

Report on	Live Here Love Here Small Grants Scheme 2023/24 update
Date of Meeting	14 th May 2024
Reporting Officer	Mark McAdoo, Assistant Director: Environmental Services
Contact Officer	Jolene Keys, Recycling Education and Data Officer

Is this report restricted for confidential business? If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	Yes	
	No	X

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To inform members on the completed projects that received funding under the 2023 Live Here Love Here, Small Grants Funding Scheme for Mid Ulster District Council.
2.0	Background
2.1	<p>Mid Ulster District Council contributes annually to the Live Here Love Here campaign. Included within this campaign is a grant scheme that aims to support and encourage responsible behaviours to improve environmental standards across Northern Ireland. Funded by 10 Local Councils, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and supported by Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, the Small Grants Scheme empowers volunteers to transform shared greenspaces for the benefit of the community and the environment.</p> <p>The Council has supported this grants scheme for a number of years and in December 2021, the Environment Committee resolved to give a renewed commitment for a £21,000 per annum contribution for a 3 year period from April 2022 to March 2024 (minute reference: E295/21). Members are reminded that 50% (£10,500) of this annual Council contribution is returned specifically to the Mid Ulster Council area each year through the successful applicants to the small grants programme. The remaining funding of the grant programme is supplemented by funding from other organisations.</p> <p>Mid Ulster District Council in partnership with Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful and other organisations launched the 2023 Small Grants Scheme on 11th May 2023.</p>

3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>The primary focus of the Small Grants Scheme is to equip and support volunteers and community groups to deliver practical environmental action in their locality. It aims to support communities to meet the following objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase civic pride and improve the quality of local environment through the creation of quality, shared spaces. • Transform underused spaces into vibrant and valued community places by adding habitats and increasing access to visitors. • Deliver actions and projects that enable nature recovery and climate action. • Improve the health and wellbeing of communities whilst helping to improve and / or maintain public space. • Enhance the quality of the local environment by reducing littering and dog fouling through community action.
3.2	<p>Within the Mid Ulster District Council area, 58 applications were submitted and assessed by the Small Grant Judging Panel on 15th June 2023. The applications were considered in terms of their ability to enable communities to deliver practical volunteer action to improve the local environment for people and wildlife. Following the grant judging sessions, 10 projects within the Mid Ulster District met the scheme criteria and progressed to Letter of Offer stage on the 30th June 2023.</p>
3.3	<p>The total grant amount available to the successful projects within Mid Ulster was £12,138. This was comprised of the Councils funding contribution of £10,500 plus an under spend from the 2022 grant allocation of £1,638 (from a project which did not commence before deadline and was therefore reimbursed to the grant fund).</p>
3.4	<p>The ten successful projects selected to proceed to grant award totalled £12,134. However, despite 10 projects being offered a funding opportunity only seven of the groups made use of the funding available and completed their project. These seven groups spent a total of £8,673.21 leaving an under spend of £3,460.79 which will be carried forward to the 2024 grant scheme due to open later this year.</p>
3.5	<p>The seven groups that proceeded with their project are:</p> <p>1. Desertcreatives The group redesigned a new grass area to make a community garden meeting space for use by visitors and the public who take part in group activities. The area is also open to the wider community so that people can enjoy making new friendships, perhaps learn a new skill or offer a quiet place for reflection.</p> <p>2. Killyman Community Play Group This local pre school group created a new growing, planting and pollinating area for children to use during their outdoor learning activities and outdoor play. This area proved to give added value for the children to learn about growing, caring for, and eating their own food.</p>

3. The Loup Woman's Group

This ladies group wished to build a number of small raised beds to both environmentally and aesthetically improve the area. The group also learned new skills such as woodwork and shrub maintenance. The transformed green space has benefited both the local community and wildlife.

4. Friends of Littlewoods

This was an exciting endeavour by a local group to try and preserve bog land against the negative impact of public access. The construction of a new boardwalk has in turn saved any further damage to impact the ecological balance of Catherines Wood. New fence work has also been installed to secure the site from against fly tipping. The boardwalk has also enabled visitors to enjoy the woodland without any further damage.

5. St John's Primary School, Kings Island

The primary school have improved their outdoor learning area by further establishing raised beds for flowers and vegetables as well as sowing out wildflowers. This has increased awareness in the local community through the school children and their families of the importance of local biodiversity and decreasing carbon footprint. The school has reached out to the wider local community offering the area as a sanctuary and a place for rest and reflection.

6. Dungannon Swifts Charitable Trust

Whilst extremely simplistic in nature this tree planting initiative has improved the environmental health of this stretch of road by offsetting the CO₂ damage caused by heavy traffic and lorries. The group has further plans to install chatty benches as part of an overall mental well-being project.

7. Loughshore Community Services

This group operates in the Moortown village area and also at the Sports Complex owned by Saint Malachy's. The group planted pollinators with wild flowers in order to increase biodiversity as well as community pride and area attractiveness.

Further details of successful grant recipient projects are provided within Appendix A - Small Grants Funding 2023/24 Report

4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: Covered within the Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful Membership (£21,000 per annum, 50% which comes back to Council through the Small Grants Scheme).
	Human: Officer time to review all applications and assess same in accordance with scheme criteria as part of the scheme evaluation panel.

	<p>Risk Management:</p> <p>This scheme is administered and managed through the Live Here Love Here governance processes as operated by Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful (KNIB)</p>
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	<p>Equality & Good Relations Implications:</p> <p>The opportunity to participate in the Live Here Love Here Small Grants Scheme is open to anyone in the ten participating Council areas.</p>
	Rural Needs Implications: N/A
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	Members are asked to note the content of this report.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix A: LHLH Small Grants Funding 2023/24 Report