

C.O.S.T.A.
Community Organisations of South Tyrone & Areas Ltd
Minutes of

25th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held on Wednesday 25th June 2025

7:30pm – 8:30pm

At Corick House

Clogher, Co. Tyrone

Present:

Richard Knox	Killeeshill & Clonaneese Historical Society (COSTA)
Heather Nixon-McLaughlin	The Rural Centre Clogher (COSTA)
Prof Wilfred Mitchell OBE	Parkanaur Manor House (COSTA)
Trevor Lockhart	Bawn Development Association (COSTA)
Lisa McFarland	Kilnaslee Community Development Group (COSTA)
Katrina McCaughey	Clogher Community Village Forum (COSTA)
Anne Lockhart	Bawn Ladies Group
Eileen Quinn	Killeeshill & Clonaneese Historical Society
Marie Quinn	Killeeshill & Clonaneese Historical Society
Pete Murray	Tamnamore Community Development Association
Cllr Frances Burton	Mid Ulster District Council (Guest Speaker)
Cllr Eugene McConnell	Mid Ulster District Council (COSTA)
Cllr Gael Gildernew	Mid Ulster District Council (COSTA)
Seamus Donnelly	CWSAN / MMC / Test & Learn Projects
Marion Dudley	Aghaloo Development Association
Myrtle Law	Mountforrest Cultural Development Association
William Law	Mountforrest Cultural Development Association
Richard Mulligan	Clogher Old Market Yard House
Loraine Griffin	COSTA Manager

1. Welcome & Chairperson's Address

The COSTA Chairperson, Richard Knox, opened the meeting, thanked and welcomed everyone in attendance. Richard added his thanks to all the local political representatives present and thanked them for their continued and strong support of COSTA and the Rural Support Networks.

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

You are all very welcome to Corick House nestled within the green and leafy drumlins of the Clogher Valley. We are delighted to be hosted here tonight and it is so hard to believe that COSTA has now been going for 25 years!

We are delighted that Cllr Frances Burton – Chairperson of Mid Ulster District Council - is joining us as Guest Speaker tonight. Indeed, Cllr Burton has been a very highly valued MUDC representative on the COSTA Board for many years and we are very grateful for all that she has contributed. We wish Frances all the very best for what will be a very busy year ahead.

We hope that tonight will be highly informative for all but also enjoyable and ideal for some informal networking and celebration.

It would be no exaggeration to say that COSTA has had a massive presence in Clogher and indeed all the surrounding villages in Clogher Valley for well over the past year. This has been part of a major Pilot Project to Test & Learn collaborative ways of working between the Statutory and voluntary, community sectors. To date, all 10 of the rural villages in the Clogher Valley DEA - District Electoral Ward have been engaged in a

process of networking communities and refreshing Village Plans with the aim of ultimately improving the local physical and community infrastructure of their respective areas. The very first villages of Aughnacloy and Clogher are well on their way to attracting in tens of thousands of pounds annually and are already delivering ambitious projects to improve their communities. Clogher even aims to gain City status no less!

There is no doubt that this major joint programme by CWSAN and COSTA Rural Support Networks will reap rewards for all communities taking part. As we say, "the squeaky wheel gets the oil". Loraine Griffin (COSTA Manager) and Seamus Donnelly (CWSAN & MMC Officer) have been out on-the-ground night after night over the past year to help local communities to get around the table, squeak very loudly, and become more 'spade-ready' to take on local projects to make their villages and communities even better places to live and work in.

We thank the Department for Communities, The Executive office and DAERA for their financial and practical support in making this all possible and indeed we are honoured that the Clogher DEA was chosen as the very first rural pilot area.

On top of this exciting development, CWSAN and COSTA have joined forces yet again on another project: 'Access to Resilience - Rural Mid-Ulster' which is funded under the Dormant Assets NI Fund and the National Lottery Community Fund. A part-time Worker will be appointed to support 6 communities (one in each Electoral DEA) right throughout the Mid Ulster area.

COSTA most definitely thanks and acknowledges the Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs (DEARA) our Keystone Funder for almost all of our 25 year history. DAERA's support makes the Network and provision of staff possible for the Rural Community Development Support Service (RCDSS), as a key part of the Tackling Rural Poverty & Social Isolation (TRPSI) Scheme.

DAERA also funds the Rural Micro Capital Grant Scheme (DRMCGS) which has provided much-needed micro capital support to groups throughout Mid Ulster District and the entire region for over 10 years now. I give a note of sincere thanks to all my fellow Board members, and of course to Mid Ulster District Council for their many years of funding and dedicated support.

COSTA continues providing for the local community via our staff member, Development Manager, Loraine Griffin. Along with Conor Corr, Seamus Donnelly and Marguerite Quinn of CWSAN, a further year of the DAERA Rural Community Development Support Service plus a further 2 Tranches of the Rural Micro Capital Grant Scheme have been very successfully delivered throughout Mid Ulster District as part of 7 regional providers.

