



# Ligoniel Village Neighbourhood Renewal Area Annual Report 2017/18



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**Ligoniel Village Neighbourhood Renewal Area  
Annual Report 2017/18**



## **Ligoniel Village Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership ANNUAL REPORT – 2017-2018**

### **About Neighbourhood Renewal**

The Neighbourhood Renewal Programme aims to reduce the social and economic inequalities which characterise the most deprived areas. It does so by making a long term commitment to communities to work in partnership with them to identify and prioritise needs and co-ordinate interventions designed to address the underlying causes of poverty. Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships were established with representatives of local community interests together with appropriate Government Departments, public sector agencies, private sector interest and local elected representatives. The socio economic statistics demonstrate some of the principal challenges facing the Ligoniel area; reflecting high levels of unemployment, low educational attainment, community health issues and the challenges facing young people in the area and lack of facilities available.

### **About Ligoniel Village Neighbourhood Partnership**

Ligoniel Village Neighbourhood Partnership area is located in the hills of North Belfast and holds a unique position above the city with breath taking views across the city. It has a very specific 'village' feel with the Belfast hills bordering the village. Based upon 2010 census figures, the area takes into account approximately 1900 people, which is a significant increase from 2001 census figures of 1400 people. This change and expansion in the intervening years was seen to be due to major development in housing. LIA staff, have continued to stay connected with private and social housing providers and have ascertained that the statistics are incorrect due to the rapid increase in housing developments within the area and sees the population size as closer to 5000 people. EA figures also inform us that currently there are 1909 young people of school going age living

in the area with 54% of those young people who attend the local youth club getting free school meals, an indicator of deprivation measured by EA.

There are over 1200 homes built in Ligoniel, as evidenced through the delivery of Ligoniel's Community News Sheet, delivered to every home in the area. A further one hundred and six homes are due to be built in the Black Dam area of the village, a further fifty planned for the Mill Valley development, fifteen apartments are being built on the front of the Ligoniel road, thirty units of social housing is planned for the Wolfhill Centre site and we have been advised that five other sites have been identified in the area on which houses can and will be built.

Despite this increase in housing units, the area still lacks any full time recreational/youth/sport facilities, the main facilities area are based on one side of an ever expanding and widely dispersed series of housing developments resulting in a lack of engagement with those residents living further from such facilities.

There is only one bus route in and out of the area, which at certain times is particularly unreliable and does not take passengers to any of the "nearest" facilities that are located in other parts of north Belfast due to the transport route. Those residents living in the new housing developments can only access public transport by walking to the main Ligoniel Road, which for those with young children or mobility issues means walking up steep inclines. For those area "lucky enough to be serviced by public transport there is an ongoing issue with service provision. The Ligoniel area consistently falls victim to Translink's timing and schedules. Therefore if a bus is behind schedule, in order to "make time up" bus stops are "missed" and rather than missing stops near the city centre where travellers can board more than one bus, the stops are missed in the Ligoniel area, meaning that residents could be waiting for over an hour on public transport into the town on

a week day. At the weekends public transport does not operate until after 1pm making it difficult for people who work in the town at weekends to get to work. What is within walking distance is in the heart of what local people still see as “the other community” and with the legacy of the sectarian interface violence in Ligoniel, they are exceptionally reticent of going into such areas.

Community Infrastructure has not increased, despite the creation of a large number of housing units in the area. There has been little in the way of investment into the area by either private companies or statutory organisations, with local people having to leave the area in search of services and facilities including shopping, dental practices, legal advice, childcare, support services and educational facilities. Employment in the area is still confined to small businesses and the LIA or the local primary schools.

Over the last year, there has been no let-up in people seeking advice with the waiting time for an appointment with an advisor being two weeks minimum. Drop in, outreach centres and referrals into the service and food bank have increased.

A danger in being a separate village is that you can fall off the edge of the map! This was certainly the case with the Urban Villages programme launched earlier this year. Having been assured that Ligoniel was included we were inexplicably dropped at the last minute.

It is also a matter of concern that, although we were assured three years ago by the then Belfast Education Library Board that Ligoniel’s case for a new youth club was recognised as a replacement for the existing unfit premises, they are now considering sites outside Ligoniel. In the meantime staffing and hence opening hours at the existing club have been cut. This is surely a dereliction of statutory duty in circumstances where Ligoniel has 1,909 under 18’s, the highest proportion in North Belfast. There is surely a link between this

lamentable under provision and increased problems with anti-social behaviour.

Where wrongs are done to our community we will speak out! During the year we have met with nearly all the political parties to explain our key issues to them, and welcome the support we have secured across the political spectrum.

This was certainly the case with regard to the Tribunal Service. This came within a hairsbreadth of closure at the New Year, but thanks to all party support on Belfast City Council renewed funding was secured.

Above all the need for the Tribunal Service and our wider advice services has become more evident by the day. The juggernaut of the Universal Credit system is thundering towards Ligoniel and is due to run over many of our residents! Meanwhile benefits are frozen or cut in a variety of ways. These changes particularly affect Ligoniel with its relatively high unemployment rate or dependence on low paid work.

