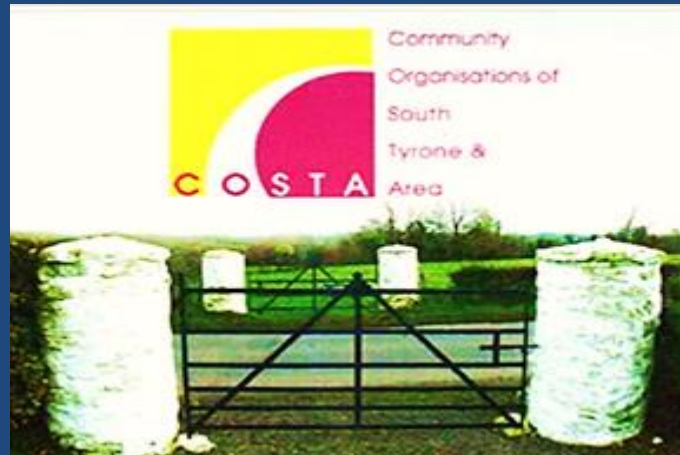


COSTA Annual Report



2016 / 2017

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COSTA is funded by

Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs via DAERA's Rural Community Development Support Service / Tackling Rural Poverty & Social Isolation Programme
Mid Ulster District Council

Registered Company in Northern Ireland No: NI 42832

Recognised Charity in NI No: NIC101598

ISO 9001:2015 Cert: FS 592437

Chairperson's Address



Hello and a very warm welcome to all for COSTA's 2017 AGM!

I take great pleasure in presenting our Annual Report for this year which showcases not only the sheer volume of work undertaken but also the diversity of what we do for the local community.

Undoubtedly it has been another difficult year for the sector as a whole with our current and constantly up-ended political situations locally, regionally, nationally and beyond. To add to that, we also now face directly into the impending Brexit negotiations.

All this continues to bring change and great uncertainty which creates a very difficult environment for us all to both live and work in. Despite this COSTA continues with devoted staff member: Loraine Griffin our Development Manager. Since our last AGM in June, we have had to very unfortunately say goodbye to all our remaining MARA staff (Maximising Access in Rural Areas): MARA Project Officer - Clare Davidson and MARA Enablers – Gillian Steenson and Karen Duggan when the Project finally closed down on the 30th September 2016. All our staff have worked so tirelessly in their roles to deliver COSTA's services to local rural and isolated communities. On behalf of the Board I would like to say a very heart-felt thank you to you all for your contributions to COSTA over many years and I wish you all the very best for the future!

Thank you to the Public Health Agency for funding MARA over the past 5 years and off course our partners TADA Rural Support Network.

COSTA would like to acknowledge and thank the Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs (DEARA), our keystone funder which makes the Network possible, and also for their leadership role in developing (TRPSI) Tackling Rural Poverty & Social Inclusion and the Rural Micro Capital Grant Scheme.

To Mid Ulster District Council, and especially, the Councilors who sit as Advisors on our Board: Frances Burton, Sharon McAleer, Dominic Molloy, Joe O'Neill, Robert Mulligan, and Philip Clarke MUDC Community Development Manager - I would like to pass on COSTA's gratitude.

Central to all this, COSTA continues to deliver and sustain the Rural Community Development Support Service (RCDSS) throughout the Dungannon and South Tyrone area; sub-contracted under CWSAN (Cookstown & Western Shores Area Network) as part of 9 regional providers. Our strong partnership with CWSAN, covering Cookstown and Magherafelt, continues to prosper and we look forward to hopefully many more positive years of working together. We also acknowledge that this year has been extremely difficult for CWSAN – indeed every organisation will have to face its trials and tribulations at various times - and we extend our deepest sympathy to the Network and the family of Anne O'Donnell. Anne sadly passed away just a few weeks ago. We were all so shocked to hear this news. Most of COSTA's groups knew Anne well, particularly in recent years when dealing with the Micro-Grant applications, Anne was the friendly face at many joint events and the voice at the end of the phone.

I would like to also take this opportunity to give a note of thanks to all my fellow Board members: Trevor Lockhart, Heather McLaughlin, Anthony McGonnell, Raymond Harrison, John Burrell, Liz Salter, Wilfred Mitchell and extend a warm welcome to: David McFarlane, Rosina O'Neill and Carmen Hamill. The Board has certainly arisen to meet all challenges very successfully and has really gone from strength to strength recently.

