

# COSTA Annual Report

## Costa Your Local Rural Support Network

Supporting Rural Communities in the  
Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council Area



# 2018 / 2019

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Community  
Organisations of  
South  
Tyrone &  
Area



## Community Organisations of South Tyrone & Areas Ltd

President Grant's Homestead  
45 Dergenagh Road, Dungannon, Co Tyrone, BT70 1TW

**T: 028 855 56880      F: 028 855 56881**

**E: [info.costa@btconnect.com](mailto:info.costa@btconnect.com)      W: [www.costaruralsupportnetwork.org](http://www.costaruralsupportnetwork.org)**



### COSTA is funded by

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

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 2019 AGM!**

I take great pleasure in presenting this year's Annual Report which showcases the level and diversity of our work both for and in the local community.

Unfortunately, the Voluntary Community Sector continues to endure a difficult and totally uncertain year as political environments change constantly due to several recent elections and the on-going Brexit saga. Adding to the region's difficulties remains the fact that the ongoing stale-mate at Stormont is continuing to have a ripple effect on all aspects of our public services and wider community. As Brexit rumbles on, we hope for the best possible outcome for our region and positive future relations with the European Union regardless of what deal is, or is not done, and who may be in government.

COSTA continues providing for the local community via our single staff member Development Manager Loraine Griffin. April 1<sup>st</sup> 2019 saw the continuation of the current tender from DAERA to deliver a Local Rural Community Development Support Service across Mid Ulster. I express sincere thanks on behalf of the COSTA Board to both Loraine, and also Conor Corr of CWSAN, for successfully delivering this contract to date. Therefore, delivery of the Local Rural Community Development Support Service (LRCDSS) throughout the Dungannon and South Tyrone area continues positively; sub-contracted under CWSAN (Cookstown & Western Shores Area Network) as part of 7 regional providers. Our partnership with CWSAN - covering Cookstown and Magherafelt - continues on strongly and we look forward to many more years of joint working across the District.

COSTA would like to acknowledge and thank our keystone funder the Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs (DEARA), which makes the Network possible, and for their role in ensuring continuation of the Tackling Rural Poverty & Social Inclusion (TRPSI) Scheme and the Rural Micro Capital Grant Scheme which has funded groups throughout the Mid Ulster District and the region for 5 years now.

I pay a very fond tribute to one of our Founding Directors and Members Elizabeth Salter who sadly lost her long battle with illness on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2019. Liz had served on the COSTA Board since the organisation first started back in 2000, and also prior to that on the Network's Steering Committee to help establish a new Rural Support Network for the area. Liz also held various office-bearing roles on our Board for many years including Chairperson from 2010 to 2014, and remained on our Board right up to the end. There is no doubt that Liz will be greatly missed by all and we pass on our sincere sympathy to all of Liz's family and friends.

I would like to also take this opportunity to give a note of thanks to all fellow Board members: Trevor Lockhart, Heather McLaughlin, Anthony



McGonnell, Raymond Harrison, John Burrell, Wilfred Mitchell, David McFarlane, Rosina O'Neill and Carmen Hamill. To Mid Ulster District Council, and especially, the Councillors who sit as Advisors on our Board: Frances Burton, Sharon McAleer, Dominic Molloy, Joe O'Neill and Philip Clarke MUDC Community Development Manager - I would like to pass on COSTA's gratitude.

This year Cllr Robert Mulligan will retire as a Council representative and we thank Robert sincerely for his huge contribution over many years at COSTA.

We also now welcome the newly elected Councillor in Clogher Valley, Meta Graham who joins our team of Advisory Board Members.

There have been many extremely positive developments for COSTA this year as we continued to serve on the Peace IV Partnership, Mid Ulster Community Planning and the Joint Voluntary Community Sector Forum Panel. In conjunction with CWSAN, both Networks continued to employ Jennifer Hamilton and now also Fergal O'Donnell on an Engaging Rural Communities (ERC) Programme funded under Mid Ulster's Peace IV Programme. We wish Jennifer and Fergal continued success.

It is hoped that despite our ongoing challenging environment, COSTA can remain here for the local community many more years to come. I wish you, your communities, groups and villages all the very best for the future.

**Richard Knox**

**COSTA Chairperson**



## Network Development Manager's Report



Welcome everyone and it is fabulous to be in Caledon this year!

