



Ards and North Down PEACEPLUS Newsletter

Autumn 2025

Welcome

As Chair of the Ards and North Down PEACEPLUS Partnership, I am delighted to welcome you to the 1st edition of the PEACEPLUS Newsletter. This Newsletter provides our residents with information on the implementation of the Ards and North Down PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan, the range of programmes being delivered, and the opportunities available for participation.

The Local Action Plan has secured €5,681,833 PEACEPLUS funding from the European Union, UK Government, the Government of Ireland and the Northern Ireland Executive. The grant has been awarded under Theme 1, Investment Area 1.1 – Co-designed Local PEACEPLUS Action Plans.

I would like to extend my appreciation to the PEACEPLUS Funders for their financial support which allows us to deliver meaningful peacebuilding initiatives that reflect the needs and aspirations of the Ards and North Down community.

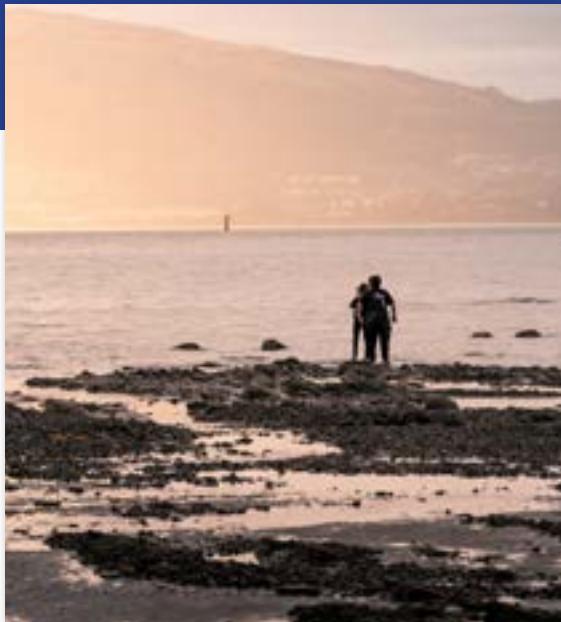
The PEACEPLUS Partnership is confident that the projects outlined in this plan, and showcased in this Newsletter, will strengthen and inspire resilient, inclusive, and connected communities; enhance local capacity for growth and collaboration; and leave a lasting legacy of peace and reconciliation across the borough well beyond the lifetime of the programme.

I would encourage everyone to get involved and take advantage of the opportunities this programme offers. I look forward to the rollout of the projects and to witnessing the positive change and enduring benefits this PEACEPLUS investment will bring to Ards and North Down.



Councillor Joe Boyle

Chair, Ards and North Down PEACEPLUS Partnership



Introduction

With a dedicated budget of €5,681,833 secured through Investment Area 1.1 – Building Peaceful and Thriving Communities of the PEACEPLUS Programme, Ards and North Down Borough Council, supported by the Ards and North Down PEACEPLUS Partnership, has developed a comprehensive Local PEACEPLUS Action Plan.

The Plan has been shaped through an inclusive co-design process, involving collaboration between community organisations, statutory agencies, and stakeholders from across the borough. It is designed to foster positive relationships, celebrate

cultural diversity, and reimagine local communities through the creation of shared spaces and services that bring people together.

The Local Action Plan comprises 23 programmes, each contributing to one of three overarching themes:

1. Local Community Regeneration and Transformation
2. Thriving and Peaceful Communities
3. Celebrating Cultures and Diversity

Through the delivery of these programmes, participants will have opportunities to develop meaningful cross-community relationships and deepen their understanding and appreciation of cultural identity and shared heritage. Projects will encourage collaboration through creative, cultural, and environmental initiatives, helping to strengthen community connections and build a lasting legacy of cooperation and inclusion.

Ultimately, the Action Plan aims to make a significant and enduring contribution to peace and reconciliation within Ards and North Down. Its implementation will support relationship-building and mutual understanding that will continue to benefit communities well beyond the lifetime of the PEACEPLUS Programme.



The long-term impact of delivery of the Action Plan includes:

- Improved understanding and respect for other cultures and traditions
- Increased understanding and acceptance of other communities
- Increased opportunities for cross-community activities
- Increased confidence in expressing cultural identity and personal background

Ards and North Down PEACEPLUS Partnership

A PEACEPLUS Partnership has been established to oversee the effective development and implementation of a Local Action Plan. The Partnership, is representative of communities across the borough and includes Elected Members, Statutory representatives and Social Partners.

