

Groomspport Village Newsletter



Picture by Perry Moore

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COUNCIL CANCELS CHRISTMAS – PART 2



We advised in our previous Newsletter that Ards & North Down Borough Council had refused to fund the long-running Christmas party held in conjunction with the switch-on of the Christmas tree lights in the village. At that time we were uncertain whether or not we should avail of the Council's (not very independent) Independent Appeals process.

Somewhat against our better judgement, we decided to lodge an appeal. Surprise, surprise, we were turned down again, despite the many failings we exposed in the Council's procedures. So, your Council will **not** be contributing to the Christmas festivities in the Village!

We're pleased that a number of local Councillors have recognised the unfairness of this situation and are endeavouring to ensure that some Council funding will be available for this event in future years. This is to be welcomed, but it means that for this year, we're on our own!

We promised in the previous Newsletter that the GVA would ensure that the Christmas event would take place despite the lack of Council funding – and that's exactly what's going to happen!

The celebration will be held on Friday 8th December and will begin with Community Carols in the Parish Church, commencing at 6.15pm. We will then proceed to the Christmas tree to witness the switch-on of the lights at 7pm. Then we move to the Parish Halls for the children to meet Santa Claus and the adults to socialise. The event is being hosted by the Parish Church this year as part of their celebrations for its 175th anniversary.

Obviously, there are financial implications for the GVA in holding the event without Council funding and we would invite residents to make a contribution, however small, in cash or in kind, towards the cost of the event. Should you wish to contribute, you can either:-

1. Put cash or a cheque made payable to 'Groomspport Village Association' in an envelope and deliver or post it to 'GVA c/o 10 Cove View, Groomspport BT19 6HR', or
2. Transfer direct to our Barclays bank account: Sort Code: 20 62 27, Account No: 33012956
Account Name: Groomspport Village Association - Thank you

THE GROOMSPORT EVERGREEN CLUB

The Evergreen Club was formed in April 1975 with over sixty members.

Unfortunately due to age and infirmity numbers are down to about fifteen. The club desperately need new members to survive. All men and women aged fifty years and over and living in the Groomspport/Bangor/Donaghadee area will be made very welcome.

Transport can be provided for anyone with mobility problems.

A varied programme has been arranged such as; Tudor Cinema Comber, Somme Centre, Walled Garden etc. as well as talks, quizzes etc. Dues are £2 per week whether you attend or not.

This is to cover the expenses of tea, trips, Christmas Lunch etc.

The Club meet every Thursday afternoon in the Parish Hall, Main St. Groomspport 2pm-4pm.

Anyone wishing to join us, pop in any Thursday or contact Valerie on 91465103



GROOMSPORT PARISH CHURCH

This year Groomsport Church celebrates 175 years of Christian mission.

Designed by the renowned Architect, Sir Charles Lanyon, who was responsible for Queen's College, Belfast (later to be Queen's University), Crumlin Road Gaol and Courthouse, and the Palm House in Botanic Gardens among many notable buildings. Originally built as a chapel of ease for Bangor Parish, the Church was endowed by the local landlord, John Waring Maxwell, who provided the site free of charge.

The family set preconditions that the building would always be known as Groomsport Church and that no interments were to be carried out in the Church or the adjoining Churchyard.

Built of local stone with sandstone dressings it cost £750 and the first service was held in December 1842. A plain barn church, it has been much extended, first in 1909 when the chancel was built and in the 1930s the transepts were added (to a design of James A. Hanna). The vestry was extended in the 1950s. A listed building, it has a delightful bright and airy interior with a good open hammer-beam roof and the original pews. The stained glass windows are of exceptional quality and are representative of 19th, 20th and 21st century craftsmanship. The three-light lancet East window by Meyer of Munich, the 2 lancet windows in the South transept by White Friars of London, the nave window of the Good Shepherd is by Kitty O'Brien and the large windows in the transepts are by Leadlines of Donegore. In order to bring the building up to modern standards the Select Vestry are undertaking a large-scale refurbishment. The building will be rewired, a new more efficient heating system installed, the roof replaced and the organ and choir stalls re-sited. It is not the intention to alter the interior other than to make the building more comfortable and easier to maintain.



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Work is expected to commence in April 2018 with the project scheduled to be completed in time for Advent of that year.

ULSTER IN BLOOM AWARDS FOR GROOMSPORT

Not one but **TWO** awards have been won by Groomsport in this year's Translink Ulster In Bloom competition. The announcement was made at this year's awards ceremony held in The Guild Hall, Londonderry on Thursday 21st September. Groomsport In Bloom chairperson, Roy McWhinney said 'these are terrific achievements and, as a community we should be proud.' Roy, who is also a member of the GVA, would like to thank the volunteers who gave up their time to add that extra bit of TLC to the village, so enhancing Groomsport as a beautiful place to live in and visit. Translink Ulster In Bloom judges awarded Groomsport the 'Silver Trophy' for Best Kept Large Village as well as giving Cove Bay a special award for 'it's outstanding planting and floral presentations'.

Groomsport was entered into the Best Large Village category, which had 27 entrants from across Northern Ireland. The judges were impressed, saying 'the community orchard and the herb garden are to be applauded'. Ards and North Down's Mayor Robert Adair congratulated Groomsport on its success and offered his support for the future, as did John McConnell, the Borough's Parks &

Cemeteries Manager. Sponsorship from village residents and businesses helped to increase the number of floral displays this year. These were complimented by the judges and appreciated by all who saw them. Hot on the heels of these awards Groomsport is hopeful for more recognition this month from The N. Ireland Amenity Council.