There have been many extremely positive developments for COSTA this year as we secured places on the new Peace IV Partnership, Mid Ulster Community Plan, Joint Voluntary Community Sector Panel and hosted this year's RCDSS Manager's Residential in the beautiful surroundings of Corick House. COSTA has adapted superbly to see off many recent tough challenges and deep funding cuts. I certainly see COSTA continuing very positively into the future and I sincerely hope COSTA will be here for many more years to come. I wish you, and your communities all the very best for the future.

Richard Knox - COSTA Chairperson



Network Development Manager's Report

Welcome everyone as we celebrate our 17th year! Despite cuts, 2017 sees very successful completion of the 5th year of the current DAERA-funded Rural Community Development Support Service (RCDSS) for Mid Ulster in partnership with CWSAN. The Network has delivered over 16 Workshops to 266 participants and over 330 supports to the local community. We have actively engaged with over 250 local groups and communities face-to-face and our key outputs can be viewed on pages 6 - 15 of this Report.

We have already seen the successful delivery of Phases 1, 2 and 3 of the DARD Rural Micro Capital Grant Scheme with our partners CWSAN. More recently under Phase 3, in total 80 grants were awarded right across the Mid Ulster area. We are awaiting confirmation of the future of the scheme, but it has certainly been hugely successful to date, and we hope that there will be a future Phase 4 perhaps from September 2017.

As ever, I extend my sincere thanks, and also bid farewell, to our staff: Clare Davidson, Gillian Steenson and Karen Duggan their excellent achievements delivering the MARA Project in conjunction with TADA. Thank you all sincerely for such fantastic work, I hope you have enjoyed your time at COSTA, and I wish you all the very best for the future.

Thank you very sincerely to the entire COSTA Board who are truly great for their unwavering dedication and hard work throughout the year - and I don't know how Richard, our Chair, ever gets time to milk the cows!

Thank you also to Mid Ulster District Council for their continued support of COSTA, and in particular, Philip Clarke who serves as Statutory Representative, and Faye and Ted Sharkey who maintain the US Grants site so meticulously. Councillors: Burton, Mulligan, McAleer, Molloy and O'Neill are always on hand to provide valuable support, guidance and wisdom. We have been lucky this year again to get further improvements – with many more still to come – to our office and the President Grant's site courtesy of Ulster Scots and MUDC funding.

I must pay tribute to our late colleague Anne O'Donnell who left us all far too soon. I had the great pleasure of working with Anne, quite a lot over the past 3 years in particular, but I have known Anne ever since I started this role back in 2000. We will all truly miss Anne and we extend our deepest sympathy to Conor Corr and the staff and board of CWSAN, and most of all, to Anne's family and friends.

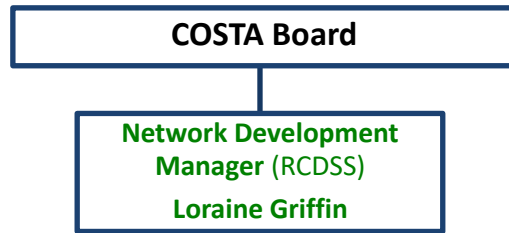
This year our AGM is hosted in Bawn Hall and I thank the Bawn Development Association and Bawn Ladies Group for such a wonderful venue and I can't wait to lunchtime as I know the food provided here is the stuff of legend. This Hall is an excellent example of the SWARD Local Action Group NIRD Access to Services Funding and to the life of our local rural communities. I hope that funding such as this will not be lost to us post-Brexit. Indeed, we all hope that community development funding will not be adversely affected and programmes like the RCDSS are vital to securing a neutral community base, like the COSTA office, which is well used daily by local groups. I also take great pleasure in going out to different local rural areas and I strongly encourage groups to take advantage of the fact that we have a Rural Outreach Service - so please do give us a call at any time.

We also welcome Dr Jude McCann from Rural Support – also part of the TRPSI family – here today. We look forward to working together and hearing more about their services to rural communities.

Despite all the current uncertainty, COSTA will still be here for another year but what lies beyond that still remains to be seen as we enter discussions with DAERA and possibly another new Minister. To date and very fortunately, "*Michelles 1, 2 and 3*" have all been very supportive of the Local Rural Support Network Infrastructure. But whatever the future holds, I certainly aim to ensure that a local office and a local service remains here as **YOUR Local Support Network** for the Dungannon and South Tyrone area :)

Loraine Griffin
Network Development Manager

COSTA Staff



COSTA Board of Directors

Richard Knox	<i>Chairperson</i>	Heather Nixon-McLaughlin
Elizabeth Salter	<i>Vice Chairperson</i>	Raymond Harrison
Trevor Lockhart	<i>Secretary & Company Secretary</i>	Carmen Hamill
John Burrell	<i>Treasurer</i>	Rosina O’Neill
Anthony McGonnell		David McFarlane
Wilfred Mitchell OBE		