Elected Members

Alderman Robert Adair (Ards Peninsula)	Alderman Naomi Armstrong-Cotter (Newtownards)	Alderman Stephen McIlveen (Newtownards)
Councillor Eddie Thompson (Bangor East & Donaghadee)	Councillor Hannah Irwin (Bangor Central)	Alderman Lorna McAlpine (Ards Peninsula)
Alderman Martin McRandall (Holywood & Clandeboye)	Councillor Patricia Morgan (Comber)	Alderman Mark Brooks (Bangor East & Donaghadee)
Councillor Stephen Hollywood (Bangor West)	Councillor Joe Boyle (Single Member Party/Independent)	

Social Partners

Ards Community Network Ms Cathy Polley	County Down Rural Network Mrs Sandra Henderson	North Down YMCA Ms Pauline McMullan
Business Sector Ms Marianne Kennerley	Voluntary Sector TBC	Older People Ms Suzanne Melville
Youth Voice Nellie Duckett/William Scott	BME Ms Monika Ciok-Giertuga	Women's Sector Ms Alison Blayney
Climate Action Organisation Mr John Caldwell	Good Relations TBC	

Statutory Organisations

Education Authority (EA) Mr Jim Dunbar	NI Housing Executive Ms Eileen Thompson	Police Service of N Ireland [PSNI] Community Planning Sergeant Sinead McCann
South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust (SEHSCT) Ms Lynda Vladeanu	South Eastern Regional College (SERC) Mr Roger Duncan	Education Authority – Youth Service Mr Johnny Crymble
Ulster Scots Agency Mr Ian Crozier	Public Health Agency Mr Andrew Steenson	Libraries NI Ms Julie Reid

The Co-Designed Process

A co-design process was undertaken to explore the needs and opportunities for the PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan within Ards and North Down Borough Council. This process brought together the PEACEPLUS Partnership and representatives from the community and voluntary sector right across the borough.

More than 300 residents from a wide variety of community and interest groups took part in local meetings held across the borough's 7 District Electoral Areas (DEAs). In addition, over 439 people contributed through an online survey. The feedback provided valuable insight into the issues that most affect community wellbeing, identifying key priorities and ideas for how they could be addressed.

Key Themes Identified

- Encouraging greater involvement of young people in community life and local activities
- Building stronger connections between people through shared challenges and experiences
- Tackling anti-social behaviour and promoting mutual respect
- Creating more opportunities for cross-community engagement and events
- Developing inclusive, shared spaces that everyone can access and enjoy
- Ensuring that public spaces feel safe, welcoming, and inclusive for all residents
- Strengthening local arts, culture, and heritage to celebrate shared identity
- Supporting mental health and wellbeing through community-based programmes

Further engagement helped to refine and co-design practical project ideas based on the priorities identified in the first stage. These collaborative sessions helped shape a shared vision for future community development across Ards and North Down.