Meanwhile we strive to create new positives for the area. During the year we secured planning permission for the conversion of the ruins of the old corn mill adjacent to our site at the old mill dams into a new environmental centre. True we will have to raise £750,000 to bring those plans to fruition. Our case will be strengthened if long sought after hopes of securing an across the Belfast Hills walking route, and one linking Ligoniel with Divis and the Black Mountain are fulfilled. After year-end we were led to believe that the City Council will progress the matter early in 2018.

We have long campaigned for an upgrading of Ligoniel Park. Again, after year end, the City Council provided us with a firm schedule for their planned actions. We would hope to undertake community consultation on these proposals by summer 2018.

In another environmental intervention we launched our Greenworks project in February with funding from the North Belfast Ethical Investment Trust. This aims to create a viable business in the environmental sector.

Not all is serious business! Events at Halloween and Christmas evoked a tremendous response. Young people travelled under our auspices as far as Poland and South Africa, and in the latter case on a cross-community project. All these events and activities are now publicised more effectively than ever before through social media.

Our work over the past year reveals that once again we play above our weight in seeking to make positive interventions in almost every aspect of community life. We are there for young and old, for longstanding residents and newcomers, providing help and advice, seeking to provide additional facilities in the area, to create educational and recreational opportunities for all, and to improve health outcomes.

The collapse of the Northern Ireland Executive led to particular uncertainty about the viability of LIA after year end. Fortunately, and late in the day, stop gap provision was provided by our main funders and our thanks are due to the civil servants and others who managed to resolve the immediate problem. Nonetheless insecurity of this kind is bound to have a debilitating effect on any organisation, and most of all on staff, who, as is too often the case, had to receive their statutory warnings of possible redundancy.

Nothing could be achieved without the dedication of staff and volunteers to whom a heartfelt debt of gratitude is due. I would also like to thank my fellow Board members who all serve in a voluntary capacity.

With continued new housing development in the area Ligoniel's population has now increased to c. 6,500. According to Education

Authority figures there are 1,909 young people of school going age in the area, 54% of whom are in receipt of free school meals – an indication of deprivation.

LIA is concerned that the development of community infrastructure has not kept pace with rising need. There has been little in the way of investment into the area either by statutory organisations or the private sector, with local people having to leave the area in search of services and facilities including shopping, dental practices, legal advice, childcare, support services and educational facilities. Employment in the area is still confined to small businesses and the LIA or the local primary schools.

We note that those facilities that are available are located in the 'old' village, and that the new developments lack even basic provision such as play facilities, and are particularly handicapped by the non-availability of public transport.

LIA remains concerned that the area still lacks any full time recreational/youth/sport facilities. The local youth club is in a 100 year-old mill building and does not conform to the Disability Discrimination Act. A number of rooms cannot be used because of health and safety issues. Despite the successful work undertaken by the Leader in Charge of the Youth Club and LIA staff, The Education Authority has removed extended school funding from the area, cut staffing, and restricted the type of work undertaken by youth leaders. The Club has been reduced to a part time facility open for a mere three hours per night on the five weekdays, while weekend activities have been lost.

LIA is convinced that there is a relationship between under provision indeed a reduction in youth facilities, and a significant increase in anti-social and criminal behaviour during the year. The Community Cohesion Task Group has sought, as best it could, to respond to

reports from residents of the intimidation and harassment of elderly residents, destruction of the parish's Columbarium, drug dealing, destruction of property and robberies.

There has been a significant increase in numbers seeking advice, with the waiting time for an appointment with an advisor rising to two weeks minimum. Drop in, outreach centres and referrals into the service and use of the food bank have all seen increased demand.

So-called Welfare Reform is making unprecedented changes to the benefit system and with a negative impact for many residents. Existing benefits such as Disability Living Allowance are being replaced with new benefits (e.g. DLA replaced by Personal Independence Payment) and with changes to eligibility criteria. The roll out of Universal Credit late this year is presenting further challenges.

LIA's role in leading the citywide Tribunal Service which provides expert representation at tribunal hearings is accordingly of critical importance as the number of appeals against benefit decisions rises dramatically. This service came close to termination in December as funding ran out, however thanks to all party support from Belfast City Council temporary continuation was achieved.

Securing more long term funding for the Tribunal Service has been hindered by the collapse of the Northern Ireland Executive. This more generally led to uncertainty about the funding of LIA as a whole from April onwards. While stop gap provision has been secured the uncertainty and insecurity involved inevitably had an adverse impact on forward planning.

Cuts in services have greatly impacted on Ligoniel residents. Recent meetings between residents, young people and a range of political parties have highlighted poor housing maintenance practices by

