

URBAN VILLAGES

FOCUS

MAGAZINE

ISSUE

07

JULY
2019

COLIN
**A Warm
Welcome
for Syrian
Families**

**Resilient
Young
Mums**
EASTSIDE

SOUTH
BELFAST
**Breaking
Down
Barriers**

**NEWS
HIGHLIGHTS**

NORTH
BELFAST

**Working
Together**

DERRY~
LONDONDERRY

**STREETS
ALIVE**
Summer
Schedule

**URBAN
VILLAGES**

Thriving Places

IMPROVING AREAS | STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES | LIVING BETTER TOGETHER

Contents



4 CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

Building relationships across Urban Village areas



6 LOCAL STORIES

- Colin West Belfast **6-8**
- Derry~ Londonderry **9-11**
- East Belfast **12-14**
- North Belfast **15-17**
- South Belfast **18-20**



21 CAPITAL INVESTMENT

Improving the physical environment



24 WHAT'S ON

Get involved in local events, activities and training opportunities



27 NEWS

Keeping you up to date

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

Front Cover: Personal Growth through Leadership (PGL) Youth Group on receiving an Outstanding Achievement Award at the Colin Youth Awards 2019.

Welcome

Siobhan Broderick, Programme Director
Urban Villages Initiative, The Executive Office



I am excited to be looking after Urban Villages while Linsey is off on maternity leave.

Being new to the programme I am just getting to know the projects and the different Urban Village areas, and I look forward to getting to meet more of you over the next few months.

FOCUS Magazine helps me to find out more about the many great projects underway and the impact that they are having on peoples lives and in the places where you live.

It is great to see such progress with the capital building projects this year, you will see the update on pages 21-23 and I look forward to seeing many more completed in the months to come.

Seeing the significant impact of creative and innovative approaches across schools and communities in the cross cutting programmes on pages 4-5, is impressive.

The community led projects show such meaningful engagement across all age groups, if you are interested in the projects, do connect with them to find out more.

We are supporting a special youth project this summer that is running alongside the TEDxStormont. The Talk like Ted youth programme will equip the participants from across all Urban Village areas to present their big ideas on a stage in Stormont this August (p29).

Do remember to submit your ideas for Good Relations Week in September (p28) and let us know if you have any comments or feedback on the programme, details are at the back of the magazine.

Enjoy,

Best regards,

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.

Buddy Up Schools Arts Exhibition



The Buddy Up Family Arts Exhibition was a colourful, upbeat event, full of songs, arts and positivity. It celebrated the shared work between Holy Cross Nursery School, Edenderry Nursery School and Community Relations in Schools (CRIS) at the Houben Centre in North Belfast.

Attended by over 60 parents, carers, more than 100 pupils and all the staff from both schools, this community event showcased photography and needle

craft works by the parents; and wonderful canvas paintings created by the children of their buddies from their partner school.

Principals from both Nursey Schools commented, *“The exhibition of the Buddy Up work was a proud moment for everyone in our school community! The exhibition is a fantastic way to share a little of the creativity and hard work that happens in Edenderry and Holy Cross on a daily basis with our parents and families.”*



The programme was developed by CRIS with these two pioneering Nursery Schools. This is an intergenerational peace building approach that seeks to engage everyone in the school community to play a role in building a shared future.

The Urban Villages Initiative is investing in the growth of this inter-school Buddy system, that will be delivered by CRIS across Primary Schools serving Urban Village areas throughout Belfast and Derry-Londonderry.

Short Films Showcase the Work of Racial Equality Groups

Films showcasing the work of organisations tackling racial inequalities and promoting good race relations in Northern Ireland have recently been launched online.

The short film profiles have been developed with support from The Executive Office, a collaboration between the Urban Villages Initiative and Department’s Racial Equality Unit.

Mark Browne, Director of Strategic Policy, Equality and Good Relations at The Executive Office commented, *“These profile films symbolise a direction of travel for us. A commitment to raise awareness of racial equality and to better highlight and connect the work that we do across departments and communities; as well as a commitment to work together to tackle racial inequalities and to promote good race relations.”*



The films capture the work of locally based groups helping to build a society in which racial equality and diversity is understood, valued and respected. The profiles are now available on the Executive Office (TEO) website at <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/articles/racial-equality>

Racial Equality Films Watch here



New Creative Learning Fund will support fresh approach in the classroom

The Urban Villages Initiative is working with the Arts Council of Northern Ireland (ACNI) and the Education Authority (EA) to support a new three-year programme to inject more creativity into the classroom, in a bid to improve educational outcomes for students.

The announcement follows a successful pilot scheme rolled out last year in 10 post-primary schools serving Urban Village areas.

The Creative Schools Partnership is a programme that was developed, based on research which indicated that access to quality arts experiences in school can benefit all aspects of learning.

These include better engagement and attendance levels, improving results in other school subjects, increasing confidence and self-motivation, and promoting positive mental health and wellbeing.

The schools will be working with artists on a range of

creative projects including, music production, journalism, photography, film making, animation, and ceramics.

“We were overwhelmed with the positive feedback we had from the schools who took part in last year’s pilot programme and are delighted to be working with the Education Authority and the Urban Villages Initiative once again to create a new three-year programme which will benefit many more children.”

Roisin McDonough,
Chief Executive of ACNI.

EA Chairperson Sharon O’Connor said: *“The Creative Schools Partnership is making a valuable contribution to our schools. It focuses on creating collaborative opportunities for schools, teachers, artists and communities. The programme enables our young people to bring about real change in how they see and value themselves, as well as understanding how they can make a positive impact in their own community.”*

Blessed Trinity College in North Belfast was one of the ten schools to take part in the original pilot programme last year.

Gilah McCarroll, Teacher, Blessed Trinity College, said: *“We have been working with a group of Key stage 3 students who are now in year ten. We are so fortunate to also be working with Newington Day Centre which is a centre that caters for the elderly in the heart of North Belfast. Our students have been visiting there, befriending the members, hearing their life stories, interviewing them and then filming them to turn their stories into animations.”*

Eleven schools serving Urban Village areas have so far been awarded funding to take part in the first phase of the new creative programme.

[▶ Creative Schools Partnership Watch here](#)

Colin

WEST BELFAST

Win for Youth Social Action Group

Congratulations to the extraordinary young people from the PGL (Personal Growth through Leadership) youth group on receiving an Outstanding Achievement Award at the Colin Youth Awards 2019.