Despite further cuts and challenging conditions, the 2018/19 year has seen the very successful completion of the 1<sup>st</sup> year of the new DAERA-funded Local Rural Community Development Support Service (LRCDSS) for Mid Ulster.

The Network has delivered 16 Workshops to 170 participants and over 282 supports to the local community. We work with around 50 different agencies throughout the region on a wide range of initiatives. We have actively engaged with over 100 local groups and communities face-to-face and our key activities can be viewed on pages 9 - 19 of this Report.

One of the highlights this year was when COSTA made a Presentation to the full Joint Voluntary Community Sector Forum on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> June 2019 on "A Day in the Life of a Community Worker". This was a great opportunity to showcase COSTA, the Rural Support Networks and the wider TRPSI Programme as well as the highs and lows of being a Community Development Worker based in a rural setting during the on-going Brexit process.

We have already seen the successful delivery of 5 Phases of the DAERA Rural Micro Capital Grant Scheme with our partners CWSAN. This year in total around 120 grants were awarded right across the Mid Ulster area under the 2018 Phase. We are now hoping that a further (6<sup>th</sup>) phase may open in September 2019 and we will keep you all posted and up-to-date on all developments.

Thank you also to Mid Ulster District Council for their continued funding and 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 and have helped ensure that the Homestead is now a 3 Star Historic Attraction. Councillors: Burton, Mulligan, McAleer, Molloy and O'Neill provide constant valuable support, guidance and wisdom.

As ever, I extend my sincere thanks to the entire COSTA Board who volunteer their time and expertise to the Network throughout the year – Thank you to all the Board and still I don't know how Richard, our Chairperson, gets any time for farming!

On a much more sombre note, it was very sad for us to lose long serving Director Liz Salter just a few weeks ago. Liz was on the panel to interview me for this job nearly 20 years ago, and was a very dedicated and hardworking member of COSTA and undoubtedly the lynchpin for the Aughnacloy area based at McCreedy Mill. The last time I saw Liz was in her home in November past. Liz was in high and fighting spirits very much that day and was, as ever, buzzing full of ideas and suggestions for her home village of Aughnacloy. Liz truly loved Aughnacloy and her work in the community will be very deeply missed by all.

Thank you to our guest speakers, hosts and caterers as this year our AGM is held in Caledon for the first time. Caledon is an absolutely excellent example of Village Renewal and Regeneration. Caledon Regeneration Partnership has worked for decades in rejuvenation and developing the rich

historical heritage of the village and area. Over the past few months I have been privileged to also work with Caledon in Bloom to help this new group realise their vision for this beautiful Georgian village. I congratulate all the groups and individuals in the area who have done so much for Caledon.

I take great pleasure in going out to our surrounding rural areas and I strongly encourage groups to take advantage of the fact that we have a Rural Outreach Service and we aim to visit all member groups. Please do give us a call at any time as I would be delighted to visit. Local groups should also take advantage of the Engaging Rural Communities Programme and various grant opportunities which are now running.

Unfortunately, the total uncertainty continues, as the only certainty. What lies beyond the next year is hard to say as we could face unknown change in our economic and political environments. We hope to have a Minister and a Stormont government back in place soon, and also hope to see suitable arrangements in-place post-Brexit.

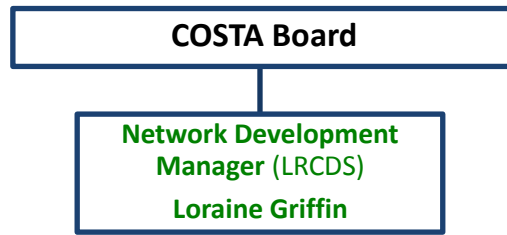
We continue as **YOUR Local Support Network** for the Dungannon and South Tyrone area :)

**Loraine Griffin**

**Network Development Manager**



## COSTA Staff



## COSTA Board of Directors

Richard Knox	<b>Chairperson</b>	Heather Nixon-McLaughlin
Elizabeth Salter	<b>Vice Chairperson Deceased 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2019</b>	Raymond Harrison
Trevor Lockhart	<b>Secretary &amp; Company Secretary</b>	Carmen Hamill
John Burrell	<b>Treasurer</b>	Rosina O’Neill
Anthony McGonnell		David McFarlane
Wilfred Mitchell OBE		

## Associate Board Members

Cllr Robert Mulligan <i>(to 20/5/2019)</i>	Cllr Frances Burton	Cllr Sharon McAleer
Cllr Dominic Molloy	Cllr Joe O’Neill	Cllr Meta Graham <i>(from 20/5/2019)</i>

## 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 7 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](http://www.localruralsupportnetworks.org) for further information.



