

# Strabane Neighbourhood Renewal & Local Growth Partnership

## Spring Edition 2026



STRABANE

Neighbourhood Renewal /Local Growth Partnership



Derry City & Strabane  
District Council  
Comhairle  
Chathair Dholre &  
Cheantar an tSraha B ain  
Derry Citty & Strabane  
Districk Council



Neighbourhood  
Renewal



Department for  
**Communities**  
[www.communities-ni.gov.uk](http://www.communities-ni.gov.uk)

Neighbourhood Renewal is a government strategy that seeks to bring together statutory agencies, service providers, the voluntary sector & communities in an equal partnership to tackle deprivation.

# Fountain Street Community Development Association

## Project Co-ordinator's Salary/ENIC and Running Costs



This project delivers services, interventions and programmes that are aimed to address issues that meet the needs of the local population. For example, anti-social behaviour, addictions including drugs and alcohol, unemployment, poor health, low education attainment etc. for residents of all age groups living in Fountain Street and its neighbouring areas.

Through National Lottery Community Funding the Centre employs a Centre Manager, Admin & Finance Worker, PT Caretaker and a Cleaner. A Neighbourhood Renewal Project Coordinator is employed through funding from Department for Communities.

During the past year Fountain Street were able to host many events on behalf of the local community and were involved in a host of Good Relations activities. We have also been involved in partnership with the other groups across the town delivering on the Council Consensual programmes which has avoided duplication and showed maturity in delivering for everyone.

### Some of the events/activities that Fountain Street were involved with:

- Paediatric First Aid Training
- Looking back-Moving forward Group – Good Relations
- Calendar Group – Old Strabane
- St Bridgid's Cross Making
- Christmas Wreath Making

- New Age Bowls
- Chi Me
- Tai Chi
- Sound Bath sessions
- Male and Female Fitness Sessions
- Irish Dance Classes
- Flipstarz Acro sessions
- Neuro Diverse FC sessions
- Irish Language Classes
- Traditional Music Classes
- Arts & Crafts sessions
- Summer Scheme
- Outdoor Movie Night
- Head of the Town 70's Reunion Disco
- Christmas Grotto
- Environmental Clean Ups within the community
- Charity Coffee Morning Mayor's Initiative
- Blood Donation Clinic
- Strabane Walk of Hope event
- Couch to 5K
- Stewarding activities at community events
- Distribution of Oil Locks
- Community Outreach Programme @ Strabane Day Centre
- Trip to Doagh Famine Village via Good Relations
- Trip to the Guildhall via Good Relations
- Daily Sure-Start Early Years Programmes x2
- Weekly Sure-Start Stay & Plays
- Fountain Street Community Development Association have recently received funding of £37,509.81 via the Department for Communities to instal a Sensory Playroom at the Centre.



# Koram Centre NR Newsletter

## 21.01.2026

The Koram Centre continues to deliver a range of services to support local residents experiencing emotional health & wellbeing issues, working with both adults and children and young people. Services include counselling/psychotherapy, play and music therapy, complementary therapies as well as a range of social support activities which aim to support participants to increase their knowledge, understanding and skills to improve their emotional health & wellbeing. Over the last 12 months the Koram Centre have delivered the following outputs

- 2066 service users supported
- 698 referrals to the services for counselling/ psychotherapy services
- 5057 counselling/psychotherapy and complementary session delivered, engaging with 686 participants
- 1150 participants supported through social support services. This has included a range of programmes such as meditation/mindfulness, understanding anxiety, understanding grief and loss, arts/crafts programmes, music/dance programmes and others

### Open Minds Youth Wellbeing Event

This was a large scale event in Melvin Sports Complex in September 2025. The event brought together children and young people from local schools, youth/community groups and training/education organisations to learn more about how they can look after their emotional health & wellbeing. This including meeting local support services, as well as taking part in a range of activities including drumming circles, complementary therapies, soccer skills, dance, martial arts and others. The event engaged with 500 attendees with the following support services attending on the day:

- Koram Centre
- Strabane Family Centre
- SECA
- EA Youth Service
- GP MDT Social Work Teams
- Start 360
- Lifeline
- Cedar Foundation
- Include Youth

This event was delivered as part of the Rory Carlin Memorial Fund Project



# Good News Story: Investment Helping Melmount Community Thrive

For many years, the Melmount community centre has been a well-used, and much valued hub, serving residents of all ages. Thanks to ongoing investment from DfC, the building is now being modernised to meet the growing needs of the community while remaining fit for the future.