Associate Board Members

Cllr Robert Mulligan	Cllr Frances Burton	Cllr Sharon McAleer
Cllr Dominic Molloy	Cllr Joe O’Neill	

Statutory Representative

Philip Clarke – Mid Ulster District Council – Community Development Manager

Bankers

Ulster Bank Ltd
Main Street
Clogher
Co Tyrone

Accountants

Mac Neary Rasdale & Co
Registered Accountants & Auditors
Darling Street
Enniskillen



The Local Rural Support Networks

- Supporting rural living across Northern Ireland -

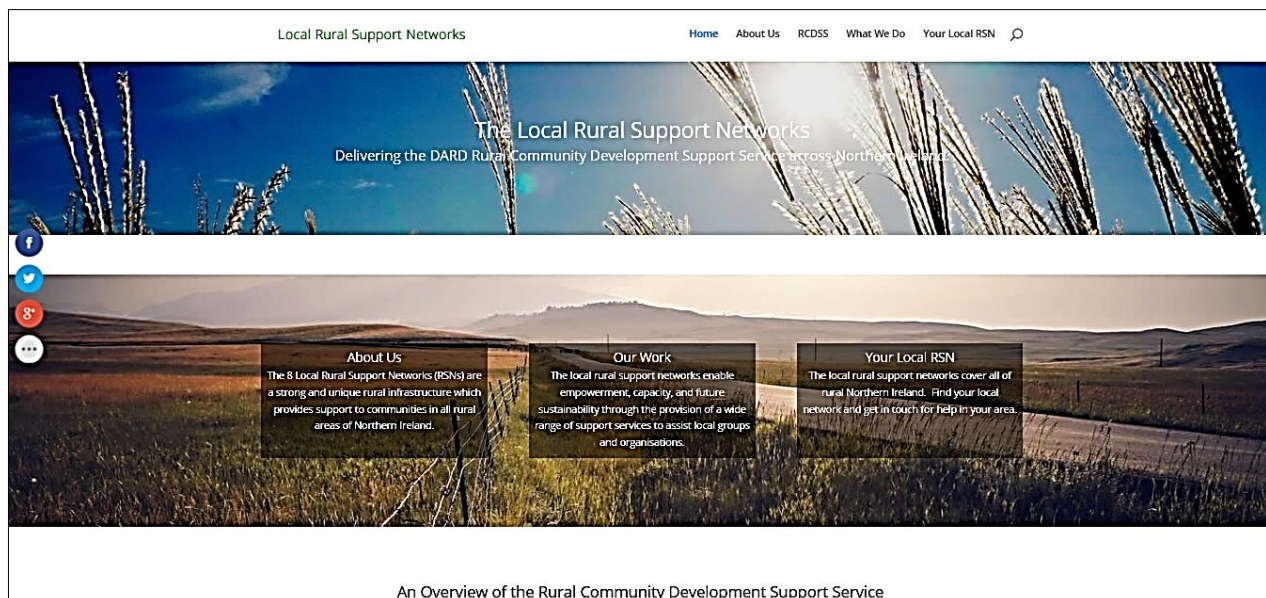
A Unique Rural Infrastructure

COSTA is one of 9 independent Local Rural Support Networks networked together under a unique rural focus. This strong and unique rural infrastructure covers all of rural Northern Ireland.

The Local Networks draw members who are largely rural and cover a wide range of community and voluntary sector organisations in their area of remit including: community groups, social economy, play groups, farmers, women, youth, disability and older people etc.

The LRSNs have been officially recognised as an example of good practice and an essential conduit between rural communities and statutory bodies – providing communities with access to the decision making process, and decision makers with a means of tapping into the expert local knowledge on the ground.

We are membership based and our Management Boards are elected each year at AGM from our member groups. Our primary aim is to support local groups and organisations to achieve what they want for their community. **We help groups to help themselves by working *with* groups and *not for* groups.** Visit: www.localruralsupportnetworks.org for further information.