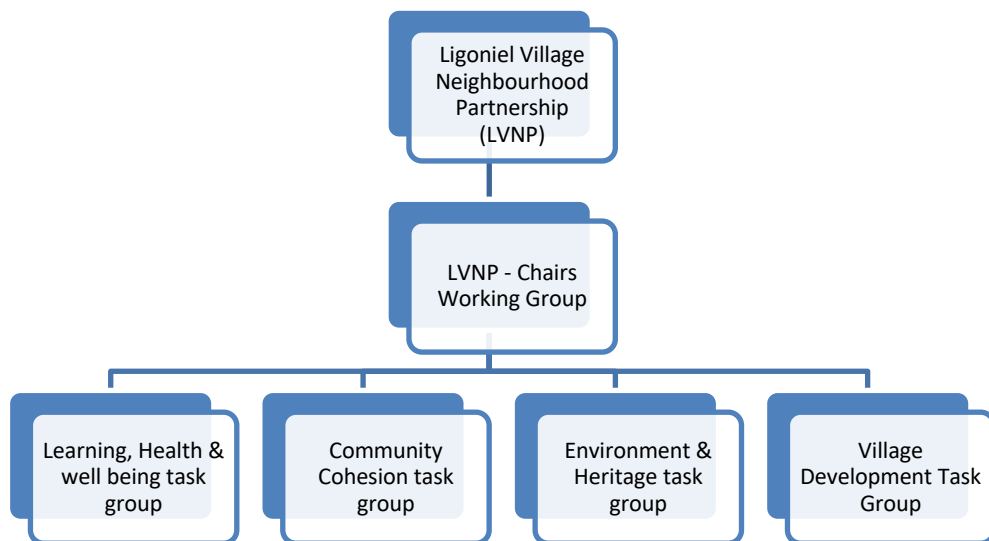
social housing providers, an increase in homes being built with no community infrastructure developed/supported, poor transport systems resulting in isolation for some vulnerable members of the community, lack of continuous/joined up community safety initiatives/actions by statutory services that have led to an increase in anti-social/criminal behaviour within the area.

In spite of the issues the community continues to experience, LIA remains committed to a partnership approach to the resolution of local issues, addressing the needs of our local community, as identified by them, by adopting a holistic approach to their problems by developing health, social, physical and capacity building initiatives to raise standards of living.

LIA continue to take forward the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme, and facilitate the Ligoniel Village Neighbourhood Partnership, which was set up in 2006 to oversee the development and delivery of the local Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plan. The Partnership currently comprises eight members which include representatives from local communities, voluntary organisations, elected representatives, private sector and local statutory organisations. It currently meets on a bi-monthly basis and its administration services are provided through Ligoniel Improvement Association.

With the development of the first neighbourhood action plan in 2007 all those groups involved in delivering neighbourhood renewal had a seat at the main Partnership Committee. After the review of the implementation plan in 2009 it was agreed that we move towards a smaller more focused Partnership committee. This coincided with the re-launch of four task groups which would draw their membership from all those groups working on neighbourhood renewal.

Each task group would then nominate at least one member to sit on the main Partnership management committee. Each task group was to appoint a chairperson and a secretary and engage with the appropriate statutory representatives to ensure representation on the task group.



The task group members are made up from a range of organisations and are broken down as follows :

### Health & Wellbeing Task Group

Margeurite Falloona	Chairperson
Caroline Milligan	Sure Start
Catherine Rock	Ligoniel Family Centre
Bronagh Gallagher	St Vincent De Paul Primary School
Gabi Mornhinweg	Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
Kathleen Kelly	North Belfast Advice Partnership

Kieran O'Reilly	LIA
Claire Nolan	Belfast Regeneration Office
Maria Morgan	LIA
Paul McCusker	Belfast City Councillor – SDLP
Ulrike Letzner	Belfast City Council
Maria Burke	Ligoniel Healthy Living Centre
Gerry Rooney	Ligoniel Pharmacy

### Community Cohesion subgroup

Maria Morgan (LIA)	Chairperson
Eammon Canavan	PSNI
Gerard McCabe	Belfast City Councillor
Kieran O'Reilly	LIA
Michaela McCusker	Clanmil Housing Association
Trevore McDonald	Belfast City Council
Ryan Milligan	NIHE
Maria Burke	Healthy Living Centre
Paul McCusker	Belfast City Councillor
Nora Duncan	Youth worker LHLC
Thomas Templeton	Radius Housing
Patrick Gallagher	Mountainhill Youth Club
Gerard Rosato	Clanmil Housing Association
James keys	Resident
Ulrike Letzner	Belfast City Council – Community Development
Carole Duffy	NIHE
Claire Nolan	Community Empowerment Division (DfC)
Kathleen Kelly	LIA
Pauline O'Neill	LIA

## Environment & Heritage Task Group

John Gray	(LIA) Chairperson
Kieran O'Reilly	LIA
Jim Bradley	Belfast Hills
Maria Morgan	LIA
Judy Meharg	Groundwork NI
Maria Morgan	LIA
Joe Carmichael	LIA
Robert Heaslip	Belfast City Council
Claire Nolan	Community Empowerment Division (DfC)
Anthony Conway	Belfast City Council

The main Partnership Committee of Ligoniel Village Neighbourhood Partnership provides the overall direction to the work of the partnership. Its membership is listed below:

Chairperson (LCE)	Arthur Acheson
Ligoniel Improvement Association	Maria Morgan
Belfast City Council Representative	Ulrike Letzner
Belfast City Councillor	Gerry McCabe
Ligoniel Village Neighbourhood	Kieran O'Reilly
Belfast Regeneration Office	Claire Nolan
Belfast Health & Social Care Trust	Gabi Mornhingweg
Ligoniel Healthy Living Centre	Maria Burke
Administrative support - LIA	Stephen Graham