The Colin Youth Awards, supported by the Urban Villages Initiative and the Education Authority, recognise and celebrate the achievements of young people in schools, sport, creativity and social action, across the Colin Urban Village area.

The PGL youth group are involved in a number of social action activities in the local community including tackling loneliness and isolation for elderly residents of their community who are living in care homes.

They have completed dementia awareness training as a lot of the residents have Alzheimer's

or Dementia and the group are now trained in how to diffuse and reduce anxiety which can be a big part of the emotional state of residents.

The group provide a range of fun activities for the residents and they plan a series of social events throughout the year where residents from the home and the wider community mix in the youth centre, with dinner and entertainment.

These young people have completed OCN accreditation as inclusion champions so they can promote good relations and help to break down barriers inside and outside of the care homes.

Engaging in conversation and social interaction, their work has also greatly helped men living in the care homes who can often become socially withdrawn from people.

The group has also connected with Good Morning Colin and created packs for Christmas hampers and delivered them to elderly residents in the community at Christmas time.

Congratulations to the PGL group and all of the winners on the night, very well deserved awards.





Footprints Supports Syrian Families in Colin

Footprints Women's Centre are providing a supportive and a warm welcome to Syrian families living in Colin through its Syrian Women's programme, delivered every Thursday in the centre.

A partnership was established between Footprints and CRAIC NI in September 2018 to support these newcomer families.

Twenty Syrian families take part in the project. The Footprints Centre provides a safe local space and interpreting services to support women to come together, gather information, meet and socialise with other women in the area.

Nemat Yousfi a participant of Footprints Women's Centre, commented, *"I am very happy going to Footprints and seeing Syrian woman. I have made new friends. My English is getting better and I can talk to everyone."*

The programme funded by the Urban Villages Initiative is proving a great success with both local Syrian families and other new families moving into the area.

"The women seem to really enjoy coming to the centre, they can relax, they use the social supermarket and they even cook their own food! They have an opportunity to get to know a bit more about our local culture and for us to find out about theirs." said Eileen Wilson, Project Worker, Footprints Women's Centre.

Women participating in the programme also have access to Footprints full range of services which include family support, childcare, empowerment project, community food store, benefit advice, employment support and volunteering opportunities.



Colin Celebrates Men's Health Month



To celebrate Men's Health Month in June, Colin's Men's Shed organised a wide range of events and activities to raise awareness of health issues that affect men.

During the month, local men could access physical and mental health services including free health tests to check blood pressure, cholesterol and glucose levels, walk and talk sessions, bowel cancer awareness workshop, complementary therapies and acupuncture and mindfulness courses.



Umberto Scappaticci, Development Worker, Colin Neighbourhood Partnership commented *"Studies consistently show men are much less likely to visit a doctor, or even notice signs of illness, than women are. The men's health month focused on getting men to become aware of problems they may have or could develop, and gain the courage to do something about it."*

He added *"We were also delighted to see an increasing number of men participate in these health awareness sessions this year and we thank the Urban Villages Initiative for their support"*.

First Graduates of Colin Community Safety OCN



Attendees at The Colin Safer Neighbourhood Projects (CSNP) recent AGM, included the Colin areas first graduates of a unique new OCN course, designed to help those involved in the safer neighbourhoods projects to be more aware of Community Safety and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) issues in their area.

12 teenagers from Saints and Sally Gardens took part in the unique course at the end of last year. The course was designed by CSNP in conjunction with Sally Gardens Manager, Martin Connolly and the centres Youth team.

Michael George, Vice Chair of CSNP commented: *"The Course is designed to highlight the effects of Anti-Social and low level criminal behaviour on the wider community.*

"We wanted it to reflect the concerns of our residents without lecturing to those taking part. Feedback from the young people involved was excellent and what came across strongly, was respect all round is key to reducing the problem.

"We have taken their views on board and vice versa. This is another link in the Colin areas multi agency approach to ASB and it's no coincidence that we have seen a 10% reduction in issues, the best since collation figures started."

Bogside, Fountain
& Bishop Street

**DERRY~
LONDONDERRY**

Financial Abuse Support - Help is out there



The Know It, Change It, Live It (KCL) project by Dove House, supports low income families through financial inclusion, helping to build financial confidence and capacity by money maximisation, spending tips, good budgeting habits and debt advice across the Urban Village area.

The KCL project offers support services including debt advice, to local families suffering hardship due to financial abuse. Financial abuse is when people lose money for essential living costs to feed an addiction of a family member.

Majella Stewart, Financial Engagement Officer, Dove House said, *“We work with a lady whose partner has a gambling addiction.*

Whilst working with her, it became evident that this was impacting greatly on her life and her entire family.

“We supported her through gaining enough confidence to change her pin numbers and we have also supported her partner by signposting him onto Gamblers Anonymous which is offering support to him. Read her story below.”

My Story: Gaining Financial Confidence

“I came to see if I could get my debts in order and Majella noticed that there was money missing that couldn't be accounted for. I opened up to Majella about my partners gambling, and how much money I was losing per week and how it was impacting on my mental health. We have worked through it with Majella, and we are getting to a much better place.

“I have ensured that there is no access to my money for gambling, however we have a long way to go with this issue. I am just so grateful for the support offered by the KCL project and especially for the listening ear that was provided. I will continue to work with the project until I can gain more confidence dealing with my debt issues.”

If you need help with financial issues or simply would like more information on the KCL project, contact Majella by telephone on: **028 7126 9327**



The Streets Alive Summertime Festival schedule is here!

The Streets Alive project will be delivering and supporting over 100 events this July and August. The festival period will swing into action on the 23 July with this year's Fringe Festival featuring over 40 events.

The Fringe Festival will explore the influence of Ulster Scots on the history of the city, as well as celebrating the current cultural makeup of the city with a number of cross-cultural events. The Festival will close with the Tartan Walk on the Derry Walls.

Kyle Thompson, North West Cultural Partnership commented, *"The New Gate Fringe Festival is a unique blend of music, dance, drama, art, comedy, exhibitions, debates and so much more. The Fringe Festival celebrates the rich cultural heritage of our city and this year we have a packed programme of events, including family events such as the Tartan Walk, which everyone can enjoy."*

The Féile Festival runs 7th - 15th August and this festival hosts over 70 events with three days of main staging at Free Derry Corner.

On 15th August 2018, the streets of the Bogside and Brandywell will be illuminated by an impressive

Festival of Fire, produced by landscape theatre company LUXe and featuring creative collaborations with local young people and international artists.

The Festival of Fire is promoted as an alternative to bonfires in the area, and has attracted over 5,000 people to the fantastical display.