The Ards and North Down PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan

Theme	Project	Description
Theme 1 – Local Community Regeneration and Transformation	1.1: BANGOR CYCLE PARK PROJECT Located at Bangor Sportsplex	<p>A capital project which will transform an unused piece of land [Council owned] creating a pioneering community facility designed to promote health, inclusion, and social cohesion through cycling. The enhanced facilities and pathways will lead to increased levels of cross community interaction and will include five separate cycling facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a pump-track, • a BMX racing track, • an Inclusive-Cycling-Area, • an Accessible Learn-To-Ride area • cross country [XC] trails). <p>These unique spaces will be unified by a central community café and workshop, serving as a social hub that fosters connection, collaboration, and shared wellbeing among participants of all ages and abilities.</p>
	1.2: Donaghadee Pump Park Located at The Commons, Donaghadee	<p>A capital project identified within the Commons Park Masterplan. This project will act as a catalyst for ongoing improvements to the area helping to grow, develop, and maintain relationships between all communities. It will create a safe, shared space where everyone feels welcomed and will enhance awareness of Donaghadee's commitment to peace and a healthy environment. The space [Council owned] will create a common ground for all communities to come together in celebration of their community, area, and heritage.</p> <p>The indicative design of the Donaghadee Pump Track will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2m wide track forming a continuous circuit • 3m wide surrounding safety area • Landscape planting/seating area
	1.3: Portaferry Parklands	<p>A capital project which will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park Hub Building Refurbishment providing community and visitor facilities to support wider use of the park as a place to meet • Tree Space Canopy for use as a community gathering space amongst the trees enabling outdoor learning and music
Theme 2 - Building Thriving and Peaceful Communities	TPC1a – Womens Resilience, Inclusion & Empowerment	<p>This programme will engage with groups of women across the borough particularly in areas of disadvantage, and include those from new communities. The project will be delivered with a view to increasing confidence, building resilience and self-esteem among women to engage in peace building and community regeneration activities on a cross community basis.</p>
	TPC 1b – Community Resilience, Inclusion & Empowerment	<p>A programme which will engage with groups the borough particularly in areas of disadvantage and including those from new communities. The project will deliver with a view to building greater citizenship and cohesion across the borough, creating networking opportunities within shared spaces; rebuilding volunteerism across the Borough post Covid; building skills and resilience across community groups on a cross community basis that addresses legacy issues.</p>
	TPC2 – Engagement & Leadership through Sports & Arts	<p>A multi sports and arts and personal development programme will work with young people at risk of paramilitary influence and who could benefit from engagement in new activities both within and outside their local area.</p>

The Ards and North Down PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan (continued)

Theme	Project	Description
	TPC3 – Education Shared Trips	A programme for young people aged 16-25 years from across a range of borough based youth organisations. The project aims to increase awareness and understanding of the impact of hatred, prejudice and discrimination on people and through this build a cohort of more informed cross community youth leaders.
	TPC4a – Tour, Talk, Taste and Living History	An activity programme to participants across 6 historic sites that has helped chart the evolution of Ards and North Down area. The project will help to break down barriers and build understanding and awareness of the past and how it has influenced the area today.
	TPC4b – Bringing Life to our Historical Heritage	A programme will bring life to 2-3 Historical Heritage sites across the borough using cutting edge augmented reality technology and drone technology through a co-produced project. Engaging with young and older people will help to break down barriers and build understanding and awareness of the past and how it has influenced the area today.
	TPC4c – Cross Community Musical Traditions Programme	A programme engaging participants in the creation and showcasing of a new music and dance creation. The project will break down myths and misperceptions about musical traditions across the Borough while building new relationships across different music and dance genres.
	TPC5a – Urban Sports Programme	A programme encouraging young people aged 8 – 16 years with different traditions and abilities to get involved in Scooters, BMX, Parkour or Skateboarding while building new relationships.
	TPC5b – Disability Sports Programme	A programme engaging with young people from local schools with special needs and disability groups, sporting organisations, adult centres and clubs. The project will ensure that everyone can benefit from the health, social and education benefits of sport and active recreation in a cross community project.
	TPC6 – Education programme for older and younger people	An intergenerational programme which will create opportunities for older people, young people and those from ethnic communities across the Borough to engage in a mutual exchange programme of old and new skills e.g.; IT, physical activity, crafts, sign language etc.
	TPC7 – Your Place, Reimagining Our Space, Allotments/ Men's/Hen's Sheds	This programme will encourage the growth of men and hens sheds across the borough. It will develop existing community gardens, encourage grow your own initiatives and offer cross border learning opportunities.
Theme 3 – Celebrating Cultures and Diversity	CCD1 – Church, Faith & Belief Initiative	A programme to build trust, awareness and understanding between different faith and beliefs and those with no faith across the borough.
	CCD2a – Genealogy – Who do you think you are?	This programme will deliver a capacity building for heritage groups and venues, genealogy and diversity workshops and an accredited course looking at the role of the Ulster Scots community in shaping Ards and North Down.
	CCD2b – Exploring the Role of Women through the years in Peace Building	A programme to explore the history and leadership role of women through the years in peacebuilding in Ards and North Down and further afield. Meaningful and purposeful participant engagement will be through a range of speaker events on the challenges women face when dealing with conflict situations.