The Partnership has established four task groups to assist them in the identification, development and where appropriate the delivery of projects which aim to address the Programmes four strategic objectives of community renewal, social renewal, economic renewal and physical renewal. They also assist local community organisations to co-ordinate actions that are beneficial for all

communities living in the Ligoniel Village Neighbourhood Renewal Area (NRA). They include:

- Ligoniel Family Centre
- Ligoniel Fishing Club
- Ligoniel Boxing Club
- Mountainhill Youth Club
- Ligoniel Working Men's Darts Club
- Ligoniel Working Men's Football Club
- St Vincent De Paul Primary School
- Ligoniel Primary School
- Ligoniel Healthy Living Centre
- Ligoniel Residents Association
- Ligoniel Community Events Committee

## Ligoniel Village Neighbourhood Partnership Projects

Due to its unique location, the Neighbourhood Renewal Investment Fund is currently supporting projects in the Ligoniel Village Neighbourhood Renewal Area. However the support of the task groups provides leverage to access funding from many other sources to provide programmes to meet the needs of the community.

The current LVNP action plan details proposals in four areas i.e. Community Renewal, Social Renewal, Economic Renewal and Physical Renewal. Broadly speaking the action plan falls into three categories:

- Advice and Educational support for a range of vulnerable groups in the community e.g. families and children, the unemployed, the elderly, the sick and disabled etc.
- Capital projects to provide the necessary facilities and resources for a growing population e.g., extension to the



Wolfhill Centre, Environmental and Heritage Project, a new Family Centre, shared space projects etc.

- Community events i.e. events to bring people together, to strengthen community bonds and encourage more people to volunteer and participate in local services and activities.

The role of the LCE and LIA figured prominently in all four areas of Renewal, particularly in terms of the potential offered by the development of the Wolfhill Centre site to meet the needs of the targeted, deprived, community in Ligoniel and the growing population. The task groups are established to meet the needs of this ever expanding Ligoniel Village and LIA, through actions agreed within the task group has set several key priorities and associated activities including;

**Priority 1:** To address community based issues and to work with key stakeholders in the development of initiatives that will positively contribute to a cohesive community including;

- The development and implementation of a range of community safety initiatives
- The establishment and maintenance of Shared Spaces
- To improve Local Communication systems and practices
- Development of Community Capacity

**Priority 2:** To establish Ligoniel as one of the key environment and heritage sites within the Belfast Hills including;

- The development of the Ligoniel Environment and heritage site
- The development of opportunities to work in partnership on the enhancement and Improvement of Ligoniel Park
- The creation and improvement of linkages across the Belfast Hills

**Priority 3:** To create the opportunities for the delivery of services, effectively addressing community needs including

- Enabling the community to make healthier choices
- Promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing
- Addressing health inequalities and access to services in an appropriate timeframe
- To promote and Develop the Skills and Attitudes of Young People in the Locality.

**Priority 4:** To work in partnership with a range of stakeholders to develop and implement actions that will improve the economic environment within the village, contribute to the education and employment opportunities for residents attract inward investment and will assist in the regeneration of Ligoniel Village

- Development of Social Enterprise in partnership with Ligoniel Community Enterprises
- Village Improvements implemented
- Develop a social economy enterprise business plan
- Development of training and employment initiatives
- Facilities for young people improved or developed
- Development of initiatives that will positively contribute to increased Educational Achievement
- Programmes and facilities developed to increase community capacity
- Increased opportunities created for engaging in Volunteering and obtaining Qualifications
- Development of the capacity of volunteers, peer mentors and groups
- Corn mill site development completed

**Priority 5:** To provide a range of services that will reduce poverty, tackle debt and advocate and highlight social policy including:

- Providing free accessible, confidential high quality advice

- Contributing to the reduction of poverty
- Financial Capability programme delivery
- Increasing volunteer resources for the delivery of our advice service
- Working with stakeholders to address the impact of Welfare Reform



### **Ligoniel Amateur Boxing Club refurbishment programme**

LABC's facilities are an old school building owned by St Vincent DePaul Parish.

The club hold a lease on the building and they are responsible for its upkeep.

Working in partnership with club representatives, we successfully secured over £10,000 toward programme costs for the year.

### **Community Renewal/ Economic Renewal/Social Renewal & Physical Renewal**

### **1. Ligoniel Improvement Association – Community Development and Relations:**

LIA provides advice and support to individuals, community and voluntary groups and organisations on matters of funding, organisational management, strategy, visioning and structure. Our main objective in delivering this service is to equip and encourage the groups to respond in a positive way to the demands, which are made both on their present and future positions within the community. We believe that through the provision of sound advice, information, support and assistance groups are aided in their development needs and with the development of a strategic plan for their short term and long term development. A further role of LIA has been to raise the awareness of the group; to projects outside the Ligoniel area, and to be aware of and respond to strategies of statutory agencies and outside bodies who have an impact and relevance to their group and the area.

LIA supports the established task groups associated with the LVNP and continues to convene and facilitate the establishment of groups and partnerships, acting as a liaison between community and statutory bodies, campaigning on issues of community concern, and initiating projects and activities involving the local community. We identify the gaps in this marginalised area and develop community infrastructures and encourage and support residents establishing their own self-help groups.