Paddy Danagher, Streets Alive Co-ordinator, *"Working in partnership with local organisations, Streets Alive will host over 100 events this year. I am new to the role and I am delighted to see the collaboration and good relations that already exist across the Urban Village area. I hope to develop that even further through the many projects and organisations that work together to make Streets Alive such a success."*

The Summer Festival Period for the Streets Alive Project is its busiest period and is only achievable by the good will of community, youth and arts organisations in the Derry-Londonderry Urban Village Area, sustaining long term good relations, between communities and groups.

Over 150 staff from over 20 organisations collaborate to deliver the Streets Alive Project.





Jog In The Bog's 15th Year Anniversary

The Bogside and Brandywell Health Forum (BBHF) are holding their 15th annual Jog in The Bog on Thursday 8th August 2019.

There will be entertainment for children at the Gasyard Centre and light refreshments for everyone taking part on the night.

As well as the Jog in The Bog 5k race, there is also a Kids fun run. The 5K race starts at 7.00pm and the Kid's Fun Run starts at 6.30pm.

Registration opens on Monday 8th July 2019 at 9am. You can register through Bogside and Brandywell Health Forum's Facebook Page, call into the Gasyard Centre, call us on 028 7136 5330 or email aisling@bbhealthforum.org. Registration will close on Friday 2nd August 2019.

Aileen McGuinness, Programme Manager at BBHF said *"We would like to see the community come out and support this event by taking part or cheering on those who are running."*

"The route takes in the Bogside, Brandywell and Bishop Street areas, starting and ending in the Gasyard Centre. This year, road closures have been secured making the run safer and more enjoyable for the runners and volunteers."



For more information on the Streets Alive programme, contact Paddy Danagher on 028 7126 2812 or email feilederry@gmail.com



Urban Villages Initiative in EastSide

EAST BELFAST

Resilient Young Mums

Twice weekly, groups of young mums from different community backgrounds and from across the EastSide Urban Village area, meet in Walkway Community Centre to take part in a range of courses and personal development opportunities.

This yearlong programme overcomes barriers for participation, by providing onsite childcare to enable the young mums to participate fully. It also gives Walkway an opportunity to address many of the needs identified by the mums, such as isolation and marginalisation.

The programme also tackles numerous barriers to learning faced by the mums including, childcare provision, low self-esteem and confidence as well as a lack of awareness of local services, agencies and resources that can support and develop them.



Participation enables the young mums to support and learn from each other and from professionals, building confidence and skills to enable them to achieve their goals and to reach their full potential.

Almost a year ago one of the young mums, Lauren, lost her newborn baby, Lottie. Lottie was born very prematurely

and had a number of medical conditions. Tragically she only survived to 14 weeks.

Lauren shared the sadness of her story with the other young mums who in turn provided significant support to Lauren during this sad time. In memory of Lottie, they also decided to fundraise for the Neonatal Unit at Royal Victoria Hospital, where she was treated, by doing the fun run in the recent Belfast Marathon. They subsequently raised over £700 whilst having lots of fun in the process.

For more information on Walkway Young Mums, please contact **Catriona** on **077 6915 3524**





New Street Art in EastSide Urban Gallery

Two new pieces of street art were unveiled by EastSide Partnership this week, as part of the EastSide Urban Gallery project funded by the Urban Villages Initiative. London based street artists have been putting their trademarks on two walls in the heart of east Belfast.

The Urban Gallery project aims to use art and creativity to enhance places and spaces in east Belfast for residents and visitors to enjoy.

Both art pieces are located adjacent to each other on a wall along the Ballymacarett Walkway section of the Comber Greenway, close to C.S Lewis Square.

The first of the two artworks features a robin amongst trees. This latest nature inspired street art works perfectly in its location on the Comber Greenway. The second piece of artwork

is almost 400 feet long and is an energetic piece of art featuring flowers, bees and her trademark toast!

Linsey Farrell, Director of the Urban Villages Initiative, commented; *"The new street art installations in the EastSide Urban Village will make a positive contribution to the Urban Gallery in the local community there and have a wider impact right across Belfast. Street art like this can really transform an area and will enhance the growing tourism initiative in EastSide."*

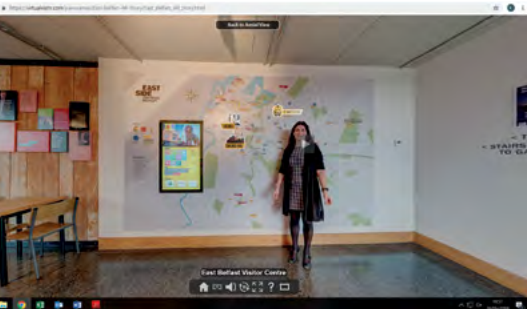
Celebrating the official unveiling of the two new street art pieces as part of the EastSide Urban Gallery project Heather Chesney, from EastSide Partnership, said: *"On behalf of EastSide Partnership I would like to thank the Urban Villages Initiative for*

their support in making this project happen. Their funding has helped to enhance this section of the Ballymacarett Walkway. The art will improve the local environment for residents, commuters using the Comber Greenway and visitors to EastSide."

For further information on EastSide Partnership and their projects visit www.eastsidepartnership.com or follow on Facebook and Twitter @EastSidePship.



New Technology driving Tourism in EastSide



The Augmented Reality (A/R) Project has focused on telling the social, cultural and historical importance of East Belfast and its people within the context of the last 100 years.

The project has been designed to help develop the tourism offering in East Belfast and has helped to generate further interest in the wider tourism offering in the local area. The first two years of the project have focused on developing relationships in the community and developing 'value-added' content using audio, video, A/R and Digital Doors to support the virtual and on-site tourist in their understanding of the EastSide Urban Village area.

The product shares online information about the area

through social media to generate interest, and via embedded e-commerce and Augmented Reality to entice footfall and encourage engagement in the area. Having developed the digital content, this year the focus is to develop engagement with visitors, both local and international tourists to access and enjoy the content created.

Through an upcoming marketing campaign, the project will help further develop tourism in Eastside by bringing virtual and actual tourists into the Urban Village area.

If you live in the EastSide Urban Village area and would like to share 'your story' via the project please contact kenny@Eastbelfast.org to discuss this further.

Inner East Belfast Churches Historical Trail



The Inner East Churches Network made up of a group of clergy and lay people from the Newtownards Road, managed by East Belfast Community Development Agency and supported by the Urban Villages Initiative. The Network meets on a monthly basis to build relationships, share information and work together on practical projects addressing local need.