The Ards and North Down PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan (continued)

Theme	Project	Description
	CCD 2c – Ulster Scots & Irish Language	This programme will develop and roll out accredited courses exploring Ulster Scots and Irish Language in Ards and North Down. Activities will be linked to celebration events and the programme will also include workshops on Good Relations and Diversity.
	CCD 2d – History Tours & Stories of the Borough	This programme will involve the Ulster-Scots and WWII living history days and visits to historical sites within the Ards and North Down area. It will be linked to the 23 heritage cluster groups in the ANDBC area and will include workshops on Good Relations and Diversity.
	CCD 3a – Cultural Drama Production	This Multi-Cultural Drama programme will involve the creation of a drama production including intercultural workshops, acting and dance workshops, stage and prop development workshops, volunteer development, auditions, filming and photography elements.
	CCD 3b – Cultural Celebrations	This Cultural Celebrations programme will aim to celebrate and increase understanding and respect for cultural diversity across the Borough. The project will include an annual cultural festival, celebrating a wide range of different cultures and traditions and seek to increase the understanding of and respect for all cultural identities and reflect the diversity in the area.
	CCD4a – Welcome Place	A programme delivering a number of activities. All participants from across the Borough will be welcomed with an emphasis on areas where there is a greater concentration of ethnic minority and newcomer communities
	CCD4b – Chit, Chat AND Connect	This programme will provide a safe space to enable engagement with participants from differing backgrounds and cultures by encouraging genuine discussion through lived experience, challenge the myths and misconceptions and promote understanding of the rich diversity within the borough.

Delivery Agents

TPC1a - Womens Resilience, Inclusion & Empowerment
Kilcooley Women's Centre
alison@kilcooleywomenscentre.co.uk

TPC1b- Community Resilience, Inclusion & Empowerment
North Down YMCA
monika@northdownymca.org
pauline.mcmullan@ymca-ireland.net

TPC2 – Engagement & Leadership through Sports & Arts
Healthy Kidz CIC
paul@healthy-kidz.com
hello@bniproductions.co.uk
northernireland@peaceplayers.org

TPC3 - Education Shared Trips
Eventwise NI
tally@eventwiseni.com

TPC4a – Tour, Talk, Taste & Living History
Eventwise NI
tally@eventwiseni.com

TPC4b – Bringing Life to our Historical Heritage
The Nerve Centre –
d.lewis@nervecentre.org

TPC4c – Cross Community Musical Traditions
Blu Zebra
bruce.hogg@bluzebra.co.uk

TPC5a – Urban Sports
TBC

TPC5b - Disability Sports
NI Active Youth
info@activeyouthni.com

TPC6 – Education programme for Older & Younger People
Kilcooley Women's Centre
alison@kilcooleywomenscentre.co.uk

TPC7 – Your Place, Reimagining Our Space, Allotments/Men's Hen's Sheds
ANDBC
andparks@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

CCD1 – Church, Faith & Belief Initiative
The Link – mark@thelinkcentre.org

CCD2a - Genealogy – Who do you think you are?
Gifted Trust –
kelly.brown@giftedenterprise.org
lynsey@giftedentreprise.org

CCD2b – Exploring the Role of Women through the years in Peace Building
Kilcooley Women's Centre
alison@kilcooleywomenscentre.co.uk

CCD2c – Ulster Scots & Irish Language
Kilcooley Women's Centre
alison@kilcooleywomenscentre.co.uk

CCD2d – History Tours & Stories of the Borough
Gifted Trust
kelly.brown@giftedenterprise.org
lynsey@giftedentreprise.org

CCD3a – Cultural Drama Production
Terra Nova
epic@terranovalproductions.net

CCD3b – Cultural Celebrations
North Down YMCA
monika@northdownymca.org
pauline.mcmullan@ymca-ireland.net

CCD4a – Welcome Place
North Down YMCA
monika@northdownymca.org
pauline.mcmullan@ymca-ireland.net

CCD4b – Chit, Chat AND Connect
TBC

PEACEPLUS IS A CROSS-BORDER FUNDING Programme supported by the European Union, the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Government of Ireland, and the Northern Ireland administration.

Contact Information

Further information about the PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan can be found on the website:
<https://www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/PEACEPLUS-Programme>

The project is supported by PEACEPLUS, a programme managed by the Special EU Programmes Body [SEUPB].



**Ards and
North Down**
Borough Council