The organisation has developed and maintained good working relationships with the community, voluntary and statutory sectors across north Belfast and plays an important role in north Belfast wide initiatives. It is essential for the regeneration of Ligoniel that the community is actively engaged with other communities in

order to reduce the sense of isolation, partially created due to its location on the periphery of the city. LIA is particularly successful in working in partnership with our neighbours in Ballysillan. Both LIA and Ballysillan Community Forum were joint winners of the Aisling Award for Outstanding Inter-community Endeavours. At present, we have a cross community steering group addressing sensitive issues between both communities, with LIA acting as the lead organisation within the Ligoniel community to drive forward the actions derived from the joint Ligoniel/ Ballysillan, Upper Ardoyne Neighbourhood Renewal Forum.

This project provides services through the provision of community development. LIA provides practical assistance in typing, computer access, and services such as, photocopying, printing and marketing material and is involved in providing advice and help on funding, training, networking, co-ordinating and facilitating meetings through requests for support and assistance from groups, projects and residents both in Ligoniel and Ballysillan. The centre is a hub for the provision of an independent advice service which stretches across a number of north Belfast areas, providing assistance with issues such as benefit entitlement, job search, employment mentoring, money and debt advice, tribunal representation, DLA, benefit checks, training and volunteer development

LIA provides a wide range of training and education opportunities at different levels, including community development courses, essential skills, ICT, family learning, cultural diversity, youth, health, negotiation skills, referral techniques, and monitoring and evaluation procedures. An important element of the education

and training strategy is providing progression routes for clients and developing a culture of lifelong learning. Programmes are developed and delivered in response to need, identified through community consultation.

The centre itself is registered as an accredited centre and can now offer OCN level one classes in two subjects; horticulture and drug awareness.

LIA is integral to the social and economic regeneration of Ligoniel. It is instrumental in highlighting both positive and negative issues which impact on the lives of the local community; developing strategies to address issues; developing mutually beneficial partnerships (statutory, community, private and voluntary); drawing down funding to sustain and support projects. The organisation has established a credible track record of community development. Including health & wellbeing programmes, advice, training, education, housing, personal development and capacity building, local history, cross community programmes and a wide range of other activities. Collaborative working and youth initiatives target all age groups and sectors in the Ligoniel Village Neighbourhood Renewal Area.

The development and regeneration of the surrounding area is a key priority to link the village LIA is a key stakeholder and resource within the community and work closely with statutory agencies and other voluntary and community organizations to promote community development in the area.

It addresses the following themes in the Action Plan:

- Health & Well Being
- Economic, Employability, Education and Regeneration

- Environment & Heritage
- Community Cohesion & Events

**2. North Belfast Advice Partnership – Welfare advice:**

LIA teams have witnessed an increase in pressure due to legislative changes and the restructuring of services.

LIA/NBAP staff have had to become familiar with a new case recording system introduced for the service. Staff have transferred from CARMA to advice PRO which is a web based system.

In addition, all NBAP partners have undergone a Quality Standards review with the LIA advice team audited, assessed and passing audit in May 2016. This audit meant that a huge amount of work was completed including case reviews and the implementation of new policies and procedures.

This year we have seen an increase in the number of people accessing the service for help and assistance with the new Personal Independent Allowance that has replaced DLA for working age people.

We have now started to see the impact of welfare reform, with the Mandatory Reconsideration process implemented prior to clients being able to appeal benefits decisions and changes to how we appeal these. It has been a frightening environment for clients and a demanding one for our advisors.




**Belfast Citywide Tribunal Service**

Staff met with The Appeal Service team who are carrying out a review of the appeals process, and we are now involved on the steering group involved. Despite the success of the service and the number of vulnerable people helped through the appeals process, December saw a threat to the service’s sustainability due to funding coming to an end. But thanks to Belfast City Council staff and Councillors,

further funding was agreed to allow the service to seek additional/alternative sources of funding to support the work.

Our Food Bank has provided 309 food parcels, 4446 meals & 185 Christmas Hampers




## TRAINING

We have run 30 Welfare Reform Workshops attended by 232 participants.


*"Excellent information more people need to know this and be prepared as these changes will have massive impact on people's lives."*

Our Volunteer Development Programme enjoyed another successful year and we had 38 participants overall with 12 completing OCN Welfare Rights Training at the Law Centre NI.


## CITYWIDE TRIBUNAL SERVICE




1548  
Clients




7823  
Enquiries



1586  
Appeals



2,506,611.78  
Money Back



949 Inbound  
Referrals

*"Massive thank you for all the support you give me at appeal can't believe I didn't thank you on the day but as you know my nerves were wrecked, thank you from the bottom of my heart."*

This has been hampered by the lack of a Northern Ireland Government, but the team continue to work tirelessly to lobby for financial support. A report completed by DeLoitte during this period

highlighted how effective the service was and the need for tribunal representation across other council areas.

### 3. Health and Wellbeing

#### Ligoniel Healthy Living Centre

The core business of LHLC is to address health inequalities within the area. During the year, the team delivered and facilitated a large number of innovative programmes, addressing improved mental and physical health, maximising and utilising residents' skills, increasing and enhancing life skills and health related opportunities.

LHLC work in partnership with local and regional organisations to improve the capacity of Ligoniel and develop links and partnerships with other areas.