One project is the development of the Churches

Historical Trail. Churches and faith-based organisations have been, and continue to be, integral to community infrastructure in Inner East Belfast. To celebrate and reflect this heritage 22 churches in the EastSide Urban Village area and wider area of influence have been included in a Churches Historical trail.

The trail will be navigated using a fold-out map which highlights key buildings and

identifies significant facts and historical achievements associated with the churches.

The trail also sets the scene by placing the development of religious life in Inner East Belfast within the wider context of urban expansion, as men and women began to move from the countryside to take up jobs in the factories, mills, shipyards and service industries of this busy district.

The Silence of the Ceasefire Generation



A public debate on children, legacy and peace building at the Imagine Festival.

Earlier this year, at Ulster University, Koulla Yiasouma, NI Commissioner for Children and Young People, and Judith Thompson, NI Commissioner for Victims and Survivors were part of a panel discussion exploring the exclusion of young people's voices in peace agreements and legacy bodies.

The Silence of the Ceasefire Generation was organised by Ardoyne Youth Enterprise (AYE), a community organisation dedicated to empowering young people, as part of the Imagine Festival of Politics and Ideas.

Judith Thompson, NI Commissioner for Victims and Survivors, said: *"What is important now is to have dialogue across and between generations in order to understand what shaped the communities we all live in, how to ensure that we secure a better future for all and how best to achieve that together"*.

Thomas Turley of Ardoyne Youth Club commented:

"Consultation with young people is at the core of all youth work, be that around services and needs, or on how young people can help change a society coming out of conflict. Youth services and young people are key to peace-building, and we look forward to engaging with all agencies to ensure that young people are at the heart of these discussions".

This event is part of Ardoyne Youth Enterprise's AYE Matter series, supported by the Urban Villages Initiative. Linsey Farrell, Director of the Urban Villages Initiative, said: *"The Urban Villages Initiative is committed to listening to the community voice and listening to young voices is a crucial part of that, giving young people the opportunity to contribute towards shaping their future."*

For further information, please contact Catherine Couvert (AYE) on catherine@ardoyne.org. Telephone: 028 9074 1479



Ardbone Festival

Building Relationships



The Ardbone Festival want to develop cross-community relationships through a series of family events, exhibitions and sporting events this year. This year's Festival, in August, will demonstrate the community's commitment to promoting good relations throughout the North Belfast Urban Village area.

The Festival runs from 6 - 17 August 2019 at various venues in Ardoyne and neighbouring areas. Sporting events include

the 'Run the Walls' 5k fun run, GAA Poc Fada, children's Mini World Cup, Flax Trust Rosebowl Gold Tee-Off, Peace Players Sports Day and lots more.

Shamrock FC, from the Ardoyne and Marrowbone areas of North Belfast, and 22nd Old Boys, a club from the neighbouring Shankill and Ballysillan communities, are working together as both clubs look to remove barriers to sporting participation and mental well-being.

As part of the Ardbone Festival, Shamrock FC, in partnership with 22nd Old Boys/ Ladies FC, will host a cross-community football competition - the Community Resilience Cup - on Wednesday 7 August at Marrowbone Park, everyone is welcome!

For information on these events and other **Ardbone Festival** events, see the **What's On** section page 25



Marrowbone and Sunningdale Getting to Know you!



Do you live in Marrowbone or Sunningdale and want to make new friends and help your community?

Marrowbone Sunningdale Volunteer Project is looking for people like you!

Breandán Clarke of Marrowbone Community Association coordinates the project, which is funded by

the Urban Villages Initiative. Kelli Crawford, based at North Belfast Alternatives, is the facilitator for Sunningdale.

Kelli says: "Both sides of the community are coming together to learn, celebrate and grow! Volunteers have already worked on hampers for vulnerable people and environmental projects in both areas."

Breandán adds, "There hasn't really been a history of good relations work between Marrowbone and Sunningdale. This project gives us the space to build relationships that will hopefully flourish for years to come. As partners we are dedicated to making it work for both communities."

The group has supported family fun days, community clean-ups and Universal Credit workshops during Volunteer Week earlier this month.

There's lots more to come - an over-50s Men's Walking Group, joint activities between Marrowbone Men's Shed and Ballysillan allotments, healthy eating events, community gardens and more training.

COME AND JOIN US!

Find out more from **Breandán (028 9074 1876 - Breandanmarrowbone@gmail.com)** or **Kelli (028 9071 7077 - kelli@alternativesrj.co.uk)**

Youth Access

Working together to deliver first class counselling for young people...



Two North Belfast counselling groups have pooled their resources together to address growing waiting lists of 11 to 24 year olds in need of counselling.

New Life Counselling and Jigsaw have identified mental health themes that are common to young people and have developed group support sessions to explore these issues.

The sessions cover mental health tips, stress management, use of drama, art and mindfulness techniques. Young people can access one-to-one counselling through self-referral. The programme also includes outreach in local youth centres.

The project has already made a difference. Jigsaw CEO, Carol Massey reports that her waiting times for young people in need of counselling have reduced. New Life has seen an increase in young people referring to its services and completing an intervention.

"I learned that life was worth living, how to cope with hard times and that talking is OK."
Jigsaw participant

'Now I am not worrying as much, I have learnt new techniques to calm myself down.'

New Life Counselling participant

To book a group session, contact: **Meabh, on 028 9039 1630, meabhivers@newlifecounselling.net** or **Vivien, 028 9543 8166, vivien@jigsawccc.co.uk**



BIG Improvements in Reading Age

Reading Partners - improving children's reading age by up to two years!

Many children in the Ballysillan and Ardoyne area do not achieve their full potential in reading. This can lead to educational under-achievement across all areas of the curriculum at primary and secondary level. This programme has shown improvement for children of up to two years for some children.

The Reading Partners programme was created to support the 'middle reading' group, as other initiatives typically deal with reading recovery and support for children with special learning needs.

Reading Partners is delivered on a cross-community basis by Jigsaw Community Counselling.

The Reading Partners, parents and children take part in 10-week programmes together. These involve three one-to-one reading sessions each week

aimed at making the child a more accomplished and confident reader, and giving the parent tips to support the child's reading at home.

Over this 2018/19 school year, 150 children have taken part, with 15 Reading Partners, both in school and with their parents at home.

The success of this project is evident as assessments of reading ability so far have shown an improved reading age of between three months and two years for each child.