View the Local Rural Support

Networks RCDSS Video at:

<https://youtu.be/loUG-6T3tII>

Rural Community Development Support Service – RCDSS



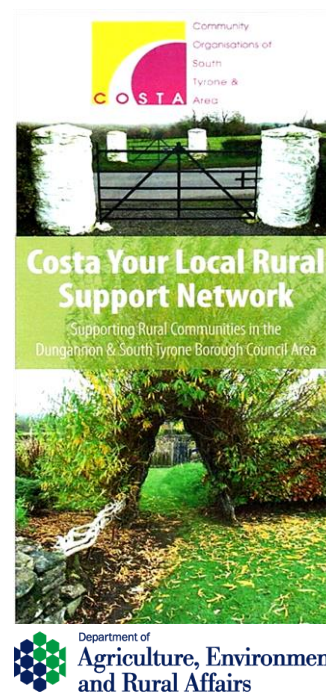
Community Organisations of South Tyrone & Areas (COSTA) in conjunction with Cookstown and Western Shores Area Network (CWSAN) continue to work in close partnership. With over 5 years now already completed, we strive towards the start of our 6th year, from April 2017, delivering the 'Rural Community Development Support Service' for the Mid Ulster area covering the Dungannon and South Tyrone area (COSTA) and the Cookstown & Magherafelt areas (CWSAN).

The key elements of this current contract with the Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs (DAERA) supported through their **Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Framework 2012 - 2017** are:

- 1. Supporting Access to the NI Rural Development Programme;**
- 2. Assisting Development of the Rural & Social Economy;**
- 3. Supporting and Assisting Access to the DARD Tackling Rural Poverty & Social Isolation Programme;**
- 4. Developing Capacity & Leadership.**

The RCDSS provides on-going practical Community Development support services - responsive local needs:

- **Community Office at U.S. Grants & Rural Outreach Service.**
- **Events / Workshops / Visits / Meetings.**
- **Signposting / Information / Practical assistance.**
- **Newsletters / E-Bulletins / Public Relations.**
- **Facebook Page / Website / Social Media.**
- **Funding / 'Grant-Tracker' searches.**
- **Assistance with funding applications.**
- **Networking & Sharing expertise.**
- **Capacity Building and Training.**
- **Good Practice Checklists & Action Plans.**
- **Governance & Board / Management Committee Skills.**
- **Office Services – access to photocopying, fax and email.**
- **Resources, Library, Equipment Loan.**
- **Community Audit (support), SWOTs, Profiles, Statistics / NINIS.**
- **Policies, Procedures, Good Practice, Guides.**
- **Needs Assessments, Skills Reviews.**
- **Wide range of Management & Leadership Support Services.**



The Rural Community Development Support Service is funded by the Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs (DAERA) under the Tackling Rural Poverty & Social Isolation (TRPSI) Programme.

COSTA Rural Support Network - Snapshot of the Year

The COSTA Rural Community Development Support Service (RCDSS) delivered across the Dungannon & South Tyrone area of Mid Ulster District:

1. Local Groups: Increased Awareness of local groups / Improved Capacity / Enhanced Sustainability:

- **99 COSTA Members.**
- **RCDSS 330 groups / supports.**
- **17 Workshops / 280 attendees.**
- **7 Newsletters, 1 Mail-out, 9 Press Releases, 780 Email-outs, 88 Website updates, 232 Face Book updates.**
- Supporting NIRDP 2014-2020: 30 Mid Ulster Rural Development Partnership LAG Promotions.
- 4 Meetings / Events / Contacts with LAG Manager re MURDP Local Action Group.
- 3 Villages / Groups / Applications Supported.
- 178 Tackling Rural Poverty & Social Isolation (TRPSI) Promotions / Signpostings / Referrals: ARTS, CDM Community / Rural transport, MARA, RYE Connect, Rural Support, SUSE+ / DEL / Skills / FarmSAFE, Libraries NI, Farm Family Health Checks.
- **3 Capacity Building Workshops: 1 COSTA & Age NI 'Just About Managing' Workshop: 30+ attendees at Smyth Hall, Ballygawley, 20/10/2016.**
1 COSTA 'DAERA Farm Business Improvement Scheme' Info Session: 60+ attendees, 22/11/16.
1 Policing & Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) & COSTA 'Information & Awareness Event for Older People': 75+ attendees at Smyth Hall, Ballygawley, 31/03/2017.
- **6 'Charity Registration' & 'Charity Annual Returns' Information Workshops: 29 attendees, 21/09/2016, 23/09/2016, 21/02/2017, 16/05/2017, 17/05/2017, 17/05/2017.**
- **5 COSTA 'Open Door Support Days': 33 attendees / supports 23/09/2016, 07/11/2016, 07/12/2016, 15/02/2017, 25/05/2017.**
- 4 Good Practice Checklists / Action Plans.
- 20+ Rural Voice / Consultations / Survey Feedback.
- 52 Regional Links & Engagements (NIVCA, RCD, RNNI, RCN, SENI etc).
- Charity Registration Support Service: 55 Charity Registrations / Supports.
- Social Economy Awareness: 7 Newsletters, 48 Promotions / Email-outs,
- COSTA Profile on SENI Website.
- Social Economy Supports: 6 new and existing groups / individuals / ideas supported.
- **DAERA Rural Micro Capital Grants Scheme: 3 Phases jointly managed with CWSAN to date.**
- **80 Groups funded under DAERA Micro Capital Grants Scheme Phase 3.**
- **65+ supports under DAERA 'Rural Micro Capital Grant Scheme'.**