Our close partnership with CWSAN – who cover the Cookstown and Magherafelt areas - continues on stronger than ever. We look forward to many more years of joint working on several Programmes across Mid Ulster District and from our Office at President Grant's Homestead.

I present our Annual Report which showcases the level and diversity of our work both, for and in, the local community and I hope you take time to have a look through it.

I wish you, your communities, groups and villages all the very best going forward. COSTA is here to support you all.

Richard finished by wishing Loraine well on her forthcoming Orthopaedic surgery coming up in September!

2. Apologies

Sharon McAleer	Ballygawley Community (COSTA)
Rosina O'Neill	Killeeshill Community Centre (COSTA)
Raymond Harrison	Tamnamore Community Association (COSTA)
Carmen Hamill	Ballygawley Area Development Association (COSTA)
Clr Meta Graham	Mid Ulster District Council (COSTA)
Anthony McGonnell	Killeeshill Community Centre (COSTA)
Phillip Clarke	Mid Ulster District Council (COSTA)
Clr Dominic Molloy	Mid Ulster District Council (COSTA)
Deborah Erskine	DUP MLA
Mary McGee	Carlton Cottage / St Macartan's Cathedral Group

3. Approval of Minutes of 2024 AGM

The minutes of the last Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday 26th June 2024 in The Killymaddy Centre were approved and adopted:

Proposed by: Cllr Eugene McConnell

Seconded by: Cllr Gael Gildernew

4. Network Development Manager's Report

Welcome everyone as we celebrate our 25th Birthday!

Sincere thanks to Corick House for hosting us tonight, it truly is a great local asset and business success story for the Clogher Valley. Indeed we are only 2 miles from where COSTA first started back in year 2000 just off Augher Main Street 25 years ago!

In the past year under DAERA's Rural Community Development Support Service, COSTA has delivered: 11 Newsletters to over 500 contacts, 14,152 Emails to local groups, 272 Website updates, and 260 posts on 2 Facebook pages with 1,099 Likes and Followers. We have actively supported and engaged over 617 times with local Groups, Communities and Villages including: 425 Governance & Capacity Building supports, 85 Funding Application supports and 84 Interagency Engagements. COSTA attended 11 Joint Voluntary Community Sector Forum meetings and there were 698 attendances at COSTA Events, Training and Workshops.

Over the past year COSTA and CWSAN delivered not one but 2 Tranches of the DAERA Rural Micro Capital Grant Scheme which saw 443 local groups successfully funded - beating all previous records. Regionally, a total of 2,022 groups received funding representing an investment of nearly £7m into rural communities [FUNDING: Rural Micro Capital Grant Programme](#)

Under the Test & Learn Programme – as Richard mentioned earlier - there were 21 Village Plan Meetings up to 31 March 2025 alone, with many more following since, and more phases yet to come.

One of the greatest highlights of the year however was our Regional Event: "Rural Support Networks Collaborating for the Future" held in Stormont Long Gallery on Monday 11th November 2024 with over 80 attendees. The event was opened by host Colm Gildernew MLA and addressed by co-host Deborah Erskine MLA. Also in attendance was Mike Nesbitt, Minister for Health and around twenty other MLAs took time out of their busy schedules to meet Community representatives alongside Departmental Officials from the Department for Communities (DfC), The Executive Office (TEO), DAERA and Public Health Agency to name but just a few.

The event highlighted the importance of collaboration between RSNs, local community groups, key stakeholders, and Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs), as well as government departments.

At the event, DAERA Minister Andrew Muir also took the opportunity to announce the opening of Rural Micro Capital Grant Scheme 2024/2025 Tranche 2 which was a fantastic bonus. For photos and more information: [Stormont Collaboration Event](#)

Thank you to Conor Corr, Seamus Donnelly, Marguerite Quinn, and all the staff and Board members in CWSAN for working so hard with COSTA throughout.

Indeed Seamus Donnelly has been absolutely essential in co-facilitating the Test & Learn Rural Village Renewal initiatives in Clogher and Aughnacloy and delivering the Minority Marginalised Communities (MMC) Programme along the border.

Over the past 6 months 'Seamy' and I have been flat-out on the road throughout the entire Clogher Valley DEA covering all 10 rural villages and refreshing their plans. I think Seamy and I, 'the 2 roadies' have made a great team on the Test & Learn Pilot and indeed there is still plenty ahead for us to do yet as the programme continues on into the next phases.

A huge 'thank you' goes to the entire COSTA Board who are so supportive and volunteer their time and expertise so diligently: Richard Knox (Chairperson), Carmen Hamill (Vice-Chair), Trevor Lockhart (Secretary), Heather McLaughlin (Treasurer), Rosina O'Neill, Sharon McAleer, Raymond Harrison, Anthony McGonnell, and Wilfred Mitchell.

This year we also say 'a very warm welcome' to 2 new Board members: Lisa McFarland from Kilnaslee Community Development Group and Katrina McCaughey from Clogher Village Forum, it is great to have you both on board.