Sandy Row,
Donegall Pass
& the Markets

SOUTH BELFAST



Building Resilience for the Big Move

PWC recently sponsored a 'Big Day' event at Belfast South Community Resources in the South Belfast Urban Village area. The focus was on mental health awareness and building confidence. It was a collective effort involving statutory agencies, community groups and schools. The Urban Villages Initiative funded the transport which brought the young people together.

When it comes to young lives, the move from primary school to secondary school is a very significant event. It is a time of change and upheaval. With that, can come anxiety and uncertainty.

A project run by Belfast South Community Resources (BSCR) in the South Belfast Urban Village area is helping local children prepare for the 'big move' in September.

The Urban Villages Initiative also supports a range of programmes for primary aged children, revision

classes for older students; as well as the Growing South Digital programme, providing innovative ways to access digital activities and facilities.

Primary 7 pupils from Blythefield PS and St Malachy's PS gathered in the Sandy Row BSCR building - which was funded by the Social Investment Fund (SIF) - and hosted mindfulness, yoga and computer coding sessions for the children.

Sinead Magee from St Malachy's explained it gives the children an opportunity to learn new skills, while meeting their counterparts from another school with a different background but the same need for support.

"Going from primary to secondary school is a big change," she said. "You spend seven years in the same environment with the same people, and suddenly it's all different - that can be daunting."

The whole idea of being ready and prepared to move on is fairly new. However, building resilience to help with this, and wider life, is a progressive move.

Lynsey Patton from Blythefield PS added: ***"Initiatives such as this help to support the work we are doing in school around the transition, and gives us access to services which we can't provide in the classroom. You can see the children are very engaged in the activities, and the impact today will have is very positive."***

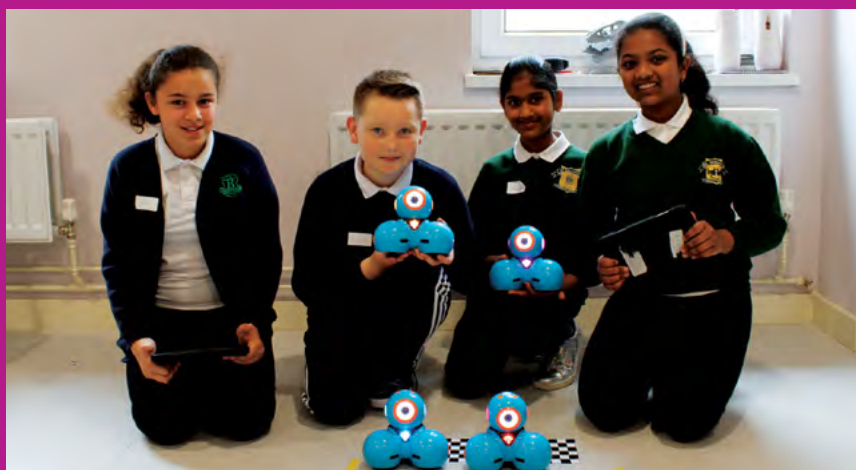
The children made t-shirts with positive affirmations about themselves, such as 'I am confident' and 'I am energetic'.

While the techniques the young people were shown focussed on helping them when they change schools, they can have a wider, and longer lasting, impact.

Nikki Johnston, the Education Manager at BSCR, said: *"I have had children come back and say the relaxation and mindfulness techniques they learned have helped them months and years afterwards."*

In the afternoon, women's groups from the Urban Village area came together to learn the same skills.

"Hopefully, the tools people learn today will stay with them. Ultimately, we want to build on this and offer more in-depth sessions for the entire community. But today is about giving them a taster and planting a positive seed."



Supporting Parents to Help their Children



Sharon Morrison is the Joint Parent Worker in Blythefield Primary School and Arellian Nursery School, both in Sandy Row. Sharon's role is supported by the Urban Villages Initiative and she splits her time working with parents from both schools.

In her role she works with parents to help them support their children to get the most out of their school experience.

Parents are empowered through developing relationships with each other, building capacity, learning

life-skills and enhancing parenting skills. Sharon helps build relationships with teaching staff, making strong connections between the parents and the school.

"I get on well with all the parents I give advice to, and although I am not a teacher, I am a parent, and I think bringing that perspective helps. Some parents struggle with the pressures of parenting, they often didn't have a positive role model in their lives, which is where I provide advice and encouragement."

Sharon identifies training opportunities for the parents and has linked up with local organisations such as BSCR and GEMS to provide courses, bringing parents from both schools together to learn.

The parents have also participated in a series of development opportunities such as sewing classes, parenting classes, cookery classes, paediatric first aid courses and anger management courses.

The classes bring people together who may not normally have the opportunity to come together and friendships are formed outside of the classes. Newcomer families are welcomed and benefit from getting to know other parents, often in similar situations to themselves.

Sandy Row,
Donegall Pass
& the Markets

**SOUTH
BELFAST**

Sólás Kids Support Den Breaking Down Barriers



Sólás is a Charity dedicated to supporting children and young people with additional needs. It is based in South Belfast and has a very strong volunteering ethos.

Founded in 2009, it provides a range of educational and social programmes for children and young people with additional needs and/or Autism.

The Urban Villages Initiative funds Sólás's Kids Support Den which operates weekly from Monday to Thursday, providing two separate after school support sessions each afternoon for children of primary school age.

Sólás have supported almost 40 children of primary school age from the South Belfast Urban Village area, who receive one to one support in literacy, phonics and learning as part of the Kids Den programme.

At the start of the support programme, each participant was assessed against the following criteria; Reading Ability, Communication with Tutor, Confidence, Teamwork, Communication with Peers, and Emotional Behaviour.

The assessments were revisited at the end of the last quarter and found that over 90% of the children attending recorded positive improvements, in at least 4 of the measures.

Children attending the Kids Den come from a range of schools in the South Belfast Urban Village area and area of influence, including, St Malachys PS, Botanic PS and Scoil an Droichid.

Operating four afternoons/week from Apsley Hall in Donegall Pass. Sólás also deliver a number of parents'

programmes, supporting the information needs of parents with children with additional needs.

For further information, please contact **Joan Henderson on Telephone: 028 90 247600**



Play Time at Holy Cross Nursery School

The newly upgraded play area and community space at Holy Cross Nursery School has been officially opened. The project was funded by the Urban Villages Initiative through an investment of £186k.

The play area has been developed into zones reflecting an 'Acorns to Oak Trees' theme creating a welcoming and nurturing learning environment for children, families and cross community partners.

