

# COSTA Annual Report



## 2019 / 2020

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Community  
Organisations of  
South  
Tyrone &  
Area



### Community Organisations of South Tyrone & Areas Ltd

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#### **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, Department for Communities and Peace IV

Registered Company in Northern Ireland No: NI 42832    Recognised Charity in NI No: NIC101598

## Chairperson's Address



### **Hello and a very warm welcome to all for COSTA's 2020 AGM!**

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

The back-drop of this year means it is so hard to believe that it's actually real but I am glad to say that there is no doubt that the Voluntary Community Sector and the army of volunteers out at the grass roots have more than proven their worth. The Sector has absolutely stepped up to the challenge of helping to meet needs of our local communities and the most vulnerable during the Coronavirus crisis.

Unfortunately, the Voluntary Community Sector now must endure a year another even more difficulty and uncertainty as our environments change due to a likely impending deep recession, and a dystopian Pandemic that still seems surreal. On top of everything, Brexit unfortunately still rumbles on too, and we certainly 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 struck.

COSTA acknowledges and thanks 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 over 6 years now.

I pay tribute to Sarah Tugwell (RIP 3 May 2020) who had only just joined the DAERA Rural Affairs Division, Newry Office in February 2020. We were very shocked to hear about this very untimely death.

This year we lost past Board Member Ernest Carroll (RIP: July 1926–11 March 2020) who was appointed to our Board on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2003 until retirement on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2014. Ernest was a very much loved, hard-working and well known member of the local community for several decades and had links to so many local business, Church and voluntary/community sector organisations.

COSTA continues providing for the local community via our single staff member Development Manager Loraine Griffin and the Board of COSTA extends our deepest sympathy to Loraine and all her family on the passing of her father 'Wilbert' on 14<sup>th</sup> June. We extend our deepest sympathy to all.

I express sincere thanks on behalf of the COSTA Board to both Loraine, and also Conor Corr of CWSAN, for successfully delivering the DAERA Local Rural Community Development Support Service (LRCDSS) contract throughout Mid Ulster District. COSTA is sub-contracted covering the Dungannon area 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 hopefully look forward to many more years of joint working across the area.

Many very positive developments for COSTA continued this year as we served on the Peace IV Partnership, Mid Ulster Community Planning and the Joint Voluntary Community Sector Forum Panel. In conjunction with CWSAN, both Networks have continued to employ Jennifer Hamilton and Fergal O'Donnell on the Engaging Rural Communities (ERC) Programme funded under Mid Ulster's Peace IV Programme.

I would like to also take this opportunity to give a note of thanks to all my fellow Board members, and off course to Mid Ulster District Council for their many years of dedicated support.

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, and very importantly, we remain here to support you all through our current tough times and hopefully into much brighter times very soon.

**Richard Knox - COSTA Chairperson**



## **Network Development Manager's Report**

**Welcome everyone as we celebrate our 20<sup>th</sup> Birthday!**

2020 will certainly be one to remember although as much, and indeed probably much more, for the challenges we had to face than anything else.

As we all sailed the very stormy sea of Coronavirus in our own little boats, our community has had to face all kinds of adversity. I start on a sad note this year and mention two people who contributed to their communities during their lives.

Firstly, I certainly owe a great tribute to 'Wilbert' my Dad (02/07/1944–14/6/2020) who always encouraged me to "keep going" through adverse times in life, and who would be telling everyone now 'you will make it out the other end.' I have no words, I cannot ever thank you enough.

Also, I pay tribute our Chairperson's late wife Maureen Knox who passed away on 7<sup>th</sup> January this year. Maureen was indeed a very well-known, popular, much loved and hard-working member of the local community.

Out of challenges can also come great good - this year has certainly proved that the Voluntary Community Sector (VCS) and our community volunteers are not just an add-on or a luxury, they are also 'essential services' and are there for the most isolated and vulnerable in society.

Without the VCS, the government simply could not have provided an effective response to Covid-19. Our Sector, as ever, faces real financial cuts. This year brings a new and serious reduction to our income streams. The VCS must remain united in ensuring that we are the sector that is not forgotten, and the huge personal sacrifices of our volunteers must not be allowed to become used and abused by government.

Despite everything, this year has seen successful completion of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and final year of the current DAERA-funded Local Rural Community Development Support Service (LRCDSS) for Mid Ulster. COSTA delivered: 13 Workshops to 186 participants and over 132 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 106 local groups and communities and our key activities can be viewed on pages 8 - 20 of this Report.