View the Local Rural Support

Networks RCDSS Video at:

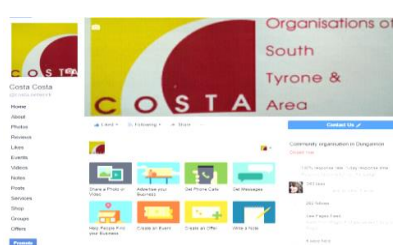
<https://youtu.be/loUG-6T3tII>

## COSTA Online

Follow us on our Facebook Pages 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](http://www.costaruralsupportnetwork.org)



# Local Rural Community Development Support Service (LRCDS)



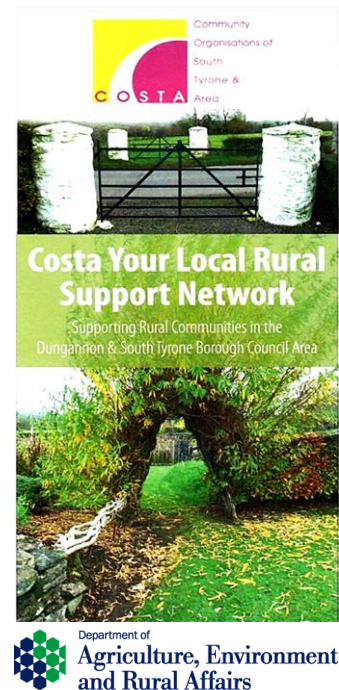
Community Organisations of South Tyrone & Areas (COSTA) in conjunction with Cookstown and Western Shores Area Network (CWSAN) have continued to work in close partnership. With over 7 years now already completed, we strive towards the start of our 8th year, from April 2019, delivering a newly updated 'Local Rural Community Development Service' for the Mid Ulster area covering the Dungannon and South Tyrone area (COSTA) and the Cookstown & Magherafelt areas (CWSAN).

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

- 1. Support for Community Planning;**
- 2. Support for Isolated Rural People;**
- 3. Support the Sustainability of Rural Villages;**
- 4. DAERA Rural Micro Capital Grant Scheme 2018**

The LRCDS 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 & 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 Local Rural Community Development 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 new DAERA Local Rural Community Development Support Service has been awarded in 8 geographical catchments (Lots) to 6 providers plus COSTA. This ensures a Northern Ireland-wide service for rural communities which are largely defined as ‘people living in communities or settlements of less than 4,000 people’.

DAERA has a key role in the delivery of the cross-departmental outcomes and a particular emphasis on overarching outcomes: **We live and work sustainably – protecting the environment.** Of particular importance to DAERA and the Networks are Outcomes 2 and 3, Outcome 2 – A clean, healthy environment, benefitting nature and the economy. The LRDCSS is a key part of delivering on **Outcome 3 – A thriving rural economy, contributing to prosperity and well-being.**

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

### 1. Support for Community Planning:

- 10 Newsletters, 485 Email-outs to 450 Groups.
- 58 Website updates, 359 Face Book updates to 450 Groups.
- 92 LRDCSS groups / 282 actions / supports to groups.
- 50 Good Practice Checklists (Community Planning).
- 3 Meetings with MUDC Community Planning Officer.
- 1 Meeting: MUDC Community Planning Voluntary / Community Sector Panel.
- 3 Meetings: MUDC Community Planning Education & Skills Thematic Working Group.
- 16 Community Planning Feedbacks / Opportunities / Linkages / Actions.
- 1 COSTA Community Planning Feedback Session: 4/9/2018.
- 1 COSTA Report to MUDC Community Planning Co-ordinator: 28/9/2018.
- 1 MUDC Community Sector Community Planning Convention: 22/10/2018.



### 2. Support for Isolated Rural People:

- 50 Good Practice Checklists (Tackling Rural Poverty & Social Isolation).
- 29 Follow-ups to Groups.
- 36 Groups supported / mentored on Capacity Building.



