

Groomsport Village Newsletter

Picture by Lynsey Brown

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Groomsport First Runner-up in "Ulster in Bloom" Competition!



We are pleased to announce that Groomsport Village was awarded Second Place in the Large Village category of Translink 'Ulster in Bloom 2016. This Large Village category was the biggest with twenty-three villages entering. Hillsborough and Saintfield were joint third and Cullybackey getting First Place.

The judges commented that "the Bug Hotel was a real asset". They also noted that the beach was clean and, overall, the village was "well presented". They remarked on the involvement of the community in a number of initiatives in the village this year. These included the bug hotel made by staff and pupils of ASLU based in Groomsport school and the herb garden. Other new additions are the six planters placed throughout the village adding additional colour to the seats, new village gateway signage, and the planting out of the rockery behind Cockle Row cottages.

Groomsport can also take pride in having 'Blue Flag' high-quality bathing water and achieving the award from Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful Seaside Awards 2016 – Rural Beach category.



Roy McWhinney, Chair of The Groomsport in Bloom committee would like to thank all the village residents who contributed to this excellent result, and those who helped on the many Saturday mornings' weeding and tidying up sessions. Thanks also go to Ards and North Down Borough Council who maintain the flower beds, weed, tidy up, supply the hanging baskets and the cutting of the grass. The Council also provided funds to purchase the planters and plants which Donaghadee Garden Centre and Groomsport Nurseries kindly supplied at discounted prices. Plans are already being made for next year, when it is hoped that even more residents will become actively involved in this great community activity, Groomsport in Bloom.

Groomsport Village Association Annual General Meeting

Thursday 20th October 2016, 7.30pm at Groomsport School Springwell Drive

Village residents are invited to attend the Annual General Meeting, to hear about the work carried out by the Groomsport Village Association in the past year and our plans for next year. Do come along and join us. Tea and coffee provided.

We look forward to seeing you there, and if you are interested in joining the GVA Committee, nomination forms are available on our website: www.groomsport.info

Planning Application for Outdoor Target Shooting Range

As you may be aware, a planning application has been made for an outdoor target rifle shooting range, club house, target store and firing shelter with new access and car parking at 78 Ballymacormick Road, close to Groomsport village.

The GVA Committee are unanimous in their objection to the above planning application and have informed the Planning Officer to this effect.

A copy of their letter is on the GVA website and on the village Noticeboard.

An adapted copy is enclosed with this Newsletter for those who wish to use it to make their views known. Comments on this application can be sent by post or Email.

Planning Reference number: LA06/2016/0523/F. Remember to include a Name & Address

Written comments should be sent to The Planning Officer, Ards, and North Down Council, Church Street, Newtownards, BT23 4AP. Or email: planning@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

Further information is available on the Council's website

www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/resident/planning/planning-applications

**It is NOT too late - the Planning Officer is
STILL prepared to receive your comments**

CHRISTMAS IN GROOMSPORT

A Date for your Diary...

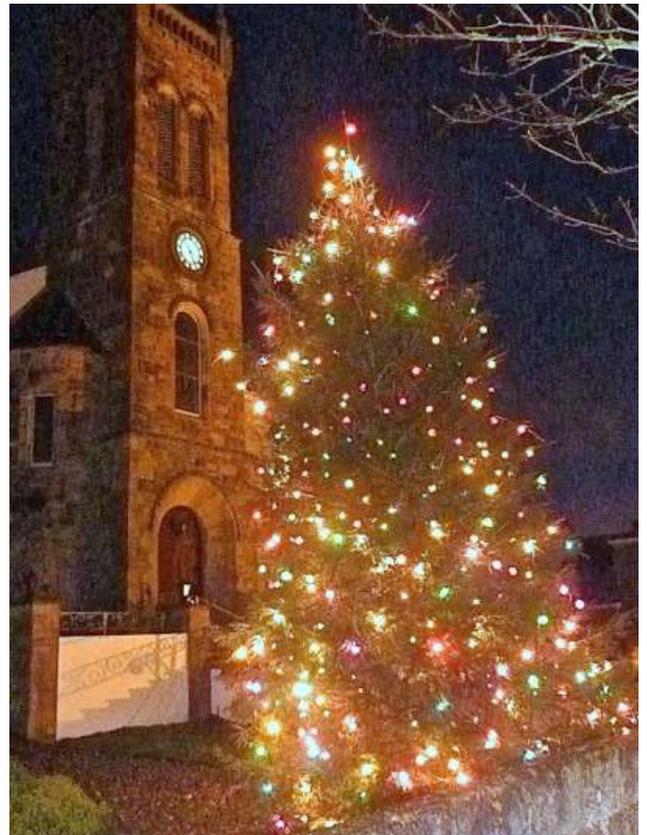
Groomsport's annual Christmas Tree Lights Switch-On will be held on Friday 2 December 2016 at the Presbyterian Church on Main Street.