Highlights this year included COSTA and CWSAN jointly delivering a new Women Involved in Community Transformation (WICT) Programme providing Leadership training and an ILM Qualification to 20 local women in Mid Ulster. Both networks also worked hard to provide a co-ordinated response to the Covid-19 crisis by providing weekly bumper Newsletters for 12 weeks and also a Small Grant Scheme of up to £150 for



PPE, sanitizer, volunteer travel costs. A total £7,400 funded jointly by CWSAN/COSTA has gone to 44 local groups.

I extend thanks to Mid Ulster District Council for their continued funding and support of COSTA, to Philip Clarke as Statutory Representative, and Faye and Ted Sharkey who maintain US Grants so meticulously despite not being able to have visitors for some time. Thank you to our Council Members: Frances Burton, Sharon McAleer, Meta Graham, Dominic Molloy and Joe O'Neill for their guidance and wisdom.

Last, but most definitely not least, a very sincere thank you to the entire COSTA Board who have been so supportive and volunteer their time and expertise so diligently: Richard Knox COSTA Chairperson, Trevor Lockhart, Heather McLaughlin, Carmen Hamill, Rosina O'Neill, John Burrell, Raymond Harrison, Anthony McGonnell, Wilfred Mitchell and David McFarland.

Over the last 5 months I have certainly missed not being able to get out and about but I still want to strongly encourage groups to take advantage of the fact that we are still delivering a full Rural Community Development Support Service to all local groups - so please give us a call any time for assistance.

We aim to develop and deliver more training and workshop opportunities online and via Zoom in particular. This indeed presents yet another challenge for us but we hope to do this effectively. We may not be able to meet face-to-face but we can still meet on-line and we strongly encourage groups to take advantage of this, to reach out, to stay in touch, to stay informed, and above all to stay safe and well.

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 : )

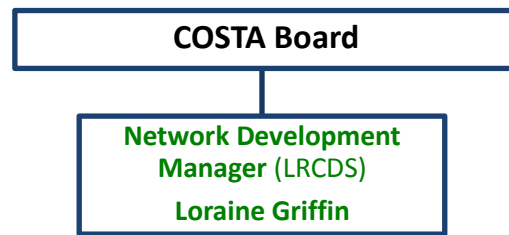
**Lorraine Griffin – Network Development Manager**



(Left) COSTA attending the NIRWN (NI Rural Women's Network) International Women's Day Event in the Glenavon House Hotel in Cookstown on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2020



## COSTA Staff



## COSTA Board of Directors

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

## Associate Board Members

Cllr Meta Graham	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 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:

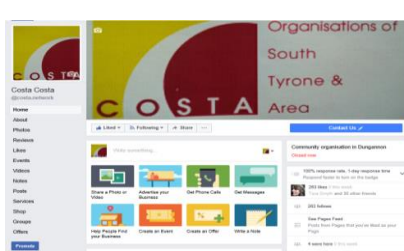
<https://youtu.be/IoUG-6T3tII>

## 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)



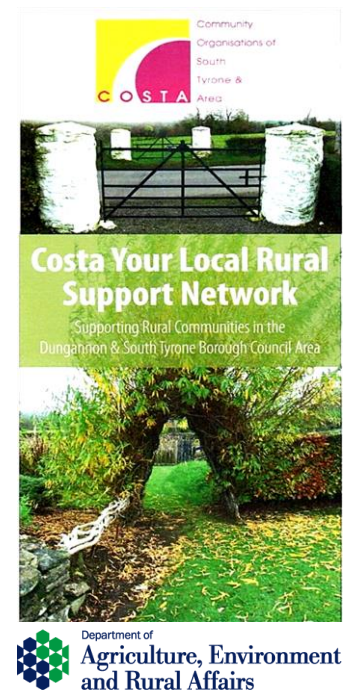
Community Organisations of South Tyrone & Areas (COSTA) in conjunction with Cookstown and Western Shores Area Network (CWSAN) have continued to work in close partnership. With over 8 years now already completed, we strive towards the start of our 9th year, from April 2019, delivering a newly updated '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 2019**

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 LRDSS 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 (LRCDSS) delivered across the Dungannon & South Tyrone area of Mid Ulster District:

### 1. Support for Community Planning:

- 14 Newsletters, 241 Email-outs to 450 Groups.
- 102 Website updates, 148 Face Book updates to 450 Groups.
- 106 LRCDSS groups / 106 actions / supports to groups.
- 36 Good Practice Checklists (Community Planning).
- 1 Meeting: MUDC Community Planning Voluntary / Community Sector Panel.
- 2 Meetings: MUDC Community Planning Education & Skills Thematic Working Group.
- 1 Meeting with Age Friendly / Environmental Health 1/11/2019,
- 11 Community Planning Feedbacks / Opportunities / Linkages / Actions.
- 1 MUDC Community Plan Cross-Thematic Event - Interagency Poverty Workshop: 30/9/2019.



### 2. Support for Isolated Rural People:

- 36 Good Practice Checklists (Tackling Rural Poverty & Social Isolation).
- 31 Checklist Follow-ups to Groups' needs.
- 36 Groups supported / mentored on Capacity Building.
- 51 Groups supported / mentored on Governance.





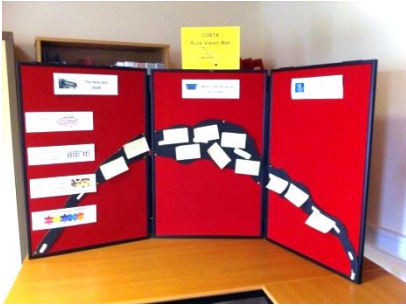
- **140 New Database Entries / Updates.**
- **63 Interagency Engagements** Tackling Rural Poverty & Social Isolation (TRPSI) Promotions / Signpostings / Referrals: DAERA, ARTS, CDM Community / Rural transport, RYE Connect, Rural Support, SUSE+ / DEL / Skills / FarmSAFE, Libraries NI, Farm Family Health Checks.
- **63 Regional Links & Engagements** (NIVCA, DAERA, RCD, RNNI, RCN, CYPSP, National Lottery Community Fund etc).
- **13 Workshops.**
- **4 COSTA 'Open Door Support Days':** (31 Groups / attendees).
- **1 Charity Registration Workshop 28/1/2020** (9 attendees).
- **1 CWSAN/COSTA Basic Finance Workshop 5/2/2020** (35 attendees).
- **182 COSTA Member Groups.**

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

- **1 Village Renewal & Regeneration Event 17/6/2019.**
- **7 MURDP Local Action Group Meetings attended.**
- **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.**
- 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.**
- **120 Groups funded under DAERA Micro Capital Grants Scheme 2019 (Phase 6).**
- 15 Groups supported to submit DAERA 'Rural Micro Capital Grant Scheme' Applications.
- 15 DAERA 'Rural Micro Capital Grant Scheme' Pre-Claims Checks.
- 37 DAERA 'Rural Micro Capital Grant Scheme' Applications received at COSTA Office.
- **5 DAERA 'Rural Micro Capital Grant Scheme' Workshops:**
- **2 DAERA Rural Micro Capital Grant Application Workshops 10/9/2019, 18/9/2019** (43 attendees).
- **3 DAERA Rural Micro Capital Grant Application LOO Workshops 5/12/2019, 10/12/2019, 12/12/2019** (46 attendees).



#### 4. Governance & Sustainability



- 1 Programme of Evaluation in place for Regional LRCDDSS.
  - 1 Meeting with DAERA Director of Rural Development.
  - 9 CWSAN / COSTA LRCDDSS Meetings.
  - 9 LRCDDSS Contract Meeting with Rural Support Networks.
  - 1 LRCDDSS Case Studies Booklet for NI region (March 2020).
  - 4 LRCDDSS Monitoring Reports / 4 Audit Certificates.
- 
- 1 Company House Annual Return: 27/03/2020.
  - 5 LRCDDSS / DAERA Financial Visits & Monitoring Visits.
  - 1 NICVA NI Environmental Strategy Meeting 8/11/2019.
  - 1 Charity Commission NI Annual Return: 28/10/2019.
  - 6 COSTA Board Meetings.
  - 1 COSTA Annual General Meeting: 27/06/2019.
  - **1 LRCDDSS Showcasing Event (Presentation and Note Taker) 20/22/2029.**
  - **1 DEAR Rural Policy Stakeholder Event 16/01/2020.**
  - **5 Rural Policy Framework Social Wellbeing Sub-Group Meetings.**
  - **1 Board Workshop: 'Director Skills & Co Ltd Update' 13/12/2019 (11 attendees).**
  - **Joint Voluntary Community Sector Forum: 6 Meetings.**
  - **1 Joint Voluntary Community Sector Forum Presentation 6/6/2019.**
  - **1 Joint MUDC-wide Programme with CWSAN (2 staff) Peace IV Engaging Rural Communities Programme.**
  - **1 Joint MUDC-wide WICT Programme with CWSAN (Women Involved in Community Transformation**