- **2 DAERA 'Rural Micro Capital Grant Scheme' Workshops:** Pre-Application Workshop 13/9/2016 (3 attendees) and Letter of Offer Workshop 14/11/2016 (16 attendees).
2. **Local Individuals: Improved Capacity of individuals, Farmers and Farm Families:**
- Positive Regional Engagements: 52 engagements / actions.
 - **1 'COSTA 2016 AGM':** Clogher Old School, 30 attendees, 30/6/16.
 - **3 New COSTA Board Members.**
 - **1 Board Workshop.**
 - **MARA Project (Southern Zone 8 - Armagh & Dungannon): 1 Programme (Extended) – Fully Completed 30/09/2016.**
3. **Relationships: Bonding (Improve relations within community) / Bridging (Improve relations with 'other' communities) / Linking (Improve relations with Decision Makers / Statutory Agencies)**
- Capacity Building Relationships: 17+ Partnerships.
 - Influencing & Engaging Statutory Bodies regarding Community Development: 52+ attendances.
 - Alleviating Poverty & Social Isolation: 17 Partnerships / 52 attendances.
 - Community Planning / Structures: 8 Meetings / Events / 5 Actions.
 - Promotion of Libraries NI: 1 Referral, 7 Newsletters, 28 Email-outs / Social Media.
 - Linking & Signposting: RCDSS 320 groups / supports.
 - Promoting Good / Community Relations: 20 promotions.
 - Future Voluntary Community Sector Mechanisms for Community Development Delivery: 15 Meetings / engagements with DARD & RCDSS Local Rural Support Networks.
 - 1 LRSNs RCDSS Strategy Residential 04/05/2017 and 05/05/2017.
 - 10 Monthly LRSN / RCDSS Networking Meetings.
 - 6 COSTA Board Meetings and 1 AGM.
 - 7 RCDSS Financial Visits & Monitoring Visits.
 - **1 ISO 9001:2015 QMS Attainment 01/02/2017.**
 - 2 ISO Internal Audits.
 - 9 ISO 9001:2015 QMS Steering Group Meetings.
 - 1 Company House Annual Return: 31/03/2017.
 - 1 Charity Commission NI Annual Return: 02/08/2016.
 - 1 Pensions Auto-Enrolment Process completed: 30/04/2017.
 - Major COSTA Restructuring Programme January 2016 – September 2016.



COSTA Rural Voice – Consultations

1. NI Executive Office: Draft Programme for Government Framework 2016 – 2021, 6/6/2016 & 22/7/2016.
2. SENI: Communications Survey 25/7/2017.
3. RCN: Membership Development Skills 12/9/2016.
4. DAERA RCDSS: New Programme Consultation Meeting 11/8/2016.
5. Big Lottery: New programmes Consultation Event 19/9/2016.
6. DTNI: Rural Economy: Local Economy 22/9/2016.
7. PHA: Protect Life 2 27/10/2016.
8. Charity Commission NI: Customer Satisfaction Survey 18/10/2016.
9. Mid Ulster District Council: Local Development Plan 29/11/2016.
10. Mid Ulster District Council: Community Plan 14/12/2016.
11. Mid Ulster District Council: Parks & Recreation Development Plan 06/02/2017.
12. NI Assist: Digital Survey 21/02/2017.
13. NICVA: Funding Watch Survey 21/02/2017.
14. SENI: Membership Impact Survey 14/03/2017.
15. DAERA: RCDSS & TRPSI Programme 10/04/2017.



COSTA Project Partnerships & Representation 2016 / 2017

- Mid Ulster Rural Partnership Local Action Group (Member).
- Rural Network Northern Ireland (Member).
- Mid Ulster District Community Plan: Voluntary Community Sector Panel.
- Mid Ulster District Community Plan: Education & Skills Thematic Group.
- Mid Ulster LAPN – Local Anti-Poverty Network.
- Mid Ulster Seniors Network (MUSN).
- Community Sector Training - Management Group.
- Rural & Urban Community Networks Forum.
- DAERA Departmental Monitoring Group.
- Joint Voluntary Community Sector Forum Panel.
- Game Changer Project Management Team.
- Agewell Mid-Ulster Partnership.
- Mid Ulster District Peace IV Partnership.
- CYPSP - Children & Young People Strategic Partnership Locality Groups: Dungannon & Clogher Valley.
- Community Development & Professional Standards Training Steering Group (SHSCT).
- RCDSS / Local Rural Support Networks Officers Forum.
- ISO 9001:2015 QMS Steering Group.



