



Creating Common Ground

# 40 Communities Programme



creating  
common  
ground  
consortium



LOTTERY FUNDED



As Chair of Creating Common Ground Consortium, I am delighted to present this Report of the 40 Communities Programme. Creating Common Ground was established in 1999 and was appointed as an Award Partner to deliver the Big Lottery's Green Spaces and Sustainable Communities Programme in 2000.

The 40 Communities Programme targeted 40 of the most disadvantaged communities in Northern Ireland. The targeted communities were engaged with and supported to participate in the development and implementation of their local strategies. Local community-led Project Teams were established supported by appointed Project Officers to develop local Plans. Residents were encouraged to identify their needs and devise effective solutions with the support of Landscape Architects. Extensive consultation was carried out through Public Meetings, Planning Events, Workshops and sometimes door to door surveys to ensure community support for proposed schemes.

Through the Project Teams, the Consortium was able to engage with other statutory, voluntary and private sector agencies which added real value to the programmes being delivered

The Consortium have wholly funded or contributed to 130 schemes throughout the 40 Communities. The projects include multi-courts, play areas, art works, entrance features, community gardens, sculptures and other environmental works.

Whilst environmentally based, the Programme is seen as making a significant contribution to the wider Neighbourhood Renewal agenda. For those communities involved it will enhance and inform future

## Conal Devitt, Chair Creating Common Ground

regeneration programmes. The Programme has made a significant impact on many people, helping them to develop new skills and giving them confidence to move on and use them to the benefit of themselves, their families and the communities within which they live.

The independent evaluation concludes that the Programme has delivered major environmental improvements and addressed other community safety and community relations issues. It has been instrumental in building community infrastructure and capacity creating a renewed sense of self-esteem, empowerment, hope and energy.

We believe that we have developed a model of partnership working, project management and capacity building which is worthy of replication across other areas of work. Everyone associated with this programme should be extremely proud of their individual and collective efforts. We have provided a legacy which will stand the test of time and on which we are sure others will build in the years ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Conal Devitt".

Conal Devitt, Chair  
Creating Common Ground





## Walter Rader, NI Director Big Lottery Fund

Six years ago we appointed Creating Common Ground as our first Award Partner in Northern Ireland to deliver more than £5 million National Lottery funding through our Green Spaces and Sustainable Communities (GSSC) programme.

So on behalf of Big Lottery Fund, I am delighted to be able to join in celebrating the achievements of the Creating Common Ground Consortium. By working in partnership with Creating Common Ground in Northern Ireland, we have seen how lottery funding has made a contribution to help communities understand, improve and care for their environments.

Creating Common Ground was tasked to work with communities throughout Northern Ireland and this has taken many forms from greening up public spaces, to conserving and creating new habitats and spaces and improving community safety and ownership. The Green Spaces and Sustainable Communities programme targeted many different communities and the changes are evident in the diverse range of projects, which are making real and lasting improvements.

The diversity of this impact has not gone undocumented, BIG's evaluation of this programme has used examples in Northern Ireland to illustrate the contribution made to sustainable development and how this translates into approaches which are used to tackle deep rooted social, environmental and economic problems in disadvantaged communities.

Local people have carried out environmental improvements and this has generated substantial social benefits to those involved, particularly the sense of excitement, which I have seen when visiting projects.

Creating Common Ground has been successful in ensuring that lottery money has contributed to social inclusion with the principal beneficiaries of projects including those at risk of exclusion such as those suffering from crime and the fear of crime and the elderly. Likewise the development of social capital has been critical, perhaps best illustrated through work with other partners in Northern Ireland.

At the individual level, Creating Common Ground and the Green Spaces programme have had a significant impact on many people, helping them to develop new skills and giving them the confidence to move on and use those skills to benefit themselves and the communities within which they live.

I would like to congratulate everyone involved in the success of this programme. The legacy of Creating Common Ground should be celebrated and built upon, to meet the challenges that still exist.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Walter Rader', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Walter Rader, NI Director  
Big Lottery Fund





## multi sports courts and play areas



With the support of other funders, Creating Common Ground has constructed 9 Multi-Sports courts. The courts may be used for such sports as tennis, netball, basketball and 5-a-side football.

The Sports Council NI part-funded a Sports Development Officer post within Creating Common Ground for 3 years. The Development Officer engaged with the local communities and local councils to produce Sports Development Plans for each of the areas.

Through the Sports Council's Investing in Sport Programme further funding was obtained to run coaching sessions and provide some sports equipment in seven areas.

The construction of 3 multi-sports courts in Drumarg, Callanbridge and Mullacreevie is an excellent example of cross-sectoral partnership working between Creating Common Ground, DSD's Neighbourhood Renewal Programme, NIHE and Armagh City and District Council.

On the Ballygawley Road estate, the DSD again provided match-funding and NIHE leased the land to Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council.