- **27 Groups supported** / mentored on Governance.
- **101 New Database Entries** / Updates.
- **46 Interagency Engagements** Tackling Rural Poverty & Social Isolation (TRPSI) Promotions / Signpostings / Referrals: ARTS, CDM Community / Rural transport, RYE Connect, Rural Support, SUSE+ / DEL / Skills / FarmSAFE, Libraries NI, Farm Family Health Checks.
- **46 Regional Links & Engagements** (NIVCA, RCD, RNNI, RCN, CYPSP, National Lottery Community Fund etc).
- **11 Workshops:**
- **1 CCNI & NICVA 'Good Governance & Charity Regulation' Workshop:** 20/6/2018 (15 attendees).
- **1 'NIRDP & Funding Readiness' Workshop:** 28/6/2018 (15 attendees).
- **1 'Reporting Adult Safeguarding Concerns to the CCNI'** 6/12/2018 (25 attendees).
- **2 'Good Governance & Committee Skills' Workshops** 1/3/2019 (7 attendees), 19/3/2019 (6 attendees).
- **8 COSTA 'Open Door Support Days':** (31 Groups / 33 attendees).
- **182 COSTA Member Groups.**

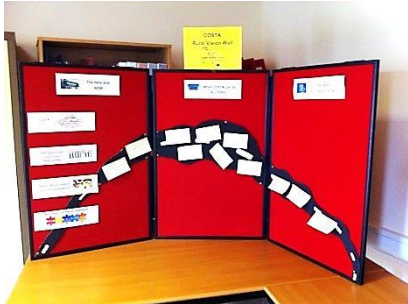
### 3. Support for the Sustainability of Rural Villages

- **7 MURDP Local Action Group Applicants contacted and supported for Basic Services.**
- **7 MURDP Local Action Group Applicants supported Basic Services Match Funding.**
- **2 Applicants Mentored on NIRDP Programme Compliance.**
- **2 Site Visits to NIRDP Basic Services Projects.**
- 12 Villages identified for Support in Dungannon area of MUD Council.
- 1 Meeting with MUDC Village Planning Officer.
- **4 Villages Supported.**
- **4 Village Plans Reviewed.**
- **4 Village Hubs / Shared Resources Plans.**
- **27 Village Plan Meetings.**
- **27 Village Plan actions / supports / follow-ups.**
- **1 Regional Village Planning Exposure & Learning Visit in TADA Network area:** 21/11/2018 (5 COSTA representatives attended).
- **Circa 120 Groups funded under DAERA Micro Capital Grants (DRMCG) Scheme 2018 (Phase 5).**
- **In the region of £100,000 to groups right across Mid Ulster via DRMCG Scheme alone.**
- 15 Groups supported to submit DAERA 'Rural Micro Capital Grant Scheme' Applications.
- 11 DAERA 'Rural Micro Capital Grant Scheme' Pre-Claims Checks.



- 28 DAERA 'Rural Micro Capital Grant Scheme' Applications received at COSTA Office.
- **3 DAERA 'Rural Micro Capital Grant Scheme' Workshops:**
- **1 DAERA Rural Micro Capital Grant Scheme 'Pre-Application Workshop' 11/9/2018.** (21 attendees).
- **2 DAERA Rural Micro Capital Grant Scheme 'Letter of Offer Workshops' 17/11/2018** (24 attendees), 4/12/2018 (23 attendees).

#### 4. Governance & Sustainability



- 1 Programme of Evaluation in place for Regional LRCDDSS.
- 4 LRCDDSS Monitoring Reports.
- 1 Meeting with DAERA re LRCDDSS.
- 6 CWSAN / COSTA LRCDDSS Meetings.
- 8 LRCDDSS Contract Meeting with Rural Support Networks.
- 4 Audit Certificates.
- 1 Company House Annual Return: 26/03/2019.
- 1 Charity Commission NI Annual Return: 9/4/2018.
- 6 COSTA Board Meetings.
- 1 Annual General Meeting: 28/06/2018.
- **1 Board Workshop: 'TRPSI, LRCDDSS & Community Planning Update' 11/12/2018 (13 attendees).**
- 4 LRCDDSS / DAERA Financial Visits & Monitoring Visits.
- **Joint Voluntary Community Sector Forum: 8 Meetings.**
- **1 Presentation to JVCS Forum: A Day in the Life of a Community Development Worker": 6/6/2019.**
- **1 Joint MUDC-wide Programme with CWSAN (2 staff) Peace IV Engaging Rural Communities Programme.**
- **1 staff member recruited Peace IV Engaging Rural Communities Programme (Extended).**