Alongside the traditional delivery of women's, men's and children's health programmes, health awareness sessions and family support intervention, the team, using an activity based schedule, actively promoted the social prescribed model health professionals are using which utilises community activities and initiatives as a means to promote and encourage health improvements. This year saw the uptake of the "Make It Better Campaign", the "Take Five Promotion", and World Mental Health Day in which 65 residents participated in art therapy sessions. The team facilitated "Health Promoting Homes", an 18-week programme in which direct impact and nutritional weight management and self-esteem initiatives were hugely successful, and so much so that this will continue to be delivered as a rolling programme.

Health lead youth programmes have continued to grow from strength to strength with the Youth Health Co-ordinator focusing on youth empowerment and encouraging young people to speak up for the betterment of themselves and their community. This has been aided through OFM/DFM funded projects such as "Young Leaders" and

“Leading Youth Forward”. The programmes delivered are all designed to include young people from both the “Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist (PUL) and Catholic/Republican/Nationalist (CRN) communities. We have extended our partnership work to include Mount Vernon Youth Club as well as Glenbank whilst maintaining a strong partnership with Glencairn Youth Initiative.

Our youth community helpers have expanded in both numbers and responsibilities by taking ownership of community events such as the Halloween Spooktacular and the Wolfhill Winter Wonderland, both helping to set up for the events, assisting in promotion and participating on the night. In combination over 800 people turned out to support these youth led events.

The second year of the LYF international residential in South Africa saw the young people from LHLC, Mountainhill Youth Club, Glencairn and Mount Vernon undertake educational trips to townships, HIV centres and orphanages along with taking on the responsibility of assisting in the care of the young in the homes and creating liveable quarters for the staff. This was the end of a year-long project which saw our young people learn many new skills and develop an appreciation of our living situation here in Northern Ireland. Another residential was set in Poland where the young people had the opportunity to learn about the history of the Second World War and the effects discrimination has had in other countries.

We continued to provide additional activities throughout troublesome periods in the year and to offer one to one support for all who needed it. With our help the young people of Ligoniel are growing into strong and independent adults.

The programmes and projects facilitated by the Environment and Recreation Co-ordinator focussed on physical activity, the

environment and horticulture, with the overall aim of improving the health and wellbeing of the many groups and individuals involved. The groups were predominantly from the local area and were of all ages and sizes.

The groups all interacted well with the content of the programmes and enjoyed being outdoors and involved in collective activity.

#### **4. Regeneration**

The physical, economic, and social regeneration of Ligoniel is a key element in LIA’s work.

During the year LIA staff supported the review of the Ligoniel Village Action Plan, in addition to co-ordinating the work of the four task groups;

- Environment and Heritage
- Ligoniel Village development
- Community Cohesion
- Health and Wellbeing

The Regeneration Coordinator facilitated a Men’s History Group with residents from Ligoniel and participants from the Barron Hall (Newtownabbey). The programme consisted of facilitated sessions that explored the history of Ireland before partition and until the Easter rebellion. The group had a residential in Dublin and visited many of the well-known landmarks including Glasnevin Cemetery, and Michael Collin’s Barracks (museum). It is hoped that funding will enable a continuation of the programme next year.

To ensure that LIA is meeting the needs of the community, every house in the area received a questionnaire asking their opinions on service provision and community needs. To reinforce this, a series of consultation events were held, focusing on the work of the specific task groups. This provided an additional opportunity to discuss any issues or to ask questions of LIA staff.

The Ligoniel, Ballysillan/Upper Ardoyne joint forum continued to meet. Members have been looking at collaborative ways of working together including shared spaces and joint projects and programmes.

## 5. Capacity Build

The Community Capacity Building Project, funded by Belfast City Council had a successful year. The project delivered a number of collaborative projects including;

- Women in Leadership
- Women through the Justice System
- Women in Irish History
- Women in World War 2
- Women in Europe
- Women's Empowerment
- Women on the Interface

The groups have enjoyed facilitated sessions with various political representatives including Emma Little-Pengelly (DUP), Carál Ní Chuilín and Mary Lou McDonald (Sinn Féin) and Mickey Murray (Alliance). The participants were women from Ligoniel, Ardoyne, Twaddell, Shankill, Ballysillan and Glengormley. Feedback from the groups was very positive and friendships have developed.



During the last year the Capacity Building Project has delivered and assisted with a number of initiatives that have encouraged people to become more active in their communities including; The Men's History Project, Ligoniel History Group, Ligoniel Boxing Club and Ligoniel Resident's Group as well as the St Patrick's Day Festival Group and Ligoniel Family Festival Committee.

## 6. Greenworks Project

Thanks to funding and support from the North Belfast Ethical Investment Trust we were able to develop a business plan for the Greenworks Project and commence operations in February.

Wolfhill Greenworks has three strands;

- Garden and Property Maintenance services
- Wholesale Mustard leaf production
- Accredited training courses and events

Work started immediately on developing the polytunnels to enable wholesale mustard leaf production and securing customers for sales. Further ideas for funding/initiatives have been explored, and an application to the Great Places Fund has successfully progressed to phase two.



Staff are now working with Open College Network (OCN) representatives to begin facilitating accredited courses at the Wolfhill Centre and our environment and heritage site.