To celebrate the opening of their new outdoor classroom and play area, Holy Cross Nursery School hosted a community fun day with pupils and parents from their Buddy Up School, Edenderry Nursery School.



Cushla Mallon, Principal of Holy Cross Nursery School said, *"We are absolutely delighted with our new outdoor classroom and play area. This will be an amazing addition to the school, the children already love it and it is even better that our Buddy Up school Edenderry joined us for the opening. Thank you to everyone who made this possible."*

Footprints Women's Centre



The Urban Villages Initiative has invested £103k in capital works at Footprints Women's Centre in the Colin Urban Village area.

The investment has doubled the size of the social supermarket - a facility which provides food and other essentials to its members at a reduced rate. It has created new office space and more flexible meeting & activity rooms for different events and audiences. Also, a new entrance has been created which allows for disability access.

Mark Browne, Director of Strategic Policy, Equality and Good Relations at The Executive Office said: *"I am delighted to officially open the fantastic new facilities in Footprints Women's Centre which have been supported through the Urban Villages Initiative. Footprints Women's Centre provides a range of vital services for women living in the local community, including Syrian refugees and their families."*



Official Launch of Colin Connect Transport Hub and Colin Town Square

The Colin Connect Transport Hub and Colin Town Square recently opened in the Colin Urban Village area.

The Urban Villages Initiative invested £1,750,000 in the Transport Hub and community space and almost £1million was contributed by Department for Infrastructure towards the construction of the Transport Hub.

The new Transport Hub forms a vital part of the Belfast Rapid Transit system (BRT) and will provide a significant economic boost to the area.

The integrated community space and adjacent Colin Town Square provides quality spaces to host a variety of events and activities for the local community and visitors to the area.

Annie Armstrong, Manager, Colin Neighbourhood Partnership added:

“We are delighted to see our ambitious plans come to fruition. This is such a positive boost for the Colin area. In addition to the new transport system which has already massively improved accessibility and connectivity with other parts of Belfast,

the civic square will provide us with a great venue to host a range of events for people living or visiting the Colin area.”

The Urban Villages Initiative has worked collaboratively with government and community partners to deliver a state-of-the-art facility.

Mark Browne, Director of Strategic Policy, Equality & Good Relations at the Executive Office said; ***“I am thrilled to officially open the Colin Connect Transport Hub and Colin Town Square.***

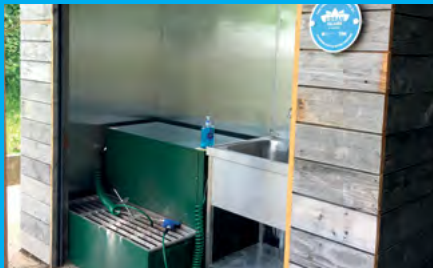
This new facility presents a fantastic opportunity for the people in the Colin area and it will be a tremendous asset for the entire community. It will not only help to connect the people who live in the Colin area, it will also serve as a gateway to the rest of Belfast and beyond.”



[!\[\]\(aab88c0d099e5d18d6533a97b13ec28d_img.jpg\) Colin Connect Transport Hub and Colin Town Square Watch here](#)

Capital Works - Progress Update

An update on some of the ongoing capital build projects across the Urban Village areas. Projects are either solely funded by the Urban Villages Initiative or jointly funded across departments. Projects are always delivered by a partner either from central or local government.



Colin Allotments

The capital works at the Healthy Living Centre at Colin Allotments have improved indoor and outdoor space and added disability access. This has improved the capacity of the Allotments to host larger and more diverse groups. Project delivered by Belfast City Council on behalf of the Urban Villages Initiative.

Due to complete: Summer 2019



The Diamond

This project has developed a currently unused piece of ground in Lord Street into a fully-functional, modern, community space including a community gym and a bicycle workshop area. Project delivered by Belfast City Council on behalf of the Urban Villages Initiative.

Due to complete: Summer 2019



Blythefield PS

Work is well under way at Blythefield Primary School in the South Belfast Urban Village area to develop a new covered digital information and meeting point for parents and secure bike park area, as well as an internal multi-purpose parent/community meeting space.

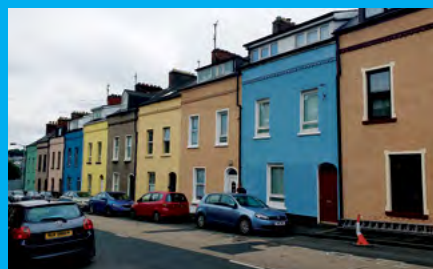
Due to complete: Summer 2019



Orchard @ the Foundry

This new training café in The Foundry in the East Belfast Urban Village area will provide training in a real catering business environment for 20 marginalised local young people aged from 16-25 yrs. They will learn catering and hospitality skills. Project delivered by Belfast City Council on behalf of the Urban Villages Initiative.

Due to complete: Summer 2019



Abercorn Rd

An environmental regeneration project in the Derry-Londonderry Urban Village area, to improve the appearance of commercial and residential properties along Abercorn Road and create a welcoming gateway to the City. Project delivered by Derry City and Strabane District Council on behalf of the Urban Villages Initiative.

Due to complete: Summer 2019



Rev Robert Bradford Play Park

Work is progressing to complete an extensive refurbishment of Rev Robert Bradford Playpark in the South Belfast Urban Village area. This project has partnership funding from the Urban Villages Initiative and Department for Communities and is being delivered by Belfast City Council.

Due to complete: Autumn 2019



What's On

EASTSIDE

Living the Green Way

The Living the Green Way project will offer a wide programme of activities to promote health and wellbeing with a strong focus on developing sustainable communities within the EastSide Urban Village area.

DATE: 13 - 15 September 2019

VENUE: Various venues across EastSide

For more can be found on www.connswatergreenway.co.uk or www.visiteastside.com



UV Arts and Creativity Project - International Chalk Art Festival

See artists from Europe and South America create amazing 3D and other chalk art masterpieces.

DATE: 6 - 7 July 2019

VENUE: Fraser Pass, Newtownards Rd, East Belfast

For further information see the Ballymac Friendship Centre Facebook page or call 028 9045 2020

NORTH BELFAST

WOMEN'STEC Training Opportunities

Women'sTec are providing a series of courses for Young Women and Girls to gain non-traditional skills helping create a diverse workforce and get more women into employment.

FREE Carpentry Course for young women

DATE: 21 June - 19 July 10.00am - 1.00pm on Fridays
FREE onsite crèche places available



Girl Tech Summer Scheme for 14-18 year olds

DATE: 19 - 23 August 10.00am - 4.00pm
Includes snacks and a visit to W5 with lunch.