**COSTA will be on-hand as ever to meet the needs of our membership and local groups – call us!**



## Feedback from Local Beneficiaries

*"It is a great help"*

*"Information on slides very useful"*

*"Excellent work"*

*"Very useful"*

*"Very relevant and informative"*

*"Very informative and easy to follow"*

*"All was great"*

*"Detailed, professionally and extremely informative"*

*"Thanks so much for such a positive event"*

*"Everything was excellent"*

*"Invaluable"*

*"Well organised"*

*"Everyone seemed to be very well informed"*

*"Everything was well presented and very good handouts"*

*"A good refresher"*

*"Found it interesting"*

*"A very worthwhile exercise"*

*"Relevant information, well presented"*

*"The Workshop was excellent in delivery, content and overall relevance to one's roles as Committee | Director Members"*

## COSTA Project Partnerships & Representation 2018 / 2019

- Mid Ulster District Peace IV Partnership.
- Mid Ulster District Community Plan: Voluntary Community Sector Panel Member.
- Mid Ulster District Community Plan: Education & Skills Thematic Working 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.
- Rural Network Northern Ireland (Member).
- Joint Voluntary Community Sector Forum Panel.
- Game Changer Project Management Team.
- Agewell Mid-Ulster Partnership.
- CYPSP - Children & Young People Strategic Partnership Locality Group: Dungannon & Clogher Valley.
- RCDSS / Local Rural Support Networks Officers Forum.
- ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management Status Steering Group.
- MUD Peace IV Engaging Rural Communities.

### Highlights of the Year

#### **‘Good Governance & Charity Regulation’ Roadshow**



15 people attended a Good Governance Roadshow Workshop hosted by COSTA, the Charity Commission NI and Volunteer Now on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2018 in the Killymaddy Centre. Participants were updated on the latest news and requirements from the Charity Commission and NICVA and Volunteer Now highlighted the newly re-revamped DIY Committee Guide Website which provides a wealth of resources free of charge to the sector:

<https://www.diycommitteeguide.org>



#### **‘NIRDP & Funding Readiness’ Workshop**

COSTA delivered a Workshop designed to prepare applicants and potential applicants to the Mid Ulster Rural Development Partnership Local Action Group funding for Basic Services on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2018. The 15 attendees were briefed on being ‘Funding Ready’ to apply to Rural Development Funds and to be ‘Programme and Letter of Offer Compliant’.

#### **‘Reporting Adult Safeguarding Concerns to the CCNI’ Workshop**

Over 25 attendees benefitted from a detailed presentation provided by the Charity Commission NI on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2018 in the SHC Trust Promoting Wellbeing Training Room in Armagh. The Workshop was organised by the Southern Local Adult Safeguarding Partnership (LASP) in association with CCNI, Community Sector Training, ABC Community Network and **COSTA & TADA Rural Support Networks** to ensure local voluntary community sector organisations were aware of their heightened responsibilities under Charity Annual Reporting and Serious Incident Reporting Requirements. COSTA provided a presentation on the Rural Support networks and Support Organisations for the Sector which are based in the Southern Health area.

## ‘Learning & Exposure’ Visit

This year TADA Network hosted all the Rural Support Networks on a Study Visit in Armagh on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2018 which was attended by 50 representatives from right across the region. COSTA had 5 community representatives from a wide range of grass roots community organisations to view 4 different projects in Armagh.

1. **11.00 Introduction at Markethill Courthouse: Coffee break & short history of the 3 sites.**
2. **11.30 Visit 1: Red Rock Orange Lodge. The group recently made another successful bid to the RDP. Mervyn Duggan OBE gave an overview as to why they have been successful.**
3. **12.15 Visit 2: Ballygorman School House. A very modest building in a rural area which also has been successful with the last RDP. The hall is in use almost every day and makes a small profit for its activities.**
4. **1.15 Back to the Courthouse for Lunch. The Courthouse is a social enterprise managed by a Board of directors. The Chairman William Johnston MBE addressed attendees.**



## ‘Good Governance & Committee Skills’ Workshops

2 Organisations to date, Willowbank (1<sup>st</sup> March 2019, 7 attendees), and JMC Counselling & Training (19<sup>th</sup> March 2019, 6 attendees) benefitted from COSTA’s newly revamped Workshops which are delivered and tailored to meet the unique needs of each voluntary / community organisation. To date, feedback from all participants has been extremely positive with groups finding the information provided totally invaluable and very relevant to their roles as voluntary Management Committee Members.