Mid Ulster District Community Plan

From 1 April 2015, the new Mid Ulster District Council assumed responsibility for Community Planning which is about the public, voluntary and community sector working together to design and deliver services which make a real difference to the lives of local people. Over 40 partners are working closely together on the plan and Mid Ulster now has a Community Plan which sets out a vision for our place as:

***“a welcoming place where our people are content, healthy and safe; educated and skilled;
where our economy is thriving;
our environment and heritage are sustained;
and where our public services excel”***

The Plan has identified 15 outcomes encompassed across 5 themes:

- **Economic Growth**
- **Infrastructure**
- **Education and Skills**
- **Health & Well-being**
- **Vibrant & Safe Communities.**



The proposed outcomes impact on all areas of life, from increasing access to affordable housing and caring for those who are most vulnerable, to creating vibrant towns and villages, safer communities and better skilled and qualified people.

COSTA is currently represented on the Community Panel and also the Education & Skills Thematic Working Group (and Infrastructure previously). Community Planning is still in its early days, but it appears that to date, excellent progress is being made regarding the prioritisation of targets and actioning the work set out in the Thematic Action Plans.

Mid Ulster District Peace IV Partnership

Mid Ulster District Council is currently preparing to implement the new Peace IV Programme across the district. A number of programmes will be delivered directly by the Council and there will also be 3 grant programmes open to community and voluntary organisations committed to developing cross community relations and engagement by working with communities and with people in the Mid Ulster District.

Grant programmes will be under three themes:



- **Children & Young People**
- **Building Positive Relations**
- **Shared Spaces & Services**

COSTA sits on the newly formed Mid Ulster District Peace IV Partnership and has also been elected as its Vice-Chair. COSTA, in partnership with CWSAN, will very shortly be commencing delivery of a significant Programme under the ‘Building Positive Relations’ Theme called ‘Targeted Rural Communities’. More details on this will follow very soon – contact COSTA for more details.

Good Community Relations Programme

Good relations across all parts of our community are an essential ingredient of building a prosperous, peaceful and safe society which is enriched by diversity and is welcoming to all. Together Building a United Community (TBUC) lies at the heart of what COSTA would like the local area to achieve as part of one connected population. We continue to work closely with MUD Council in delivering an annual programme to help address local issues across South Tyrone. COSTA provides support to local communities on an ongoing basis via training and practical actions to support **Equality, Human Rights and Diversity, Inclusion & Anti-Racism**.

COSTA will be delivering more support to local communities via our annual Good / Community Relations Programme which will be securing additional resources from Mid Ulster District Council for this year coming.



Mid Ulster Rural Development Partnership

The Mid Ulster Rural Development Partnership Local Action Group for is taking forward the delivery of Priority 6 funding under the 2014-2020 NI Rural Development Programme in partnership with MUD Council. Mid Ulster has a focus on supporting its rural communities and rural enterprise as 2/3 of the local population live in rural areas. A local Rural Development Strategy for Mid Ulster has been developed by the Partnership to address local need and develop the rural economy. This current Programme is funded under the NI Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 via the Department of Environment, Agriculture & Rural Affairs.

The COSTA Manager and a number of COSTA Board Members are Members of the Local Action Group for the District. COSTA is keeping the community fully up-to-date with rural development funding opportunities as they arise and assisting groups to access the current range of programmes on offer.

Joint Voluntary Community Sector Forum

In April 2017 COSTA was successfully nominated to the Joint Voluntary Community Sector Forum facilitated by NICVA. The forum meets with all the Department heads on a quarterly basis to lobby for the Sector.

COSTA 'Open Door Days'

Throughout the year **33 groups have accessed 5 'Open Door Days** held once every 6 weeks. The Open Door Days provide COSTA members and local groups with **access via one-to-one appointments to free and confidential support, advice and information** on topics such as:

- **Charity Registration;**
- **Charity Annual Returns;**
- **Funding application forms assistance;**
- **'Grant Tracker' Funding Searches;**
- **Good Governance Reviews and Support;**
- **Information & Signposting;**
- **Constitutions;**
- **Policies & Procedures;**
- **Good Practice Checklists;**
- **Action Plans.**