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE GVA

The Annual General Meeting of the Groomsport Village Association will be held in the Groomsport School, Springwell Drive, on Tuesday 24th October 2017, commencing at 7.30pm. The meeting is open to all those living within the 'Area of Benefit' as defined in our Constitution. This is essentially the Village and its environs.

The business to be transacted at the meeting will include:-

- A review of the past year in the Village
- The election of Committee Members
- A discussion of live issues in the Village
- The presentation of awards for the Village Garden Competition.

We would encourage residents to play an active part in the life of our community by joining the GVA Committee. If you wish to stand for election to the Committee, you should obtain a nomination form from David Martin, 10 Cove View, Groomsport, and return it to him, completed, by 17th October.

Should there be any topic you wish to be considered for the agenda of the AGM, you should forward it, in writing, to David Martin, 10 Cove View, Groomsport by 21st October.

As we approach the AGM, we would wish to express the Committee's thanks to two members who will be stepping down at that meeting.

Firstly, our Treasurer, Brian McBride, who has guided us through the upheavals attaching to the amalgamation of the two Councils and into the calmer waters beyond. Brian was also Editor of the GVA Newsletter until Mandy Ritchie took over earlier this year. Brian had advised us last year that he would be stepping down at the AGM in 2017. We thank him for his significant contribution to the work of the Committee.

Our Secretary, Eileen Thomson, is also stepping down. Our thanks go to Eileen – it can't have been easy combining the Secretary's duties with a busy full-time job!

Finally, thanks to the school for agreeing to host the AGM.

THE BIG LUNCH



The sun shone on Sunday 18 June to allow us to fully celebrate "The Big Lunch" in Groomsport. This year we had a sharing table, everyone brought buns or a cake to the table and we enjoyed a cup of coffee and a chat together. It worked very well. Our thanks to everyone for joining in the spirit of community sharing.

There was great music by 'The Lotties', a crab fishing competition for adult males (as it was Father's Day) and one for children – thanks to Kevin at Quay Marinas for the sponsorship.

The adult male winner was Jason Angus and the child was Lucy Moore. Well Done!!

We created giant bubbles, planted sunflower seeds and had fun taking part in the tug of war – thanks to Gabbys for the prizes. We also organised a gazebo and PA system from Donaghadee CDA – we are grateful for their contribution and look forward to working with them in the future.

We hope to take part in The Big Lunch again next year – as we received no funding for this event we would appreciate all local skills and contributions to make our community lunch a great event.

Get in touch with Sharon Cummings if you would like to add to this event in 2018.



**National
Trust**

Hello there!

I'm really pleased to be able to write to you all in what I hope will be regular feature from your local National Trust Ranger team.

I hope to be able to keep you up-to date with all the work we're carrying out in the local area, and let you know about any events taking place.

We've had a very busy summer with our properties on Ballymacormick Point, Cockle Island, McCutcheon's Field and Orlock Point. In addition to the never-ending task of grass cutting and tackling invasive species (such as Monbretia), our Rangers planted a new native hedgerow in Orlock.

It's taking well and we're hoping it will encourage local wildlife (such as birds and small mammals) in future years. We've also been tackling the grass along Ballymacormick Point and were delighted to host a school group to explore this fascinating and rare maritime heath coastline.

Adding to our workload, unfortunately, on this site is the litter and dog fouling which occurs so regularly here. It's such a beautiful site and it is disappointing that some people feel it's OK to leave rubbish and dog mess behind them – both of which can have such a damaging effect on local wildlife and the environment.

Finally, our Rangers were also out on Cockle Island (set in Groomsport harbour) which we visit once a year to count the Common and Arctic Terns that nest there.

It's important to monitor their population so we can pick up on any trends that might occur.

These are internationally important species, and need to be protected.

With that in mind, we've heard reports of possible cockle pickers working on Cockle Island, who may risk disturbing the nesting birds. If you see anything suspicious, please note times, locations and descriptions (safely!) and let us know.

Looking forward, the seasons are beginning to change. The autumn brings different challenges for our Rangers. We'll be starting scrub clearance in many of our Strangford properties and you may see us on the Ballymacormick coastal path, cutting back the scrub – mainly gorse. While gorse is a native species that provides important habitat for insects, birds and small mammals, it grows very quickly, outcompeting other plants and as a result we lose other important habitats, like coastal heathland species such as Heather. It's all about balance!

We're also going to carry out some dry-stone walling on farmland in Orlock, a traditional technique of fencing which again provides perfect winter habitat for small mammals.

If you see us about, please come over and say hello, we'd love to see you!

I'm one of a small team of National Trust Rangers, based at the Schoolhouse, Mount Stewart. We cover all the free access coast and countryside sites across Strangford Lough and the Ards Peninsula.

Our work is incredibly varied, from conservation and maintenance to seal/bird surveys, fencing and even moving livestock to islands in Strangford Lough for grazing.

With just five members of our Ranger team, we rely heavily on volunteers.

If you would like to join us, contact me at: will.hawkins@nationaltrust.org.

Alternatively, you can find us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/NTStrangford

Many thanks! Will Hawkins, Ranger.

Contacts for Groomsport Village Association

Website: www.groomsport.info Email: info@groomsport.info Facebook: Groomsport Village Association