Some schemes were delivered in partnership with the local community and other statutory agencies. At Milltown, Derriaghy, Creating Common Ground in conjunction with Lisburn City Council constructed a multi-sports court on land leased by the South Eastern Education and Library Board. The site which lies adjacent to Derriaghy Primary School will be maintained by Lisburn City Council. A Management Committee including local residents has been established to manage access.

A similar project has been delivered at the Rathenraw estate in Antrim where the facility is shared with the local Integrated Primary School.

In the rural community of Ashfield Gardens, Fintona, the sports court was jointly funded by CCG and Omagh District Council. The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development also supported Project Delivery costs in rural estates.



### Play Parks

Many of the communities identified a need for recreational space for young children and youths. The Consortium's response was 16 Play Parks or Kickabout pitches.

In Seacourt, Larne match-funding was provided by Larne Borough Council and Children in Need to create a state-of-the-art play park boasting one of the largest octopus slides in Northern Ireland. A similar cocktail of funding came together to build a park in the Antiville estate.

Banbridge District Council, together with the Local Strategy Partnership and the Community Safety Partnership supported CCG to create a play facility in the rural community of Lissize, Rathfriland. Play parks were also constructed at Dundarave, Bushmills and Trasna Way, Lisnaskea. At Carlisle in North Belfast and Tullyally, Derry/Londonderry, play parks were refurbished.



At Hillhead/Cline Road, Banbridge and West Winds, Newtownards, the communities opted to create Adventure Play Parks aimed at 10-14 year olds.

Previously unused land has been converted into Kickabout Pitches in Lower Albertbridge Road, Longlands, Lissize, Ashfield Gardens, Fintona and Corcrair, Portadown.



## environmental works



Some communities sought environmental solutions to address such issues as anti-social behaviour, fly-tipping, dumping, joy-riding etc.



On the Glenwood estate, the landscape architect working with the community designed an attractive feature known locally as the 'spinal path' with

anti-ram bollards to deter joy-riding whilst retaining pedestrian access.

Residents in Bawnmore also identified and landscaped a previously derelict site. The community in Lower Castledawson worked with CCG and other statutory agencies to clean the Moyola River and landscape the overgrown pathway. In addition, local children worked with an artist to produce mosaics which have been installed along the pathways. A similar project was carried out at Ardowen where pathways and lighting was improved and bollards erected to deter future dumping.



In many cases, the Consortium sought to add value to projects by working in partnership with other agencies. In Glenville, Whiteabbey, the Consortium landscaped the area adjacent to the new community facility which was funded by the Local Strategy Partnership.



A similar partnership approach was undertaken within the Longlands estate to provide a community facility. Creating Common Ground contributed to the environmental works at the site and funded a kickabout

area. In the Lower Albertbridge Road area, CCG contributed to the regeneration of the former Boxing Club site.

In Carlisle, a scheme was developed to erect fencing and replant and reinstate the Westlink Pathway. The proposal was supported by DRD Roads and further funding was secured from the EU Urban II Programme. Young people were involved in clearing the litter from the area and also worked with artists to create art projects for the walkway. A similar partnership approach tackled overgrown vegetation and re-landscaped an existing walkway at Lawnbrook.



Canning Hill in Lower Duncairn, has been totally transformed from a derelict over-grown unused space into a pleasing landscaped area with new pathways, railings, planting and seating. Five art panels erected on the new railings depict the lives, livelihoods and interests of five local people. In Aitnamona, residents undertook a project to landscape an area and add fencing to discourage anti-social activity. On the Doury Road estate, existing open spaces were landscaped to include tree planting, grassing and fencing.

In Lower Oldpark, extensive community consultation proposed the erection of fencing to protect the public play park and green space. The community at Lower Newtownards Road also

opted to erect fencing around the Pitt Park area. Art panels depicting the history of the area were added to the railings.





## art works and sculptures



In Dundarave, Bushmills, the community decided that an Ulster Scots sculpture at the entrance to the estate would enhance the area and reflect their cultural identity. A local artist was commissioned to create the bronze sculpture and additional funding was drawn in from the Ulster Scots Agency and the European Natural Resource Rural Tourism Initiative (NRRTI). The sculpture is recorded on sites throughout North America and is included on the Causeway Coast Cultural Trail.



Another bronze sculpture mounted on a stone plinth has been created in Ballysally, Coleraine. A unique aspect of this project is that it incorporates a time capsule. Local children have worked with the artist to source materials and data for archival storage.



The Glenbawn Public Art Trail was undertaken by residents in partnership with the Upper Springfield Development Trust. Artists worked with local residents and children to

create a variety of artwork including murals, bronze and stone sculptures and interactive projects representing local history, celtic mythology and cultural and sporting interests. The Project has had a huge visual impact on the estate and the sculptured stone benches create a focal point. One piece of artwork is based around the hand prints of local children. The human sun dial is also an ingenious project.

