingplaces!**



# About Us

The Urban Villages Initiative is a headline action of the Together: Building a United Community (T:BUC) Strategy. It is designed to improve good relations outcomes and develop thriving places.

The Urban Villages Initiative is shaped and delivered in partnership with local communities and has three core aims:

- To foster positive community identities
- To build community capacity
- To improve the physical environment

The Urban Villages Initiative is continuing to invest in the five Urban Village areas by supporting organisations in the development of projects aimed at improving the lives of people in these areas.

For more information contact: [info@urbanvillagesni.org](mailto:info@urbanvillagesni.org)

**URBAN VILLAGE AREAS** - Derry-Londonderry: Bogside, Fountain & Bishop Street. South Belfast: Sandy Row, Donegall Pass & The Markets. North Belfast: Ardoyne & Greater Ballysillan. East Belfast: Newtownards Road, Grampian Avenue to Bridge End. West Belfast: Colin Area.

Merry Christmas Everyone!



*Linsey Farrell*

Drawing by **Carl Southern**,  
Urban Villages Initiative

Bogside, Fountain & Bishop Street  
**DERRY~  
LONDONDERRY**

# Derry~Londonderry Seasonal Events



*The High Hopes Choir, invited by Cathedral Youth Club, performed at a special Christmas concert at St Columba's Cathedral. The choir consists of people who have been affected by homelessness and/or addiction. The concert also featured performances from Lisneal College Choir, Long Tower Primary School and the Fountain Primary School.*

As part of the Streets Alive project, an events based programme supported by the Urban Villages Initiative, a number of Christmas community projects have taken place across the Derry-Londonderry Urban Village area.

The various events aim to foster positive community identities and to build community capacity across the Bogside, Bishop Street and Fountain Urban Village area.



*Seniors from across the Bogside, Bishop Street and Fountain Urban Village area came together for an evening of music, dance, games and laughter at the Gasyard Centre.*



*The Winter Market, held in Bishop Street & The Fountain, has helped to build community relations by creating an area where local residents feel safe to engage in cross-community activities. In the preparations for the market there has been sustained cross-community engagement, with local residents attending a series of craft workshops, helping to produce goods to be sold at the market.*



Ardoyne & Greater Ballysillan  
**NORTH  
BELFAST**

**TASCIT** *Cross community Christmas event at the NI Ambulance station in the North Belfast Urban Village area.*

Around 500 people attended the TASCIT Christmas event in the North Belfast Urban Village area. This cross community event was supported by the International Fund for Ireland, The Executive Office Central Good Relations, Community Cohesion Unit - NI Housing Executive, Belfast City Council Good Relations and Newington Housing Association.

TASCIT (Twaddell Ardoyne Shankill Communities In Transition) is a project which seeks to create the conditions where residents feel confident that they can live without risk to or from their immediate neighbours and can move forward together in a process of mutual benefit.

Sandy Row,  
Donegall Pass  
& the Markets  
**SOUTH  
BELFAST**



*The Sandy Row Residents Association hosted its annual Senior Citizens' Christmas Party at the Sandy Row Community Centre. The event included Christmas dinner with all the trimmings and gifts for all attending.*

## Festive fun in South Belfast

Groups from the South Belfast Urban Village area have been feeling particularly festive this year, holding a number of Christmas events across Sandy Row, Donegall Pass and The Markets.



*The Donegall Pass Community Centre Senior's Christmas Dinner welcomed guests from Donegall Pass, Sandy Row, the Markets and the local Chinese community for an evening of dining, fun and festive cheer between the tight knit communities of South Belfast.*



*The Donegall Pass Community Forum hosted its annual Winter Wonderland and community market along with the lighting of the Christmas tree on Donegall Pass. The event included a mini-fairground, bouncing castle, a farm, food and drink stalls and was well attended by people from the local area.*



*The Markets Christmas Family Event was held in the Markets Community Centre where Santa arrived on his train. The family event was a night of song and dance celebrating the spirit of Christmas.*



*Sure Start Winter Wonderland*

Colin  
**WEST BELFAST**



Young people from East and West Belfast Urban Village areas as part of the Tibuc Uniting Communities Young Leaders programme joined officials from The Executive Office, Department for Infrastructure, Department for Communities, Translink and David Sterling, Head of the NI Civil Service, to celebrate the first ever event on the Colin Town Square.



Santa was joined on stage by Linsey Farrell, Urban Villages Initiative Programme Director for the official lights switch on.



