**DCSDC PEACEPLUS Local Co-Designed Action Plan – E Newsletter Summer 2025**



The PEACEPLUS Programme is a funding partnership between the European Union, the Governments of the United Kingdom and Ireland, and the Northern Ireland Executive and will be administered by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB).

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**All 58 projects now up and running!**

Summertime, and the living is… well, hectic. All PEACEPLUS 58 projects are go! If your community group, or you as an individual, are interested in getting involved, contact us! Email us on peace@derrystrabane and we’ll try to connect you with a project that interests you. All our projects are free for participants.

**Peacebuilding and community work: A Young Adult Perspective – Connor Crawford**

A person standing on a railing near water

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I first joined Derry City & Strabane District Council through the JobStart scheme via the Job and Benefits office. It started as a six-month, part-time placement role within the PEACE Team, and honestly, I had no idea what to expect. I’d only ever worked in retail before and had no clear plan for the future, like most people my age. But one contract led to another, and before I knew it, I’d spent a year with the team, learning more than I ever thought possible.

I never imagined myself in this sort of job. I didn’t even know roles like this existed, and I definitely didn’t think I’d take so well to working in an office or on community projects. But from day one, my colleagues were welcoming, and the work felt genuinely meaningful.

I assumed council work would be all silent offices and paperwork, but instead I found a team deeply connected to the community, with people who genuinely care about making a difference. I got to take part in meetings, learn about event planning, minute taking, venue booking, catering, skills I’d never even thought about before. Even using office phones and photocopiers was new to me, but it all came naturally thanks to my interest in tech.

What’s been most eye opening is learning how peacebuilding really works. Communication, open mindedness, and being willing to change in ways you didn’t plan for, that’s what matters most. I was born after the Troubles, but I grew up in their shadow. Working with the PEACE Team helped me understand what caused the tensions, how they still linger, and how much work goes into healing. It’s also shown me how important it is to meet people where they’re at, even those holding onto views shaped by the past.

The best part of the job? It never really felt like work. I always felt involved, supported, and like I was part of something bigger.

Since joining the team, I’ve been able to get a place to study Community Development at Ulster University, excited to keep walking this path. I know I’ve only scratched the surface, but this experience gave me the confidence and skills to move forward.

To any young person thinking about community work, go for it. We are the future of peacebuilding, and there’s never been a better time to get involved.

**Some upcoming events:**

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**Our Present Past** PEACEPLUS project launch is **Thursday 10th July at 11am** in the Sollus Centre in Bready. All are welcome to attend. This is an adult dialogue project based around exploring the past through workshops and visits and considering perspectives on those events and how they shape us today.

**The Freedom Project** is running an event in Strabane in August, and we'd love you to be there 😊 It will shine a light on mental health and wellbeing support services available in Strabane and the surrounding areas. Bringing together a wide range of community, voluntary and statutory organisations under one roof, it will be a kind of “one-stop shop” for all things support, from addiction services to creative wellness, youth programmes and family-based initiatives. Why not drop in and connect with the people behind these services in a warm, approachable space? Call in on **Wednesday 20th August 2025, from 12–3pm** at Melvin Sports Complex, Strabane.

**Distance Travelled** a project focused on diversity, social issues and wellbeing through workshops delivered in a range of venues. It is recruiting adults from all backgrounds to take part. All welcome at the launch on **Friday, 1st August 2025, 11AM - 3PM** in the Fir Trees Hotel, Strabane. Please register in advance with: distancetravelled2025@gmail.com

**Our Journey to Peace** project will be doing some walking tours of the Fountain/Bishop Street/Bogside areas and visits to local museums over the summer. If you are interested in taking part, please contact [derrybluebadgeguide@hotmail.com](mailto:derrybluebadgeguide@hotmail.com)

**Celebrating recent project launches!**

A screenshot of a computer

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**Our Journey to Peace** is based in the Moor area, will explore contested history, shared oral history and culture as well as providing tour-guiding training. It will produce a small exhibition. The £95,955 contract is being delivered by the Gasyard Development Trust.

**Centre of Hope** is a £52,035 Castlederg area project delivered by Derg Valley Care Ltd. It will build ‘hope’ in Castlederg through a series of workshops and Hope Ambassadors training to create positive cross-community engagement. ‘Investing in hope is a powerful step,’ said Mayor, Ruairí McHugh at the launch. ‘This project has the potential to make lasting change in the Castlederg area. We’ll be working with local partners and groups for maximum impact,’ said Martin Duffy of Derg Valley Care.

**Forward Thinking** is a £79,300 District Level project, delivered through Holywell Trust, will explore constitutional issues from a wide range of perspectives and consider Northern Ireland in the global context through examining other places also facing constitutional challenges. There will be opportunities to engage in public seminars and workshops as well study visits to Scotland and Catalonia and/or the Basque Region. The learning will help inform our thinking of the constitutional debate on these islands.

A person standing at a podium with a crowd watching

AI-generated content may be incorrect. A group of people standing next to a white van

AI-generated content may be incorrect. **A person sitting down and a person standing on a stage

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**Be Driven** is a rural project across Sperrin, Faughan and Derg. It is a community mini-bus driver training scheme linked with a cross-community and cross-border social, history, heritage and cultural programme. Delivered by Easilink Community Transport it is a £55,096 investment.

**LGBTQIA+ Awareness** is a £39,900 project delivered by the Rainbow Project. It is a sexual orientation and gender identity awareness and training project for adults including accredited and non-accredited training and a conference.

**The Exodus Project** is a £69,300 investment delivered by the NW Cultural Partnership.

The one-year project will research and share the experiences of the Protestant, Unionist and loyalist identities in Londonderry from the outbreak of the Troubles to present day with a specific focus on the migration of the PUL community from the Cityside and within the context of the wider history of the era, the area, and on a cross-community basis.

**Other relevant funding:**

The Executive Office has its Central Good Relations Fund Small Grants open for applications up to a maximum award of £2,000.

Small Grants funding should be used for the delivery of projects which aim to address any of the following:

* where there is an identified good relations need and the aim is to work with those most in need of a good relations intervention within specific areas of impact;
* where there is, or potential for, heightened social unrest;
* where there has been a significant change in local demographics;
* where there has been an increase in racist/sectarian hate incidents; and
* where emerging issues within communities warrant a Good Relations intervention.

Further information on the Small Grants Fund can be found at: [https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/articles/central-good-relations-small-grants-fund](https://url.uk.m.mimecastprotect.com/s/OhcNCqY71IOY776TZfLhEanHf?domain=executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk)

**Contact us:**

The PEACE Team in council can be reached via [peace@derrystrabane.com](mailto:peace@derrystrabane.com)

Our website is: <https://www.derrystrabane.com/community/peace-plus>

The PEACEPLUS Programme is a funding partnership between the European Union, the Governments of the United Kingdom and Ireland, and the Northern Ireland Executive and will be administered by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB). Match-funding for this element of the PEACEPLUS Programme has been provided by the Executive Office in Northern Ireland and the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government in Ireland.