COSTA 'Charity Registration' & 'Charity Annual Returns Information' Workshops

Throughout the year COSTA, as a recognised support organisation, has engaged with **62 groups** to comply with the new Charity Commission NI legislation **via 6 Workshops and 5 'Open Doors Support Days'** held at President Grant's Homestead to provide direct information and support to those 'called forward' to register as Charities. **To date over 135 groups have been assisted to complete or submit their Charity Registrations and / or Annual Returns. In line with upcoming demand, COSTA is now rolling out a Charity Annual Returns Workshop and support service to give local groups the essential guidance, assistance and information on how to successfully complete their Annual Returns to the Charity Commission NI.**

DAERA Rural Micro Capital Grant Scheme (DRMCG)

The Rural Micro Capital Grant Scheme funded by DAERA provides grants of up to 85% of the total cost of a small project, up to a maximum grant limit of £1,500, and are designed to address local issues of:

- **Access Poverty**
- **Financial Poverty**
- **Social Isolation**

Phase 1 was piloted in May 2015, Phase 2 was launched in October 2015, and Phase 3 was launched on 5th September 2016. CWSAN and COSTA jointly deliver the DRMCG Grant Scheme throughout the Mid Ulster District Council area along with the other 9 Network regionally. There has been a huge uptake in the scheme from all manner of local groups wishing to carry out small capital projects which can fall under one or more 3 Key areas:

- **Modernisation (of premises / assets)**
- **Information Communication Technology**
- **Health & Wellbeing**

The Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Michelle McIlveen MLA has spoken in the NI Assembly about how pleased the Department is with the positive difference these small grants have made to groups, not only in capital value, but in confidence building.

Under Phase 3, this year 80 eligible projects in the MUDC area were funded and we hope that a further Phase (4) of DRMCG will open again soon.

ISO 9001:2015



Since May 2009 COSTA and the Rural Support Networks have all successfully, and very proudly, held the internationally recognised ISO 9001:2008 Quality Management Standard (QMS) for excellence.



In our quest to ensure that we are continuously evolving, adapting and improving all that we do - we updated our entire Quality Management System – to something more applicable and better suited to the Networks and the types of work and services we deliver. The new Standard carries a stronger emphasis on the management of risk and organisational sustainability which is particularly relevant to us all at present. **We are very proud to announce that as of 1st February 2017 we successfully attained the newly updated ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management Standard (Certificate No. FS 592437).**

Key Capacity Building Workshops & Interagency Events

COSTA & Age NI 'Just About Managing' Workshop



'Just about Managing' A workshop on Governance for Older People's Groups run by the Age NI 'Steps to Funding' Programme and COSTA focused on running a successful group and good governance. The event was attended by over 30 people and was held on Thursday 20th October 2016, 12:00noon – 2:30pm in the Smyth Hall, Ballygawley and starting with a free Lunch. Key topics covered included:

- **Basic understanding of Constitutions: what's in them & why**
- **Committees: Roles & Responsibilities, Meetings Agendas & Minutes**
- **Jargon Busting**



COSTA 'DAERA Farm Business Improvement Scheme' (FBIS) Information Session



COSTA held an Information Workshop for Farmers on the DAERA Farm Business Improvement Capital Scheme on Tuesday 22nd November 2016, 7:30pm - 9:30pm at President Grants Homestead. Bernie Donnelly hosted the very practical and informative session for local farmers which proved to be a major success as over 60 local Farmers totally packed out the entire U.S. Grants Premises with standing room only!

Policing & Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) & COSTA 'Info & Awareness Event for Older People'



Over 75 people packed into the Smyth Hall in Ballygawley on 31st March 2017, 10:00am – 1:00pm to view Information stands from 15 organisations. The Interagency Event consisted of an Opening Address by Cllr Frances Burton - Chair of PCSP and a range of talks by: PSNI Crime Prevention Officer – Home Security & Scams, Agewell - Handy Van Scheme, COSTA - RCDSS, 5 Steps to Health, Mid Ulster District Council – 'Bin-ovation' & Household Recycling, and was followed by a Finger Buffet Lunch and **Free Keep Warm Packs.**



BrExit

We envisage that BrExit will have a major impact on the entire region and the voluntary / community Sector. On 05/04/2017 COSTA attended the NICVA & RCN BrExit Briefing Event in which the **DAERA Departmental Monitoring Group** gave a presentation on how the Department and funding structures may be affected and how they expect to approach the impending negotiations. **COSTA will play a key role in supporting, assisting and informing the local community and groups during the BrExit process.**



COSTA Strategy for Sustainability



Over the past 2 years the Networks, like almost all organisations, have faced serious funding cuts of over 30%. To ensure we could meet this challenge, COSTA successfully implemented a major Restructuring Programme in 2016 and **COSTA hosted the LRSN Managers Strategy Residential in Corick House** on 4th and 5th May 2017.