With this support, the centre has benefited from the installation of gas heating and new energy-saving lighting which improves on both sustainability and comfort. While also receiving an exterior fresh paint job, oozing a welcoming new look. In the coming weeks, works will continue with the installation of a brand-new kitchen and upgraded toilet facilities, long-awaited and much needed improvements that will significantly enhance the experience for users, volunteers, and visiting groups alike.

One of the centre's most pressing challenges had been a lack of storage space. Once again, the Department for Communities stepped in, funding the purchase of external storage containers. This practical solution has made a real difference, allowing activities to operate more efficiently and freeing up valuable indoor space for community use. This targeted investment has already had a clear and positive impact. Melmount Community Forum has been able to introduce new activities and expand existing programmes, creating more opportunities for local residents to come



together, learn, and connect. Attendance numbers have not only increased but have been consistently maintained, strong evidence that the investment is delivering real value and meeting genuine community need.

Melmount Community Forum and its member groups would like to sincerely thank the Department for Communities and the Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership for their continued support. This investment is not just about bricks and mortar, it is about strengthening community life, supporting wellbeing, and ensuring that Melmount remains a vibrant, inclusive space for everyone.

The Empowered Communities Strabane project continues to make strong progress, with 105 participants registered to date, representing 59% of the overall target of 177. The participant profile reflects a broad community reach, with 68% identifying as from the CNR (Catholic, Nationalist, Republican) community, 28% from the PUL (Protestant, Unionist, Loyalist) community, and 4% identifying as other or choosing not to state a background. To date 8 projects have been delivered. Below is an example of one of these where we visited the Tower Museum.

## Tower Museum Trip

Our recent Empowered Communities Strabane visit to the fantastic Tower Museum in Derry was a huge success!

From the warm welcome by staff to the brilliant Derry Girls exhibit, our participants had an amazing time - many even stepping into their inner Derry Girl.

Along the way, they learned about Derry's past and progress, while seeing the city from a whole new perspective. A great day of learning, laughter, and discovery!

## Some ladies from our STAY YOUNG 55+ group who attended a recent EAT SMART LIVE WELL workshop

delivered by the STRABANE NEIGHBOURHOOD HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PROJECT.

By delivering sessions like this within community venues we can have a real impact on people's lives, teaching them new skills, celebrating healthier choices and demonstrating simple techniques that can help manage our weight and our budgets. These sessions will continue in the coming months and there will be opportunities for local young people to get involved as part of a similar primary schools nutrition and well being workshop.

Check out the NEIGHBOURHOOD HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PROJECT ON SOCIAL MEDIA FOR MORE INFO



## Some members of the Strabane "MUSIC TO YOUR EARS" men's group attended a Falls Prevention session at Strabane and District Caring

Services this month. This event was organised by the Chris from the Strabane Neighbourhood Health Improvement Project and facilitated by the wonderful Eilish from the Western Trusts Health Improvement Team.

A very worthwhile event for those who attended, sincere thanks to Eilish and to everyone who attended on the day. Working in partnership to support local people.



# Strabane teacher is BID's Christmas Star



L-R Mr Ciaran Johnston (Principal), Mrs Marie Strawbridge, Michael Kelly (Strabane BID)  
L-R Jarlath McNulty, Chris McDaid, Aodhan Harkin, Ursula Doherty, Michael Kelly, Jaqui Timoney, Kieran Kennedy

Strabane Business Improvement District (BID) is delighted to announce the successful conclusion of its inaugural 'Christmas Star' Competition, a heart-warming initiative designed to celebrate the dedication and impact of local teachers and classroom assistants across the Strabane area.

The competition asked pupils within a five-mile radius of Strabane Town Centre, across both primary and secondary schools, to nominate a teacher or classroom assistant who has made a truly special difference in their lives. The purpose of the initiative was to "shine a light on those special people who make a difference" in the classroom and beyond.

After a fantastic response from the community, Strabane BID is thrilled that Mrs. Strawbridge from Holy Cross College, is the ultimate "Christmas Star." Mrs. Strawbridge's dedication resonated deeply with the students, commanding an impressive 32% of the total votes cast.

As a reward for her outstanding commitment, Mrs. Strawbridge receives a £150 Strabane Gift Card, encouraging her to spend the prize locally and support businesses within the BID area.

Kieran Kennedy, Chair of Strabane BID, welcomed the overwhelming participation and spoke highly of the competition's success.