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



## COSTA Project Partnerships & Representation 2019 / 2020

- Mid Ulster District Peace IV Partnership & Vice-Chairperson.
- 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.
- Rural Network Northern Ireland (Member).
- MUD Council Fair Trade Steering Group & Chairperson.
- DAERA Rural Policy Framework – Social Wellbeing Sub-Group 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

### **Women Involved in Community Transformation (WICT)**



Funded by the Department for Communities (DfC) and Cooperation Ireland, CWSAN and COSTA worked with Women Intervention Partnership (WIP), Training for Women Network (Operational Lead), Co-operation Ireland (Strategic Lead), Foyle Women's Information Network and Intercomm to deliver training over 6 months (1 October 2019 – 31 March 2020).

WICT is aimed at women from the central Mid Ulster areas with emphasis on: Cookstown, Pomeroy, Dungannon, Coalisland, Donaghmore and Eglish. This programme aimed to increase the participation and influence of women in the community by giving them knowledge, skills and confidence.

It covered the following 5 Modules:



**Personal Development:** health & wellbeing, increase confidence, self-esteem and positivity;

**Leadership & Mentoring:** how leadership can set direction, inspire vision and create something new;

**Citizenship:** how women can make a greater contribution to their communities and society;

**Women & Peacebuilding:** help women identify the factors leading to community cohesion and the vital role they can play;

**Women in the Justice System:** accessing non-judgmental help, support and guidance.

The workshops are mainly discussion-based and facilitated in a supportive, accessible and encouraging way and include a Good Practice Study Visit and a high profile Guest Speaker. All activities are provided free of charge and assistance is given with transport. The total time commitment is 51 hours guided learning or 8 full day sessions. This is a new programme for CWSAN/COSTA - a very successful Induction Session to enrol participants was held in November 2019 with 20 women registered. **This year we were absolutely delighted to have the Right Honourable Baroness May Blood MBE as one of our truly inspirational Guest Speakers.**

This Programme offers great scope to use the skills and competencies of Network staff and enables further diversification and partnership working. This is an exciting opportunity to expand on new approaches to building community development capacity via a motivational, self-efficacy and Leadership approach which also promotes physical and mental health and well-being.



**Although a final site visit and closure session could not be held at the end of the course due to the Coronavirus outbreak, we aim to resume this very successful project again with a new cohort as soon as possible.**

**COSTA and CWSAN can now also offer ILM Level 2 Accreditation in Leadership as a result of this new programme.**

**In year one 15 local women successfully completed the course in March 2020 and gained their ILM Leadership Qualification.**



## Village Regeneration – Caledon in Bloom

**COSTA Village Renewal & Regeneration Event** was held on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> June 2019 in Caledon Courthouse with 25 attendees. COSTA worked with Caledon in Bloom over several months to assist the group to get set-up and to enable Village Regeneration since February 2019. A 'Village Hub / Shared Resources, Spaces & Services Plan was also completed for Village.



## COSTA Workshops

- **2 DAERA Rural Micro Capital Grant Scheme - Grant Application Workshops:** 10 and 18 September 2019 (44 attendees).
- **3 DAERA Rural Micro Capital Grant Scheme – Letter of Offer Workshops:** 5, 10, and 12 December 2019 (46 attendees).
- **1 Ltd Co & Directors Responsibilities Workshop:** 13 December 2019 (10 attendees).
- **1 Charity & Good Governance Workshop:** Dungannon West Recycled Teenagers 11 September 2019 (20 attendees).
- **1 COSTA Charity Registration Information Workshop:** 28 January 2020, (9 attendees / 4 Groups).
- **1 COSTA / CWSAN / NICVA Basic Finance Workshop:** 5 Feb 2020 in The Gables, Carland (35 attendees).