Angling NI have also been in discussion with staff to explore the potential of the Environment and Heritage site for angling. They have proposed that Wolfhill dams be used as an angling 'hub' for Belfast and we are now in the process of registering LIA's as a member of Angling NI and as a service provider and getting ready for the 2018 season.

## 7. Marketing and Promotion

We have continued to use the Community TV, Facebook and Twitter to advertise local news, events and training in the North Belfast area. With stories circulated on our Social Media platforms (Facebook & Twitter) including;

- Community festivals
- NBAP Services
- Support services
- Youth programmes
- Foodbank initiatives
- Community Consultation events
- Training opportunities
- Community safety initiatives
- Employment and training opportunities

The use of social media has been particularly successful when dealing with anti-social behaviour or community safety issues and has led to an increase in reporting to PSNI and Belfast City Council.

### The Future

LIA intends to continue to develop the programmes, projects, facilities, services and support provided over the past year. The organisation has identified a number of potential opportunities for development over the next five years, building on the expertise and capacity of LIA and meeting needs identified by the community. We



look forward to working in partnership with residents, the community and voluntary sector, statutory agencies and businesses to continue to improve our community.

We want to ensure that moving forward the organisation continues to;

- Have a leadership role in the community with residents using LIA for advice, support, guidance, and signposting
- Act as a resource organisation for community and voluntary groups in Ligoniel
- Have specific organisational roles in particular spheres, namely: environment, health, advice, regeneration, horticulture, education and training, good relations, community safety, and capacity building
- Be an inclusive organisation, supporting programme development and delivering programmes and initiatives to meet the needs of Ligoniel residents of all ages, religious beliefs, and ethnicity.
- Provide support for vulnerable people in the community (of all ages)

In doing so LIA is conscious of the need to ensure that it operates on a financially viable basis and to build up sufficient free reserves to ensure that it can deal with any unexpected adverse developments.

**8. Ligoniel Improvement Association – The Ligoniel Development Project:** This project proposed by Ligoniel Improvement Association (LIA) has three different elements.

1. Cornmill site – Environmental Centre
2. Wolfhill Centre Site – Development.
3. Mountain Hill Youth Club – Development

### **SITE 1 – Cornmill Site**

The proposal is to develop the site of a disused Cornmill into an environmental centre which will have the potential to act as a hub for activities, initiatives and to provide space for work on environmental issues. The site is an opportunity for cross community and reconciliation structures that will provide opportunities to all ages and groups to access the mountain and walkways and the Ligoniel Dam which is currently owned by LIA. This year planning permission was granted for the site and funding. LIA have been meeting with potential funders to explore possible funding opportunities for the site and to look at the activities that will make the site a centre for tourism, outdoor activities and preservation. Presentations have been made to local council working groups to garner support for the initiative and talks continue about the potential to open up links to enable people to walk from the west to the north of Belfast over the hills.

### **Site 2 – Wolfhill Centre Site.**

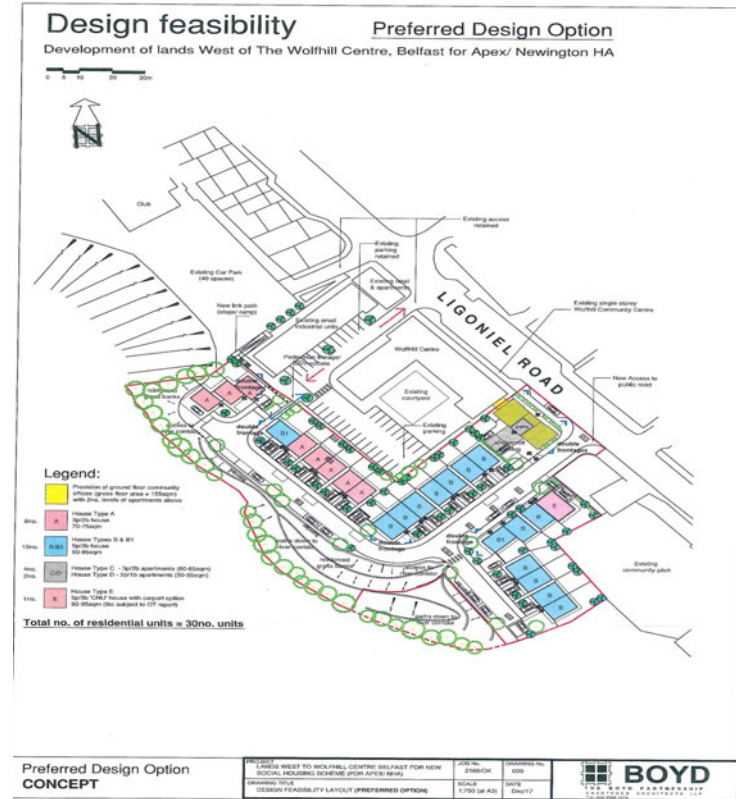
LIA currently operate from the Wolfhill Centre which is owned by the Ligoniel Community Enterprises. The current facility provides a range of offices, retail units, workshop units and horticultural area. However LIA have ambitious plans to develop the site to develop and extend the current horticultural centre, extend the existing premises to provide a full time childcare facility, provide additional office space and housing units for the elderly and disabled. All of the facilities would be operated on a social enterprise model as is currently operated for the Wolfhill Centre. A feasibility study and site investigation has been completed and Newington Housing Association have agreed to build the thirty units of housing on the site, supported by NIHE. LIA and LCE are also working with Apex on the proposal to develop a child care business on site and the

possibility of an older people's fold. The organisation has been told that EA are building their own youth club. The Village Development Task Group are now reviewing what the land could be used for.