COSTA believes that a local presence in the centre of the former Council area of Dungannon & South Tyrone is very important for our community particularly given the fact that this area alone stretches for early 40 miles. Despite a future that appears to remain new and quite uncertain – particularly now that we face into Brexit - we remain very positive and pro-active as the *Local Rural Support Network*.



COSTA Website & Social Media



Follow us on our Facebook Pages and newly Re-vamped and Enhanced Website:

Check out our website for the latest NEWS on all forthcoming Projects, Events, Training and Workshops.

All COSTA's Newsletters, Annual Reports and Leaflets can now be accessed on-line and downloaded as pdf documents.

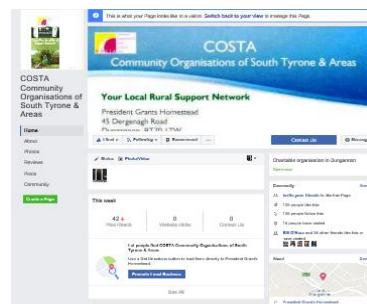
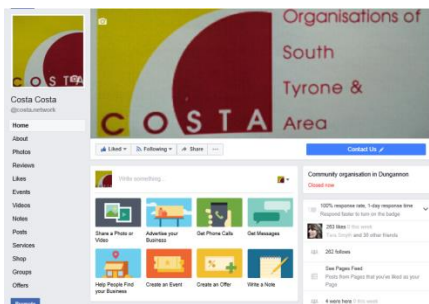
COSTA Website: www.costaruralsupportnetwork.org



COSTA: <https://www.facebook.com/costa.network>



COSTA Community Organisations of South Tyrone Areas <https://www.facebook.com/pages/COSTA-Community-Organisations-of-South-Tyrone-Areas/595993680543963>



MARA - Maximising Access in Rural Areas – The Legacy



Back in March 2012, DAERA and the Public Health Agency (PHA) introduced the MARA Project to all rural areas of Northern Ireland. Since then **COSTA delivered MARA home visits to nearly 2,500 households in the rural areas of Dungannon and Armagh in partnership with TADA Network.**

The project was co-ordinated by Project Officer Clare Davidson and COSTA Enablers: Gillian Steenson and Karen Dougan who carried out home visits during the last 2 years of the programme.

The overall aim of the project was to improve the health and wellbeing of people living in rural deprived areas by making them aware of, or helping them access local services, grants or benefits, thus supporting those rural dwellers living in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion.



What MARA Achieved Locally & Regionally

Regional Targets were set for the number of referrals for services, grants and benefits with all these being successfully exceeded.

In total, over 15,000 homes were visited by Enablers across all rural areas of Northern Ireland between May 2012 and September 2016. The overall profile for clients included in MARA was as follows: 40% of clients were male and 60% female. The gender breakdown was roughly equivalent across zones. Clients were aged 64 years on average (ranging from 18 to 102 years). Over half (55%) of all clients were 65 years or more. Over half of all clients (57.9%) were retired, less than one fifth (19%) were in employment (full or part time or self-employed) and the majority, 81.7% lived in households that did not have children under 18 years.

MARA achieved all its targets and yielded great success, particularly for older rural people - for every £1 invested MARA yielded £6 for clients. Forecasting over 5 years this increases to a value to clients of £15.52 for every £1 invested. MARA's holistic multiagency helped deliver government in a 'joined up' way and its local community development approach identified and accessed those who were most isolated and most in need.

The MARA Project undoubtedly proved to be a fantastic service for local rural communities and it is most unfortunate that *from 30th September 2016 it closed.*

MARA – The Legacy



However, MARA has paved the way for a legacy of new schemes which are now available and led via the new District Councils in partnership with other public agencies such as the Health Trusts and NI Housing Executive.

Locally, Mid Ulster District Council has recently commenced the following programmes: Mid Ulster 'Make a Change' Project, Mid Ulster 'Home Safety Scheme', Mid Ulster 'Affordable Warmth Scheme', Mid Ulster 'Energy Efficiency Advisory Service' (For further info Contact Mid Ulster Council Tel: 03000 132 132.



**Clare Davidson
MARA Project Officer
September 2016**

COSTA delivers the
**Rural Community Development
Support Service (RCDSS)**

**In the former Dungannon & South Tyrone area of
Mid Ulster District Council**

(sub-contracted under CWSAN as part of the
9 providers of the Rural CDSS) - funded by the

**Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs (DAERA)
Tackling Rural Poverty & Social Isolation Programme (TRPSI).**



Comhairle Ceantair
Lár Uladh
Mid Ulster
District Council

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