A short Carol Service with music by our regular musicians: Symington Memorial Silver Band at 6:30pm will be followed by the Christmas Tree Light Switch-On by Lady Sylvia Herman MP, at 7:00pm.

Then it is across the road to the Walter Nelson Halls to enjoy supper and a visit to Santa Claus. There will be a range of activities there too for the children to enjoy. Admission is £2 per adult. All children have free admission.

GVA is looking for children from the village who would be interested in being part of the Christmas celebrations - to say a short Bible verse, sing, play an instrument or do a short reading in the Church.

If your child would be keen to get involved, please contact us via email before 12 October and leave a message for Sharon - with your child's name, age and contact number, to enable us to get this organised in good time. Email: info@groomsport.info



Groomsport Herb Garden outside the Walter Nelson Halls

Groomsport's community herb garden is now in place on Main Street, outside the Walter Nelson Halls. It has been provided by Groomsport Village Association with a grant from Ards and North



Down Council. We hope to encourage village residents to grow their own herbs and to cook with them. Snip off some of the herbs for your own use, but leave some for others. The initial planting of herbs includes donations from Alan Crawford of Groomsport Garden Nurseries and from local residents.

The herbs available are Parsley, Thyme, Purple Sage, Rosemary, Nasturtiums (yes, you can eat them!), Chives, Curry Plant, Oregano, and Mint.

The most popular herbs sampled are Rosemary and Bay, which will continue to grow over the winter. The herbs in the garden may change over time as we discover what grows best in our coastal location.

Information is available on our website about the herbs in the planter, including how to grow them, their medicinal uses and their culinary uses. For most herbs, we have included a recipe that uses it as an ingredient. You can find all this information at our website: www.groomsport.info

The Village Defibrillator arrives at the Spar Shop



This life-saving equipment also known as AED (automated external defibrillator) is now available for use in the Village.

It is available 24 hours a day and is positioned in a large yellow case on the outside of the door at the Spar in Main Street, Groomsport.

To access the Defibrillator press the **Red** button on the protective case and the equipment will be released, and then you can take the Defibrillator to the casualty. The operation of the Defibrillator is very straightforward as it will automatically talk you through the actions you need to take so there is no need to be concerned about using it.

Please return the equipment and advise the staff in the Spar shop that it has been used, as after each use, the pads must be replaced. Let's hope the defibrillator's services are never required but, it's very reassuring to know it's so close to hand.

The Mysterious Sculpture on the Village Green

What is it, who is it, why is it there? These are just some of the questions often asked about this mysterious sculpture. A plaque on the sculpture says it is called "Aspect One" created by Thomas Ronald Irvine in 1972.

Do you like it, love it, hate it, or even notice it? We would like to hear from you, your comments about the sculpture, and the story behind it. Contact via our email: info@groomsport.info



Right of Way at Groomsport House

John Waring Maxwell of Finnebrogue, Downpatrick built Groomsport House in 1849 for about £6,000. One hundred and sixty years ago, in 1856 Robert Perceval Maxwell (John Waring's nephew) who was then residing in Groomsport House decided to enclose the house and grounds within a stone wall which would have denied public access to Groomsport's beaches.

Groomsport had by then become a popular summer resort for the wealthy residents of Belfast who rented houses in the village for the summer months.

The closure of the beach threatened this trade and the Presbyterian minister, Reverend Isaac Mackie, who also happened to own the largest boarding house, protested, using his influence with Belfast people to establish the 'Association for the protection of public rights of way'. The affair was eventually settled by the High Court in Dublin in favour of the public and the Perceval Maxwell family had to accede to demands to leave access to the beach.

The turreted wall on the rocky outcrop remains today as a reminder of a long forgotten incident, probably one of the first cases involving rights of way in Ireland.



Groomsport Village Association hosted the annual **Big Lunch** event in the Boathouse on Sun. 12 June. We were delighted to combine our festivities with Her Majesty, The Queen's 90th birthday celebrations - a great excuse for a tasty cupcake!

During the afternoon we enjoyed live local music from 'The Lotties' band as well as a varied programme of activities: herb skills workshop, Ulster Wildlife arts, and crafts, including making a poppy for the Council's Somme event, hook a duck fun, and a crab fishing competition sponsored by Quay Marina to round off our day. We enjoyed a visit by the RNLi lifeboat and really appreciate their support at our community event, as well as all those who volunteered and contributed in various ways to make Groomsport's Big Lunch a massive success. Thank You!

50 mph Speed Limit on By-Pass success, but 30 mph in the village often ignored

At last, the speed limit on the Groomsport By-Pass has been reduced from 60 mph to 50 mph.

The successful result of years of campaigning, however, we continue to be contacted by local residents regarding their concerns about vehicles speeding through the village, where a maximum speed of 30mph applies.



Enforcement of these limits is required, and the GVA are contacting the P.S.N.I regarding this issue. If you have any concerns with speeding in the Village area please also contact the local P.S.N.I to highlight the problem.

Groomsport Village Association is supported by:



Website: www.groomsport.info

Email: info@groomsport.info