COSTA has now also totally revised the “**Limited Company & Directors Skills**” Workshop which is available for groups to request.

## ‘TRPSI, LRCOSS & Community Planning’ Workshop & Site Visit to Parkanaur Manor House



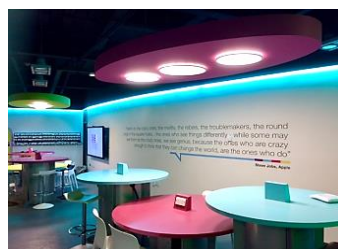
A workshop to update on the **Tackling Rural Poverty & Social Isolation Programme, the Local Rural Community Development Support Service and Community Planning** was held on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2018 in Parkanaur Manor House. All 13 Attendees were also treated to a **Historical Talk and Guided Tour of Parkanaur Manor House** and a fabulous Christmas Lunch in the very plush surroundings.



## Education & Skills Thematic Working Group Study Visits



**COSTA sits on the Education and Skills Thematic Working Group of the Mid Ulster District Community Plan.** Over the past year Study Visits have taken place in various locations where meetings have been held for example: Loughry College and the **Dungannon Campus of South West Collage on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2018.**



## Brexit

We still envisage that Brexit will have a major impact on the entire region, Farmers, local rural and border communities and the voluntary / community Sector. **COSTA will continue to play a key role in supporting, assisting and informing the local community and groups during the Brexit process which is important for this border area.**

## Local Rural CD Support Service via COSTA Local Rural Support Network



Over the past 3 years the Networks, like almost all organisations, have faced serious funding cuts of over 30%. **COSTA believes 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 the former Dungannon Borough area alone stretches for nearly 40 miles. Despite a future that appears to remain new and quite uncertain – particularly now that we, after 3 years, still continue to face into Brexit - we remain very positive and pro-active as *the Local Rural Support Network.***



## 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. The Joint Forum is comprised of representatives from across government and the voluntary and community sector. It facilitates an open discussion about the relationship between these two sectors. Members of the panel are from the following organisations:

**COSTA**  
**Rural Community Network**  
**Evangelical Alliance**  
**NI Environmental Link**  
**Volunteer Now**  
**Womens Resource and Development Agency**  
**Sandy Row Community Forum**  
**East Belfast Community Development Agency**  
**Diabetes UK**  
**Carers NI**  
**NI Youth Forum**  
**Start 360**  
**Voluntary Arts Ireland**  
**Children in NI**



The Voluntary and Community panel meets with the membership from government departments three times per year as the Joint Forum to facilitate regular dialogue between the voluntary and community sector and government, and to support effective collaboration between the two.

**As a key rural representative from west of the Bann, COSTA has attended 8 meetings this year to date** and the important issues currently being tackled by the Forum include: identifying strategic and work actions ahead, Welfare Reform, Suicide, Drugs and Health issues, Funding issues for the Sector including the Department of Finance's proposed cuts to the Rural Affairs budget and refreshing 'The Compact' between Government and the Third Sector.

**COSTA was very privileged to deliver a presentation to the full Joint Forum on "A Day in the Life of a Community Worker" on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2019 at Colin Glen Healthy Living Centre in Belfast.**

## **COSTA ‘Open Door Days’**

Throughout the year **33 people / 31 groups have accessed 8 ‘Open Door Days** held once every 2 months. 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 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 groups to comply with the new Charity Commission NI legislation via one-to-one supports held at President Grant’s Homestead to provide direct information and support to those ‘called forward’ to register as Charities.

**To date over 175 groups have been assisted to complete or submit their Charity Registrations and / or Annual Returns. In line with upcoming demand, COSTA is continuing to offer free essential guidance, information and practical assistance to successfully complete Charity Registrations and Annual Returns to the Charity Commission NI.**

## **DAERA Rural Micro Capital Grant Scheme 2018 (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 first piloted in May 2015, since then Phases 2, 3, 4 and now the 2018 Phase (5) was launched in September 2018. CWSAN and COSTA jointly deliver the DRMC Grant Scheme throughout the Mid Ulster District Council area along with the other 7 Networks 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 previous 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 the 2018 Phase (5), around 120 eligible projects in the MUDC area were funded and we hope that a further Phase (6) of DRMCG will open again soon.**