He said: "The 'Christmas Star' competition has been a wonderful way to pause and acknowledge the unsung heroes in our community our teachers and classroom assistants. They invest so much into the future of our young people, and it's important we celebrate their immense contribution. The strong support for Mrs. Strawbridge and all the nominees shows the high esteem in which our local educators are held. Congratulations to Mrs. Strawbridge. We are delighted to recognise her as our community's well-deserved Christmas Star."

Strabane BID extends its thanks to all the schools, pupils, and educators who participated, helping to make this initiative a truly positive end to the school year.



## Strabane BID donates gift cards to Strabane's most vulnerable in 2025

**Upholding its commitment to supporting the local community and its residents, Strabane Business Improvement District (BID) has announced a significant donation of £2,000 worth of Strabane Gift Cards to be distributed to those most in need across the district.**

The donation aligns with Strabane BID's core ethos of supporting local, ensuring that assistance reaches vulnerable individuals and families while simultaneously directing funds back into the local economy by encouraging recipients to shop at participating Strabane businesses.

To ensure the gift cards reach those who can benefit most, Strabane BID is working in partnership with Chris McDaid, Community Development Lead at Strabane & District Caring Services. Mr. McDaid leads a dedicated team of relevant community representatives tasked with identifying and distributing help to individuals and families experiencing hardship.

Kieran Kennedy, Chair of Strabane BID, speaking about the initiative said: "The festive period can be a particularly challenging time for many families in our area, and as an organisation committed to Strabane, it is vital that we step up to help. This donation of Strabane Gift Cards is a practical way for the BID board to support our most vulnerable neighbours, while ensuring that the money remains local and supports the businesses that make up our town centre. It's about community helping community."

Chris McDaid, of Strabane & District Caring Services, said the donation was very much appreciated at a very difficult time for many people. He said: "This incredibly generous donation from Strabane BID will make a genuine difference to the lives of many people in our community. The Strabane Gift Cards offer dignity and choice, allowing recipients to purchase essential items where they need them most, be it food, clothing, or

other necessities. We are thankful to the BID board for their support and dedication to those facing difficulty in Strabane."

Strabane BID remains dedicated to fostering a resilient and supportive community, and this donation is a testament to its commitment to the well-being of all local residents.

## Crafty Quavers Spread Festive Cheer at Christmas Lights Switch-On



On the day itself, the Crafty Quavers stall was a real highlight of the fair. The group engaged warmly with the public, proudly showcasing their work and playing an active role in the celebrations. The event was a fantastic success and a confidence-boosting experience for everyone involved.

Most importantly, the Crafty Quavers truly embodied the spirit of the season contributing not just crafts, but joy, connection and a strong sense of community. Their involvement was a wonderful reminder of the positive impact inclusive community groups have on local events, and they should be incredibly proud of all they achieved.

**The Crafty Quavers group brought creativity, colour and community spirit to this year's Christmas lights switch-on by taking part in the local Christmas craft fair and what a fantastic contribution they made.**

In the weeks leading up to the event, the group worked with enthusiasm and dedication to create a wide range of beautiful seasonal crafts. Alongside their creativity, members developed valuable life skills, including planning, project management, budgeting and effective use of resources. These achievements are particularly significant as the group is made up of adults with additional needs, demonstrating just how much can be accomplished when opportunities are inclusive and supportive.





## Developing Women in the Community

SECA recently partnered with the Churches Trust to deliver a new initiative for female members titled **Developing Women in the Community**. This programme focuses on strengthening community connections, supporting personal development, enhancing family wellbeing, and encouraging shared learning and participation.

As part of the initiative, participants will also take part in organised educational trips and visits. The group is preparing to begin an OCN qualification in Community Development, further supporting their skills, confidence, and leadership within the community.

## Cultural Competency Workshops

SECA delivered a series of Cultural Competency Workshops at North West Regional College for students studying **Caring for Children, Child Care Learning and Development, and Health and Welfare**. Also to Magee Ulster University to **Social Work Students and Nursing Students**.

During the interactive sessions, learners explored what it means to be culturally competent in the workplace, particularly when supporting individuals from diverse backgrounds. The workshops form a structured educational programme designed to increase cultural understanding, empathy, and respectful practice, equipping students with the confidence and awareness to work effectively in diverse environments.



## Community Cultural Workshops

SECA delivered a series of cultural workshops to a range of local community groups. During each visit, participants learned about SECA's work and its role within the community. Sessions included hands-on cultural arts such as henna design, rangoli art, and Diwali lamp artwork.