The Project Team at Carlisle sought to enhance the Housing Executive improvement works at the seven

multi-storey blocks by commissioning a local artist to create murals in the foyers of each. Images of Irish mythology associated with the area were produced. Further murals were created along the Westlink pathway. With the assistance of Belfast City Council another mural was created at North Queen Street steps.



At Lower Shankill a ceramic art feature involving local primary school children has been created to commemorate the

“lost streets of the Shankill”. The scheme was identified by the community to highlight those areas of the “old Shankill” lost through years of redevelopment.



In Lower Falls, 3 murals were created celebrating the lives of local people and reflecting the history of the area.

The Caw community chose to create a mural using handprints of local people and a ceramic mosaic.

The young children on the Callanbridge estate worked with an artist to create murals on a bus shelter on the estate.



## entrance features and community gardens



Many communities were keen to create new beginnings and enhance the appearance of their estates from the outset. In conjunction with the communities, landscape architects designed 19 entrance features. These ranged from simple wall mounted signage to stone works and bronze sculptures.

The West Winds community opted for a chevron style feature from local scrabo stone. Granite stone was the choice of communities in



Lissize, Rathfriland and Ballykeel II in Ballymena. Stone also featured in the Ballykeel I sign which was designed by a pupil from the local Primary School. Stone is also used to great effect at Glenfield, Carrickfergus, Lower Newtownards Road, Aitnamona, Glenwood, Belfast Trasna Way, Lisnaskea and Caw, Derry/Londonderry.

Other communities such as Garvaghy Park and Corcrair/Redmanville have opted for metal work signage.



### Community Gardens

Many communities identified unused green areas which they wanted to make more attractive. For some this meant creating a garden with perhaps some seating which residents could enjoy.

In the Caw estate in Derry/Londonderry the community designed a garden in conjunction with the landscape architect. Attractive fencing has been erected to protect the space and it provides a tranquil area for residents to visit. Across the city in the Brandywell estate, residents undertook an ambitious project to transform a derelict piece of land at Bluebell Hill into community use. The site has been transformed into a unique attractive and vibrant space



with mosaics and metal weathervanes designed by the young people.

An organic garden was also created at the Gaelscoil Eadain Mhoir School. This was a particularly challenging project in that the area was previously a gasworks site and special membranes had to be laid to decontaminate the soil. Here the children are learning about growing vegetables and it is planned to sell the produce to local businesses. A further community garden has been created at Cushowen, where residents secured funding to set up a community gardening initiative.

In Garvaghy Park, Portadown, residents have created a small sensory garden. Pathways have been laid in cobbles and stones creating different textures. Raspberries and strawberries are also grown here and residents are encouraged to use these. The garden is maintained by the Garvaghy Park Residents Association in association with the Housing Executive.



In the West Winds estate in Newtownards, the community have created a small garden which will be used by residents and children from the Little Doves Playgroup. The garden has been designed as phase one of a project which the community plan to add to when further funding can be sourced.

In Glasvey in West Belfast, the community have created a 'Celebration Garden' with the help of additional funding from the Belfast Regeneration Office. It includes a bronze sculpture by an internationally renowned artist.

Residents in Bawnmore and Lawnbrook also identified unused spaces for transformation into gardens for community use.

## Estates in which schemes were funded or part-funded by Creating Common Ground:

- Lower Oldpark
- Lower Albertbridge Road
- Glenfield
- Seacourt
- Glasvey
- Lower Shankill
- Brandywell
- Ardowen/Altmore
- Lower Newtownards Road
- Longlands
- Ballygawley Road
- Glenwood
- Garvaghy Park
- Ballykeel
- Aitnamona
- Lower Castledawson
- Ballysally
- Lissize
- Dundarave
- Trasna Way
- Milltown
- Ashfield Gardens
- Doury Road
- Bawnmore
- Drumarg
- Callanbridge
- Carlisle
- West Winds
- Mullacreevie
- Corcrair/Redmanville
- Lawnbrook 2
- Upper/Lower Duncairn
- Glenville
- Antiville
- Rathenraw/Stiles
- Caw
- Tullyally
- Hillhead/Cline Road
- Glenbawn
- Lower Falls

## Themes

### Environmental Regeneration

Working with communities to improve green public spaces and conserve or create new 'wildscapes'.

### Community Safety

Working with communities in designing out crime and creating safer cross-community access.

### Neighbourhood Renewal

Working with communities to create local neighbourhood services, raise capacity and create focus and impetus for drawing in agency funding and resources.

### Community Relations

Working with communities to provide opportunities for residents to engage and to acknowledge issues of cultural relations.

### Building Community Infrastructure

Working with communities to address weak community infrastructure and build sustainable networks.

## Creating Common Ground Consortium Board

- Northern Ireland Housing Executive (lead partner)
- Groundwork NI
- NIO Community Safety Unit
- Community Foundation for NI
- DSD Neighbourhood Renewal Unit
- Community Relations Council
- Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
- Sports Council NI
- Business in the Community

**Housing  
Executive**

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