Girl Tec Summer Scheme for 11-13 year olds

DATE: 12 - 16 August 10.00am - 4.00pm
Includes snacks and a visit to W5 with lunch.

VENUE: Women'sTec, 29 Chichester Avenue (off the Antrim Road)

For more information on any of the courses above, please contact Women'sTec by phone 028 9074 9810 or email: info@womenstec.org Booking is essential.



Ballysillan Youth for Christ - Summer Programme 2019

Activities for young people aged 5 - 17yrs including outdoor pursuits, community fun days, football camps, summer trips and so much more.

DATE: 28 June - 22 August

VENUE: Blue Houses and other locations

For more information on our summer programme contact

Ballysillan Youth for Christ,
Tel: 028 9071 4255
or find us on Facebook @
Ballysillan Youth for Christ

NBWISP Families Together for Fun

NBWISP Families Together for Fun Summer Scheme enables families to get together for fun activities and away days, while meeting other people from the local community.

DATE: 25 July - 22 August
VENUE: Various

For more information contact Kerry or Alex at NBWISP on 028 9039 1028

Ardbone Festival

A festival of family events, exhibitions and sporting events encouraging good relations throughout the North Belfast Urban Village area. Everyone welcome!

DATE: 7 - 18 August
VENUE: Various venues in Ardoyne and neighbouring areas

Various venues in Ardoyne and neighbouring areas

DERRY~LONDONDERRY

Fringe Festival

This year's Fringe Festival will feature over 40 events including music, dance, drama, art, storytelling, poetry recitals, cookery demonstrations, historical tours and debates.

DATE: 22 July - 8 August 2019

VENUE: Various venues across Derry-Londonderry

For more information contact New Gate Arts Centre by telephone 028 7126 5869

Feile 2019

DATE: 7 - 19 August

VENUE: Various venues across Derry-Londonderry

For more information contact email feilederry@gmail.com or visit Gasyard Feile Facebook page



Festival of Fire/ Feile Finale

DATE: 15 August

VENUE: Free Derry Corner

For more information contact Paddy Danagher on 028 7126 2812 or email feilederry@gmail.com

SOUTH

Try it Free Fridays

This is a fantastic workshop that will allow members of the public to come along and use our Creative Digital Equipment to make their own items for personal use or to support their entrepreneurial ambitions.

DATE: Fridays, 10.00am - 4.00pm

VENUE: BSCR, 127-145 Sandy Row, Belfast BT12 5ET

For more information contact Email jonny@bscr.co.uk or Tel 028 9024 4449

Geek Week

Geek Week is open to young people aged 8-16yrs to come along and get a taste of Digital Creative technologies including stop motion animation, coding, iPad film making, virtual reality, augmented reality and much more.

DATE: 8 - 13 August

VENUE: BSCR, 127-145 Sandy Row, Belfast BT12 5ET

For more information contact Email jonny@bscr.co.uk or Tel 028 9024 4449



What's On



COLIN



Colin Summer Festival 2019

Colin Neighbourhood Partnership's annual community festival returns this summer with activities for all the family! Join us for the Colin Family Fun Day and Carnival Parade, craft fair, overnight family camp-out, day trips, family treasure hunt, cookery classes, and more!

DATE: 2 - 10 August

VENUE: Various

For more information visit www.newcolin.com or call John Paul at CNP on 028 9062 3813

Colin Fun Day & Carnival Parade

The parade leaves St Luke's Church in Twinbrook at 12:45pm and makes its way to the New Colin Town Square for a FREE Family Fun Day including bouncy castles, live music, Colin's Got Talent competition, carnival rides, and much more!

**DATE: 8 August
12.45pm - 4.00pm**

VENUE: Colin Town Square

For more information contact John Paul at CNP on 028 9062 3813 or email johnpaul@cnp.com

Colin Outdoor Movie night

Join us for the late night open air movie in the new Colin town square, bring your sweets and treat and soak up the atmosphere of this scary movie night event. Film and time TBC

**DATE: Saturday 10 August
VENUE: Colin Town Square**

Contact Ciara at CNP on 028 9062 3813 for more information

Local Food and Craft Market

Vendors will be selling fresh vegetables, jams, breads, cakes, tea/coffee, and arts & crafts. There will also be cookery demonstrations in the allotment kitchen throughout the day. Free entry.

**DATES: 6 August
11.00am - 3.00pm**

VENUE: Colin Town Square

For more information or to take a stall at the market contact Matthew at CNP on 028 9061 2317 or email Matthew@newcolin.com

ALL AREAS

Talk like TED - Youth Event

Young people from across the Urban Village areas present their big ideas in Stormont. (Ticket only event)

**DATE: 8 August
Time: 2.00pm - 5.00pm**

VENUE: Parliament Buildings, Stormont

For more information contact Jonathon.fulton@urbanvillagesni.org

News

Celebrating T:BUC

Uniting Ardoyne and Ballysillan Programme in North Belfast Urban Village area

Alongside the successful **Uniting Communities Programme in the Colin and EastSide Urban Village areas, a new programme was launched in the Ballysillan and Ardoyne Urban Village area, last October.**

Since then, around 120 young people from the area have taken part in a wide range of sports, physical and creative activities and leadership training.

At the core of each session, good relations themes and local issues have been incorporated, alongside facilitated sessions to help participants learn about each other's culture and identity.

The first phase of this Uniting Communities programme was marked by a celebration event entitled 'Togetherness' where groups showcased displays of artwork they had created.

Due to the success of the first phase the project is being extended. The next phase will build on the positive achievements and further develop the good relations work already undertaken.

The programme is being delivered by local groups on behalf of the Department for Communities (DfC). Including, Ashton in partnership with



Ardoyne Youth Centre, Ardoyne Youth Enterprise, Benview Community Centre, North Belfast Alternatives, FabLab, New Lodge Arts and TAMHI.

This good relations programme provides community-based activity for 11-16 year olds and a Young Leaders Training and Ambassadors programme for 16-24 year olds with the training elements delivered by Dame Kelly Holmes Trust and Peace Players NI.

The programme, funded jointly by The Executive Office through Shared Future and the Department for Communities, aligns with the wider T:BUC good relations

programmes and activities and works closely with the Urban Villages Initiative through the Project Board for the area.