To enhance the cultural experience, participants sampled a traditional chicken curry and received a recipe to take home, encouraging continued cultural exploration within their families.



## Multi-Cultural Food, Music and Entertainment Night

SECA's Multi-Cultural Food, Music and Entertainment Night brought together people from across the community in a celebration of culture, diversity, and shared experience. Through food, music, dance, and traditional arts, attendees had the opportunity to explore different cultural practices and traditions in a welcoming and inclusive environment.

The event promoted understanding, reduced misconceptions, and fostered empathy by allowing people to connect through positive, shared experiences. It reinforced the message that everyone, regardless of background, is valued and belongs, helping to strengthen community relationships and mutual respect.

## Summer of Fun Scheme

SECA delivered its annual two-week Summer of Fun scheme, offering a varied programme of recreational, cultural, and educational activities for children. The scheme was further strengthened by the involvement of youth helpers who previously attended, creating continuity and positive peer leadership.

**Week 1** focused on creativity and cultural learning, including arts and crafts sessions, a podcasting experience where participants learned recording and storytelling skills, and a cultural workshop introducing traditional Thai arts and crafts.

**Week 2** emphasised teamwork and physical activity, with cricket coaching sessions and a joint activity trip that encouraged movement, social interaction, and confidence-building.

The Summer Scheme promoted positive social interaction among children from diverse backgrounds, supported skill development, encouraged youth leadership, and strengthened community connections. The programme provided a safe, welcoming, and enriching environment during the summer period.

**Look out for new dates for Summer 2026 coming soon!**





# 3 Day Diwali Festival

The festival created welcoming spaces where people could come together to learn about Diwali, share traditions, and enjoy cultural experiences. Across the festival, SECA delivered a schools cultural programme introducing pupils to the meaning and traditions of Diwali through interactive workshops, dance, and creative activities such as rangoli art and henna. These sessions helped build understanding, respect, and curiosity about different cultures and faiths, with learning extending beyond the classroom into family homes.

Community workshops also took place, offering hands-on experiences including sari tying, henna art, and rangoli design. These sessions encouraged participation, cultural exchange, and opportunities for people from different backgrounds to connect and learn from one another.

The festival concluded with a lively evening celebration featuring cultural performances, traditional food, music, and shared celebration. The atmosphere reflected Diwali's message of light, hope, and togetherness, bringing the wider community together in a spirit of unity.

Overall, the festival promoted cultural awareness, inclusion, and positive community relations, while celebrating diversity and strengthening local connections.



## Culture Café

The Culture Café, SECA and Strabane District Caring services, was a welcoming community space designed to bring people together through conversation, learning, and shared experiences. The sessions provide a relaxed environment where individuals from different cultural backgrounds can meet, talk, and build understanding over informal discussions. We had people from diverse backgrounds from Ethnic, Disability, Political backgrounds all sharing their stories.

Each Culture Café focuses on themed table conversations, encouraging participants to share stories about traditions, food, celebrations, family life, and everyday experiences. This approach helps people learn about one another in a natural and supportive setting, breaking down barriers and building friendships across communities.

The programme promotes cultural awareness, confidence in communication, and a sense of belonging. By creating safe spaces for dialogue, Culture Café supports inclusion, reduces isolation, and strengthens positive relationships within the wider community.

## English Language Programme

SECA launched a new English language programme in partnership with Clever English. The course supports learners from a wide range of backgrounds and runs twice weekly at the SECA Centre. Participants are working at similar proficiency levels and represent a diverse mix of nationalities.



The programme supports improved communication, confidence, and integration, helping learners to access services, education, and employment opportunities more effectively.



## Drop-In Support Service

SECA continues to provide a drop-in advice service offering support on welfare matters such as housing and benefits, as well as immigration-related issues including passports, the EU Settlement Scheme, visas, and citizenship. This service remains a vital source of guidance, reassurance, and practical help for individuals and families navigating complex systems.



**BREAK  
THE  
SILENCE**



**STRABANE**

Neighbourhood Renewal /Local Growth Partnership

## Strabane Neighbourhood Renewal & Local Growth Partnership

### For further information

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This information is available upon request in a number of formats including large print, Braille, PDF, audio formats (CD, MP3, DAISY) and minority languages.

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**Foyle Women's aid**  
02871416800

**24hr Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline**  
0808 802 1414

**The Koram Centre**  
02871886181

**If you are in danger, call the police by dialling 999 immediately**