Excited crowds gathered at the new Colin Town Square for the switching on ceremony of the Colin Christmas tree lights and an evening packed with entertainment.



David Sterling, Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service, speaking at the event about the positive impact of collaboration across Government departments and with community.

## Santa comes to Colin

This was the first event to be held in the new Colin Town Square. The new civic square and Transport Hub forms part of a major investment in the Colin area which is being supported by the Urban Villages Initiative.

Special guests included David Sterling, Head of NI Civil Service, Dr Mark Browne from The Executive Office and Linsey Farrell, Programme Director. Crowds were kept entertained by carol singing from local school children and the Colin and EastSide community choirs.



Santa greeted children from the local area in his Grotto in the new Colin Connect Transport Hub. Colin Connect forms a vital part of the Belfast Rapid Transit project and has created a new and dynamic public transport system for the Colin area.



Mark Browne, The Executive Office, David Sterling, Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service, Annie Armstrong, Colin Neighbourhood Partnership, Damian Bannon, Translink, Chris Conway CEO, Translink at the Santa Comes to Colin event, the first ever event on the new Colin Town Square supported by the Urban Villages Initiative in partnership with Department for Infrastructure, Department for Communities and Translink.



The EastSide and Colin Community Choirs arrived on the Glider with Santa and combined to lead the community Christmas Carol singing.



Urban Villages Initiative in EastSide  
**EAST BELFAST**

## Christmas Fayre



The annual EastSide Christmas Fayre, held in the Skainos Centre drew record numbers this year and was once again filled with festive cheer, with all of the community partners working together as part of the Urban Villages Initiative Arts and Creativity collaborative project.

Special highlights included Santa's Workshop, that showcased Hosford team's efforts, local community crafts from Ballymac Mens Shed, Short Strand Community Centre, the Diamond Project, Walkway Community Association and Hosford, the Scaffolding project supplied tasty treats and EastSide Learning created a reading corner that celebrated the 40th anniversary of Raymond Briggs 'The Snowman'.

*The event included a number of stalls selling hand crafted festive gifts, food and drinks, sweet treats and farm fresh vegetables.*

*Representatives from the EastSide Arts and Creativity Sub-Group from different organisations across the Urban Village area taking part in the annual EastSide Christmas Fayre at Skainos Centre.*



*Plenty to keep the children entertained including activities such as arts and crafts, a chocolate factory, storytelling and of course Santa's workshop supplied by Hosford.*



*Linsey Farrell, Programme Director and Wayne Irvine from the Urban Villages Initiative helping out at a stall for the Hosford Homeless Shelter who were getting into the festive spirit at the EastSide Christmas Fayre.*

# Halloween throwback!



A reminder of the fantastic Halloween events that took place across Urban Village areas in 2018. The quality of events was exceptional and attendance numbers often exceeded expectations. The

events brought groups to work together across the areas and welcomed visitors from far and wide, creating welcoming shared spaces.

**#thrivingplaces**



*A bewitching time for all*

*A spooktacular family soirée*

*Totally frightful fun*

*Clowning around together*

*It was a ghostly gathering!*

\* <https://youtu.be/Wx1qAbdC-US>



WE WANT  
TO HEAR  
FROM  
YOU...

URBAN VILLAGES FOCUS MAGAZINE will tell you what's happening and what the Executive is supporting across the Urban Village Areas in Belfast and Derry~Londonderry.

The local stories you have read have come from community groups and individuals in Urban Village areas. We want this magazine to reflect the great things that are happening where you live and welcome your comments and ideas!

If you would like to receive future editions of FOCUS Magazine, sign up at **info@urbanvillagesni.org** or contact us at The Urban Villages Initiative, Room E4.15, Castle Buildings, Stormont, Belfast, BT4 3SR

 **@urbanvillagesni** and  
Instagram - **@urbanvillagesni**

## Keep in Touch

Stay updated with what's happening in your Urban Village area. To join our mailing list send your contact details to **info@urbanvillagesni.org**

### Focus Magazine

Next issue - February 2019.  
If you have any local community stories or events that you would like included, just let us know.

### Ezines

Ezines will keep you updated throughout the year on what's happening in your Urban Village area and beyond.

### Social Media

#### Twitter & Instagram

Keep the conversation going **@urbanvillagesni**  
Connect with us online to keep up to date with what's happening across all five Urban Village areas.

Contact us:  
**info@urbanvillagesni.org**



Northern Ireland  
Executive  
[www.northernireland.gov.uk](http://www.northernireland.gov.uk)

**T:buc**  
Changing for the better, together