## Mid Ulster District Community Plan

From 1 April 2015, 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:



Comhairle Ceantair  
**Lár Uladh**  
**Mid Ulster**  
District Council

*“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 & 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 Voluntary Community Sector Panel and the Education & Skills Thematic Working Group. Work is very actively progressing and there is excellent progress towards addressing the work set out in the Thematic Action Plans. We will be in contact with almost all groups in the area from 2018 onwards to keep local communities involved and fully up-to-date.**

## Mid Ulster District Peace IV Partnership

Mid Ulster District Council is now actively delivering their **Peace IV Action Plan** to implement the new Peace IV Programme across the district. A number of programmes are now being delivered directly by the Council and other key strategic voluntary / community organisations located within the area including CWSAN and COSTA. **COSTA currently sits on the Mid Ulster District Peace IV Partnership as a Voluntary Community Sector Partner and as Partnership Vice-Chairperson.**

Over the past 12 months, Mid Ulster District Council has announced £2.8m worth of funding under the European Union’s PEACE IV Programme. The funding will be used to support a number of locally-based projects and initiatives that will promote positive relations between people from different communities and backgrounds.

The Grant Programmes, also like the Peace IV Action Plan, are being delivered under three key themes:

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



Comhairle Ceantair  
**Lár Uladh**  
**Mid Ulster**  
District Council

Mid Ulster’s PEACE IV Project is supported by the European Union’s PEACE IV Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB).

## Peace IV Project – Engaging Rural Communities Programme (ERC)



COSTA, in partnership with CWSAN, are delivering a significant 'Engaging Rural Communities' Programme under 'Building Positive Relations' aimed at 'Targeted Rural Communities'.

Launched on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2018, this project is supported by the European Union's PEACE IV Programme which is managed by the Special EU programmes Body (SEUPB) in partnership with Mid Ulster District Council.

Community groups within the Mid Ulster District Council are being invited to contact the **Community Engagement Officer Jennifer Hamilton** and a newly appointed Project Officer, **Fergal O'Donnell** for potential inclusion in this project.

The project has been designed for those groups at early stages of development who are interested in growing their capacities to undertake cross community activities and shared projects in the same area, a neighbouring area or with a group of similar interest. A small grant will be available for up to 20 groups across mid Ulster rural areas to work on a partnership project.

The Rural Communities Programme will be run over a period of 2 ½ years and will take groups through 4 phases of development, providing training sessions, facilitation and mentoring throughout. A range of training is available on offer and training can be designed specifically to the needs of community groups. **Within this PEACE IV initiative there is a grant available to those groups to come on to the programme.**

Both Jennifer and Fergal have a wide range of experience in single identity and cross community work, working with a wide range of groups and funding bodies. **Jennifer and Fergal can be contacted in the Crieve Centre, Stewartstown on 028 877 38845 or via email at [jennifer@cwsan.org](mailto:jennifer@cwsan.org)**



## Mid Ulster Rural Development Partnership

At local level funding is being used to encourage the economic development of rural Mid Ulster and will be delivered across a range of schemes: **Rural Business Investment, Rural Services, Village Renewal, Rural Broadband and Co-operation.**

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 – call us at any time.

For further information on MURDP LAG contact: Eamon Gallogly - Programme Manager, Mid Ulster District Council Tel: 028 867 64714, Email: [rdp@midulstercouncil.org](mailto:rdp@midulstercouncil.org)

COSTA delivers the  
**Local Rural Community Development  
Support Service (LRCDSS)**

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

(sub-contracted under CWSAN as part of the  
7 providers of the Local Rural CDSS) - funded by the  
**Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs (DAERA)**  
**Tackling Rural Poverty & Social Isolation Programme (TRPSI).**



COSTA is funded by  
**Department of Agriculture, Environment & Affairs (DAERA)**  
**Mid Ulster District Council**  
The European Union's PEACE IV Programme managed by the  
Special EU programmes Body (SEUPB) in partnership with  
**Mid Ulster District Council.**



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**Contact COSTA:**  
**President Grant's Homestead, 45 Dergenagh Road, Dungannon, Co. Tyrone**  
**BT70 1TW**  
**Tel: 028 855 56880      Fax: 028 855 56881      Email: [info.costa@btconnect.com](mailto:info.costa@btconnect.com)**  
**Web: [www.costaruralsupportnetwork.org](http://www.costaruralsupportnetwork.org)**