**Site 3 – Mountain Hill Youth Club**

Mountain Hill Youth Club is an EA youth service in the Ligoniel Area. LIA established a community steering group to manage the Mountain Hill youth club with the goal of LIA taking responsibility for the full time management of the centre. This has been delayed due to the changes in EA structures. This steering group has been created and has focused on services provided in the area to meet the needs of the community and youth services. However, termination of extended schools funding has had a negative impact to the youth provision and the steering group feel that the EA are not meeting their responsibilities to provide adequate services in the area. The EA had advised that they had completed their own economic appraisal for a new build youth club in early March. At the time of writing this report the document has not been forth coming for review by the steering group and the EA are now indicating that a new youth facility may not be placed in the Ligoniel area until 2020. The resident's and youth groups created over the last year to give the community a voice in what happens in their area, have adopted a more militant approach to the lack of facilities and are intent on holding EA to account for service and facility provision.

All three elements, if they are invested in and supported, would allow for the delivery of Neighbourhood Renewal and the implementation of the Ligoniel Village Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plan



**Newington Housing Association and Ligoniel Community Enterprises**

The proposal to build 30 units of social housing in the heart of the village will give Ligoniel a much needed boost which will in turn create a sense of community and encourage investment in the area.



**The young Female Leaders programme saw young girls from Ligoniel and Glencairn learning about our political system including study trips.**



**During the year the Women in Politics group met with various representatives from a number of political parties**



## Ligoniel Village Neighbourhood Partnership 2017/2018 Expenditure (by Strategic Objective)

The following table details current projects funded via the Neighbourhood Renewal Investment fund. It also details the 2017/18 individual spend for each project, the total amount of expenditure by strategic objective and the overall 2017/18 total expenditure in the Ligoniel Village Neighbourhood Renewal Area.

Programme/Project	CFF Funding Period	CFF Funding Amount (Project allocation)	2017/18 Spend (as at 31/03/18)
<b>COMMUNITY RENEWAL/ SOCIAL RENEWAL</b>			
Ligoniel Improvement Association		£132,022.20	£132,867.12
<b>Total Community/Social Renewal Expenditure</b>			
<b>ECONOMIC RENEWAL</b>			
North Belfast Advice Partnership (Lead Partner Vine Centre) LIA Portion only		£57,343.08	£56,428.89
<b>Total Economic Renewal Expenditure</b>			
<b>PHYSICAL RENEWAL</b>			
Ligoniel Improvement Association – The Ligoniel Development Project			
		<b>Total Allocation £189,365.28</b>	<b>Total Spend £189,296.01</b>

## ACHIEVEMENTS OF NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL FUNDING IN 2017/18 YEAR

### Community Renewal

Community Output Measures	CR8 – Number of community relation projects supported	CR12 – Number of enquiries and clients by category	CR16 – Number of direct referrals to other support services	CR17 – Value of benefits claimed as a result of advice given £
Ligoniel Improvement Association – Community Development & Relations	4			
North Belfast Advice Partnership – Ligoniel Improvement Association – Welfare and Benefit Support		7501	397	£3,552,241
<b>Totals</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7501</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>£3,552,241</b>

**Social Renewal - Health Output Measures from April 2017/18**

PROJECT	SR(H)4 Number of health education/ awareness initiatives provided/delivered
Ligoniel Improvement Association – Community Development & Relations	4

**Social Renewal - Crime Output Measures from April 2017/18**

PROJECT	SR(C)4 Number of crime prevention initiatives implemented	SR(C) 6 – Number of young people benefiting from youth inclusion/ diversionary projects	SR(C) 7 – Number of victims of crime supported
Ligoniel Improvement Association – Community Development & Relations	4	35	6

**Physical Renewal Output Measures from April 2017/18**

PROJECT		PR3 – area of land improved and made ready for development
Ligoniel Improvement Association – Community Development & Relations		1

**Economic Renewal Output Measures from April 2017/18**

PROJECT	ER4 - Number of people receiving job specific training	ER11 – Number of social economy projects supported	ER15 – Number of FTE jobs safeguarded
Ligoniel Improvement Association – Community Development & Relations	3	1	4.8
North Belfast Advice Partnership – Ligoniel Improvement Association – Welfare and Benefit Support			2
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6.8</b>



## Ligoniel Village Neighbourhood Partnership Conclusion

In the 2017/18 financial year, Ligoniel Village Neighbourhood Partnership total overall spend was **£189,365.25** broken down as follows:

Community Renewal	£ 66,011.10
Social Renewal	£ 26,404.44
Economic Renewal	£ 83,747.52
Physical Renewal	£ 13,202.22



**Department for Communities  
Belfast Area Office  
Lighthouse Building  
Gasworks Business Park, Ormeau Place,  
Belfast, BT7 2JB**