## COSTA Mid Ulster Covid-19 / Coronavirus Response

COSTA acknowledges the huge and absolutely essential response of the Voluntary Community Sector (VCS) and grass-roots volunteers on the ground to the Coronavirus crisis. Without the VCS there is no doubt that many of the most isolated and vulnerable members of our communities would have faced considerable hardship. The VCS proved to be an absolutely vital part of the economy that provided essential workers and essential volunteers when and where they were needed most. The VCS is clearly not just an add-on or a luxury but is in fact a critical part of our community and civilised society.

Many local VCS groups, new pop-up response groups, food banks and volunteers instantly met the challenges posed by Covid-19. Groups were involved in a wide range of activities throughout Mid Ulster including the delivery of food boxes to 11,000 people and ensuring important charitable work continued on despite the challenges faced.



CWSAN / COSTA (Covid-19 Response)  
"Safety Equipment and Volunteers Fuel"

Small Grant for Smaller Groups

This small grant is for Safety Equipment and Volunteers fuel up to a maximum of £150.

This grant is designed for small local emergency support groups only who are working right across their local communities.

Larger groups and groups covering larger district villages and district towns should not apply at this time. CWSAN/COSTA reserves the right to ascertain whether your group fits this category or not.

The proposed support can be used to provide equipment or items such as Soaps, Sanitizers, Face Masks, Bottled Water or Fuel for your Volunteers. It cannot be used for any other expenditure.

Please note all groups must follow established guidelines in taking care when supporting others and in protecting your volunteers. Please find attached recommended guidelines. You should consult the PHA website daily for guidelines: <https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/news/covid-19-coronavirus>

To apply: [mhealthproject@cwsan.org](mailto:mhealthproject@cwsan.org)



COSTA continued on delivering almost all services to local groups. The COSTA office closed to the public from mid-March 2020 onwards and services began a process of adaptation towards the virtual realm. Between March – July 2020 COSTA produced 12 weekly and then bi-weekly special edition Newsletters and Funding Bulletins to keep local groups informed of key information.

## CWSAN COSTA Covid-19 Response Small Grant Scheme

As part of the Covid-19 Response and the very extreme situation facing our local communities and groups, CWSAN and COSTA set-up our own Mini Small Grant Scheme aimed a very small or pop-up emergency response groups. Up to a £150 per successful applicant was available for items such as: PPE, sanitizer and volunteer travel costs. **A total of £7,400 funded jointly by CWSAN/COSTA went to 44 local groups right across Mid Ulster District between March – May 2020.**

## CWSAN & COSTA "Checking in" Survey

CWSAN and COSTA carried out an extensive on-line survey with local groups in Mid Ulster which formed part of a region-wide needs gathering exercise during June and July 2020. This will help ensure an effective local service is delivered and also help groups realise effective **Covid-19 Recovery Plans** as Lockdown eases.

## CWSAN/COSTA "Checking in" Survey with community during Lockdown & Recovery

We are currently gauging the needs of rural groups in the Mid Ulster Area. Our networks are keen to support local groups through this difficult period and wish to check how we can do this most effectively both now and into the foreseeable future. You can help us develop and deliver an effective rural support service by responding to this short survey.



## **COSTA Covid-19 Recovery to a New Normal**

COSTA will be continuing to assist local groups to work towards 'normality' and re-opening local Halls and venues again via provision of guidance, information, funding information, on-line training sessions, virtual 'Open Door Days', and we are always available via phone 028 855 56880 and email [info.costa@btconnect.com](mailto:info.costa@btconnect.com)

- ✓ **Grant Tracker / Funding Searches**
- ✓ **CCNI Charity Registration**
- ✓ **CCNI Charity Annual Returns**
- ✓ **Assistance with Zoom Meetings / Getting On-line**
- ✓ **Covid-19 Guidance**
- ✓ **Completing Funding Applications**
- ✓ **Information**
- ✓ **Guidance**
- ✓ **Updates**
- ✓ **Signposting**
- ✓ **Training Sessions / Governance (*very wide variety of topics*)**



**Follow our FaceBook Pages  
important information posted daily:**

**Costa Costa**

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

**&**



**COSTA Community Organisations of South Tyrone  
& Areas**

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



**The Local Rural Support Networks**  
- Supporting rural living across Northern Ireland -

Home About Us What we do - RCDSS CURRENT EVENTS Local Rural Support Networks Contact Us Funders