Thank you also to our Council Representatives Cllrs: Eugene McConnell, Gael Gildernew, Dominic Molloy, Meta Graham, and Karol McQuade for their knowledge, experience and contacts.

I also congratulate one of our past and long-serving MUDC representatives, Cllr Frances Burton, on her recent re-appointment as MUDC Chairperson.

I extend sincere thanks to Mid Ulster District Council for their continued funding and support of COSTA, to Philip Clarke as our Statutory Representative, and Ted and Faye Sharkey for their hard work in keeping President Grant's Homestead such a beautiful and welcoming place.

I want to pay special tribute to our very long-serving Chairperson, Richard Knox who is unfortunately is bowing out as Chair after many years of faithful service. I thank Richard very sincerely for doing such an excellent job at representing COSTA and we value his continued service on the COSTA Board for hopefully many years to come. Richard will still be a frequent and very much welcomed caller to the COSTA Office and it's always great to see him call in for a cuppa.

As I always say, it is not the staff but it is the Committees, Boards, Trustees, Member Groups and Volunteers in the community who are truly worthy of thanks. Indeed without these individuals giving of their own time, experience, expertise and often personal resources, there would be no Third Sector - especially out in rural areas - and so much could simply never be done without these volunteers.

As ever, we warmly encourage our membership and local groups to make contact for any assistance required. So please give us a call any time as we encourage everyone to reach out, to stay in touch, to stay informed, and keep-up-to-date via our FaceBook Pages, Website and E-Newsletter Updates.

COSTA aims to meet all challenges ahead and to see that we continue to have a local office and a local service here to support our local communities as YOUR Local Support Network for the Dungannon and South Tyrone area ;) [COSTA Photo Slideshow](#)

Cllr Eugene McConnell thanked Richard and Loraine for their updates and reinforced the fact that there was such a great opportunity for local villages to get involved in the Test & Learn initiative. This was also a great opportunity to get new people recruited onto the COSTA Board and to involve all villages and areas even more.

Cllr Gael Gildernew seconded.

Trevor Lockhart thanked Richard Knox for his many years of long and dedicated service as Chairperson of COSTA. Trevor also thanked Loraine and Seamus for all their hard work throughout 2025.

Lisa McFarland added that, as new member of the COSTA Board, COSTA was involved in fascinating and valuable work and she was really looking forward to the year ahead.

Katrina McCaughey seconded.

5. Presentation & Approval of Audited Accounts

The Annual Audited Accounts for 2024/2025 prepared by MacNeary Rasdale & Co. Accountants were presented to the AGM for formal approval.

The Annual Accounts were approved and duly adopted as presented.

Proposed by: Heather McLaughlin

Seconded by: Lisa McFarland

6. Appointment of Auditors

MacNery Rasdale & Co. are retained as Accountants and Auditors for the financial year 2025/2026 with remuneration fixed at £1,680.00.

Proposed by: Trevor Lockhart

Seconded by: Lisa McFarland

7. Nominations & Appointment of the COSTA Board for 2025 / 2026

Lorraine Griffin, COSTA Manager Chaired proceedings:

All current COSTA Board Members resigned off the COSTA Board en-bloc.

Outgoing Board Members:

None.

Incoming Board Members:

None.

Outgoing Advisory Board Members:

None.

Incoming Advisory Board Members:

None.

The following Board Members were all re-elected en-bloc:

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| 1. Richard Knox | Killeeshill & Clonaneese Historical Society |
| 2. Carmen Hamill | Ballygawley Area Development Assoc (BADA) |
| 3. Trevor Lockhart | Bawn Development Association |
| 4. Raymond Harrison | Tamnamore Community Association |
| 5. Wilfred Mitchell OBE | Parkanaur Manor House |
| 6. Heather Nixon-McLaughlin | Clogher Rural Centre |
| 7. Rosina O'Neill | Killeeshill Community Centre |
| 8. Anthony McGonnell | Killeeshill Community Area |
| 9. Sharon McAleer | Ballygawley Community Area |
| 10. Lisa McFarland | Kilnaslee Community Development Group (COSTA) |
| 11. Katrina McCaughey | Clogher Community Village Forum (COSTA) |

The six Local Authority / Statutory Representatives to sit as Associate / Advisory Members:

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|--------------------------|--|
| 1. Cllr Meta Graham | Mid Ulster District Council (UUP) |
| 2. Cllr Karol McQuade | Mid Ulster District Council (SDLP) |
| 3. Cllr Dominic Molloy | Mid Ulster District Council (SF) |
| 4. Cllr Gael Gildernew | Mid Ulster District Council (SF) |
| 5. Cllr Eugene McConnell | Mid Ulster District Council (SF) |
| 6. Philip Clarke | Mid Ulster District Council (Statutory Representative) |

Proposed by: Heather McLaughlin

Seconded by: Lisa McFarland

8. Close of AGM

The Chairperson declared the AGM closed.

The AGM closed at 8:30pm.