If you are interested in finding out more about the programme, please contact Caroline Delaney at Ashton on **028 9074 2255** or email caroline.delaney@ashtoncentre.com



News

GOOD RELATIONS WEEK:

Schools of Sanctuary Celebration and the Launch of CRIS Buddy Up Scheme




The Schools of Sanctuary Celebration event returns to the City Hall again this year during Good Relations Week on the 16th September. Last year, 13 schools serving Urban Village areas were accredited as Schools of Sanctuary, and their wonderful creativity showcased at the event.

This year another 13 schools will join them, as they share their presentations and performances of cross cultural understanding, inclusivity and support for children and families in need of sanctuary.

The event will also launch the roll out of the Community Relations in Schools (CRIS) Buddy Up scheme, to be delivered across schools serving Urban Village areas. This successful and well-established programme

will work with children and parents from schools of different traditions to build understanding and friendships between both children and adults.

Good Relations Week in September provides a great platform to bring attention to work you are involved in. If you are living in an Urban Village area and would like support on profiling relevant events and activities, **contact us on info@urbanvillagesni.com**

 School of Sanctuary
Watch here

News

Young People sharing their BIG IDEAS as they **Talk like TED**

During July this year, a group of young people from across all of the Urban Village areas will attend a series of professional media training workshops to help them develop and present their big idea on the 'Talk like TED' platform in the Stormont Long Gallery on the 8th August.

The Urban Villages Initiative supports the young community voice to express itself to new audiences. The overall theme of TEDxStormont 2019 is "Imagine" – looking forward and imagining the kind of future we could have together as a society here

and elsewhere. TEDx believes passionately in the power of ideas to change attitudes, lives and ultimately the world.

The young people will focus on the three Urban Village core aims; to foster positive community identities, to build community capacity and to improve the physical environment.

An expert panel will then select one of the young people to inspire the audience and join a range of exciting speakers on the main stage at TEDxStormont event on the 31st August, in the Great Hall, Parliament Buildings, Stormont.



Path 2 Employment Opportunities

Martin was referred to Workforce Training Services Path 2 Employment programme by his local Jobs & Benefits Office to get support with finding employment and completing his CSR card.

Martin had worked in construction for over 30 years but more recently he had been working as a Caretaker in a local school on an ad-hoc basis.

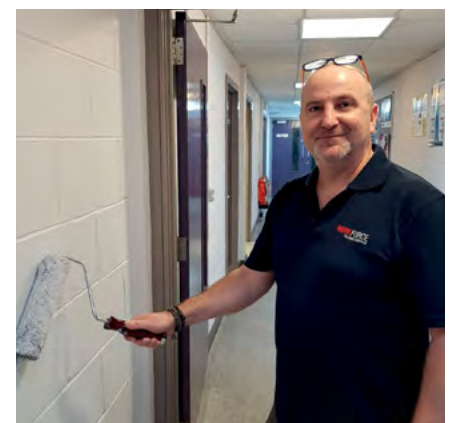
The Path 2 Employment team identified a number of opportunities available to Martin and helped him design a career pathway that would enable him to find employment.


Martin was very open to receiving support and upskilling himself and he signed up to Belfast City Council's Construction Employment Academy, which Workforce helps deliver.

Martin completed CSR training, Food Hygiene Training and a number of sessions around job searching, completing application forms and interview preparation.

Martin was so impressive throughout his time on the programme that Workforce Training Services actually

offered him a full-time job as a Caretaker. He started employment with Workforce earlier this year.



 Building Your Future Project **Watch here**

News

Tackling Holiday Hunger

Holiday Hunger can impact on families when access to Free School Meals and Breakfast Clubs stop over the summer months.

The Scaffolding Project is an Urban Village community-led project in EastSide that already includes a focus on Holiday Hunger. This inspired communities across all five Urban Village areas to work together to raise awareness of this issue and engaged more joined-up approaches.

Business in the Community (BITC) is already working with groups across the areas to improve links to the business sector and increase opportunities for companies to work with local communities to address social issues.

Several BITC members are now supporting a pilot Holiday Hunger approach across the five Urban Villages. This will add to delivery of summer schemes, festivals and community events which bring young people, families and the wider community together to build confidence, learn new skills, promote good relations and have fun.



A Shared Learning event later this year will include wider regional stakeholders to explore what is possible when business, government and the community work better together **#bettertogether**

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 - June 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.

Twitter - Keep the conversation going [@urbanvillagesni](https://twitter.com/urbanvillagesni)

Youtube Channel - View videos of the great community projects we support

Connect with us online to keep up to date with what's happening across all five Urban Village areas.

New Community Connections

Each Urban Village area now has a local communications contact that will liaise between the community and the Urban Villages communications team.

North - Catherine Couvert, AYE

West, Colin - Katherine Redpath, Colin Neighbourhood Partnership

South - Kevin McGarry, SBPB

Derry~Londonderry - Patrick Danagher, Gasyard Wall Féile

EastSide - Jonny Currie, EBCDA



News Highlights



Meet the Neighbours Event

Back for another year, organisers NB WISP invited local residents and visitors to enjoy time together; while offering support for youth provision, mental health issues, cancer patients, physical health check-ups and much more.



Easter Revision week supported by QUB

BSCR ran their annual Easter revision week at Queens. This year included English and mathematics. 99 pupils from across the South Belfast Urban Village area attended.



North Belfast Hero

Vivien Davidson is regional winner of the BBC NI Unsung Heroes Award and received a Points of Light Award for her voluntary work. Vivien is the project coordinator at Jigsaw Counselling in the North Belfast Urban Village area and volunteers as a Guide Runner for people with visual impairment conditions (VI runners).



South Belfast Young people invited to Lord Mayor's Parlour

Former Lord Mayor, Deirdre Hargey hosted South Belfast Alternatives' Youth Action Partnership. Coming from the Markets, Sandy Row and Donegall Pass they celebrated their achievements in the project and were awarded certificates.



WOMEN'STEC Gala Awards 2019

Students, all women and girls, gained over 150 OCN qualifications in non-traditional skills in 2018-19. Courses covered such as, electrics, plumbing, carpentry, horticulture, personal development and much more.

Urban Villages Initiative supports #notjustforboys



Colin Gaels at the heart of the local community

Gaelic football for boys and girls from 2 ½ to 12 years old. Join us for a fun, positive activity and make new friends.

[Visit Colin Gaels Facebook.](#)

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, Knockview Buildings, Stormont Estate, Belfast, BT4 3SJ



Northern Ireland
Executive
www.northernireland.gov.uk

T:buc
Changing for the better, together



Contact us:
info@urbanvillagesni.org