Welcome to COSTA - Community Organisations of South Tyrone & Areas

Rural Community Development Support Service

**Coronavirus / COVID-19 Emergency Response**

As your **Local Rural Support Network** we continue to support our local communities and groups in Mid Ulster as much as possible. We are following ongoing official advice on how to handle the current Coronavirus situation and **keeping you all regularly up-to-date**. We are maintaining certain services strictly in line with all current restrictions. OUR OFFICES CURRENTLY REMAIN CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC. If you require any support or assistance Tel: COSTA 028 855 56880 Email COSTA: [info.costa@btconnect.com](mailto:info.costa@btconnect.com)

**Mid Ulster District Council COVID-19 Local Community Support**  
Regularly updated Information and Lists of local Support Organisations to assist people in the Mid Ulster area is available on the MUD Council website at:  
<https://www.midulstercouncil.org/resident/health-wellbeing/coronavirus-advice-and-information/local-community-support>

**TO KEEP FULLY UP-TO-DATE WITH ALL THE LATEST UPDATES, INFORMATION & GRANTS FOR THE LOCAL COMMUNITY**

**To keep fully up-to-date with the latest Funding Bulletins, Grants, Guidance, Information and Events go to our**

## **Coronavirus / COVID-19 Response & Recovery Hub:**

**[www.costaruralsupportnetwork.org](http://www.costaruralsupportnetwork.org)**

**How You Can Help Mid Ulster Stay Safe**

Stay Home Wash Hands Stay 2m apart

**Trevor Lockhart from Bawn Development Association delivering Food Boxes.**





## Clogher Valley Decides!

On 6th December 2019, the **National Lottery Community Fund** held their very first ever participatory budgeting event in Northern Ireland when the Clogher Valley Community Centre became a hive of activity.

Fifteen groups from the Clogher Valley area were invited along to pitch their project idea to their local community in the hope of getting funding of up to £500. Nearly one hundred local people braved the cold to come along and vote for their favourite project.



Ten groups received funding on the night and this is what they will be up to between now and April 2020:

- **Augher Central Primary School PTFA** - Lights, Camera, Action
- **Augher Development Association** - Defibrillator Training
- **Campa Mhic Artain** - St. Patricks Programme
- **Carntall PTA** - Ready, Steady, Read
- **Castlecaulfield Eco Buddies** - The "Beyond Limits" project
- **Clogher Valley Beekeepers Association** - Beekeeping Training for Beginners
- **Cúchulainn an Ghleanna** - Club Training
- **Fivemiletown Women's Institute** - The Clogher Valley Area Events Project
- **Home Start Clogher Valley** - The Volunteer Support Project
- **Tully Meadow Community Association** - The Mindfulness through Creativity & Horticulture Project.



**We support people and communities to thrive.**

**The National Lottery Community Fund**

**COSTA was pleased to be involved in helping to identify and invite local groups along to join in the exciting new event which was a first for the entire region.** The event proved very successful for the Community Fund who went on to organise more events in different areas.





## Brexit

Four years on from the Referendum in 2016, 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 6+ 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 very uncertain – particularly now**

**that we still continue to face into Brexit - we remain very positive and pro-active as *the Local Rural Support Network.***



## Joint Voluntary Community Sector Forum

Since April 2017 and also now again in April 2020 (2nd and final 2<sup>nd</sup> term) 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 6 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 ‘Open Door Days’**

Throughout the year **31 groups have accessed 4 ‘Open Door Days’**. 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 200 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 2019 (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, 5 and now the 2019 Phase (6) was launched in September 2019. 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 Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs 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 2019 Phase (6), around 120 eligible projects in the MUDC area were funded and we hope that a further Phase (7) of DRMCG will open again soon.**

## 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:



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**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.**

## 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 sits on the Mid Ulster District Peace IV Partnership as a Voluntary Community Sector Partner and also as Partnership Vice-Chairperson up until 24<sup>th</sup> June 2020.**

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**



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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 being delivered by local Rural Support Networks CWSAN and COSTA 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 Engagement Officer, Jennifer Hamilton and Project Officer, Fergal O'Donnell** have been working with local 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 is available for up to 20 groups across mid Ulster rural areas to work on a partnership project.

The Rural Communities Programme has been running over a period of 2 ½ years and takes 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 from Wednesday to Fridays 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

**Mid Ulster Rural Development Partnership**

This year COSTA has re-joined the LAG Partnership Board as a Social Partner from September 2019. 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 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**  
**Department for Communities**  
**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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**Charity Registration Number: NIC 101598**

**COSTA**

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