

# Communities Leading Change

Participatory Budgeting in  
Newry, Mourne and Down  
2021/2022



# Communities Leading Change

Communities Leading Change participatory budgeting project has been delivered by Newry, Mourne and Down community planning partners since 2018. The PB process has been delivered across the seven district electoral areas and has funded 86 community and voluntary sector groups a total of £87,000 over 4 years.

Multiple partners are involved in the delivery and funding of the projects and each year this funding has increased, this year the total was £57,000.

This report details the 2021/2022 Communities Leading Change (CLC) PB processes and highlights some of the projects which received funding.

The aim of the CLC project this year was to mitigate the impact of covid19 by promoting positive mental health through increased social connectivity. Any group could apply, no groups were excluded as long as they met the criteria – legal, safe, deliverable and target the theme.

This year we had to work a little differently due to covid19. As we couldn't have in person events we held the vote online using the SpeakNMD platform. The groups sent in their project ideas with photos for funding of up to £1500 which were then uploaded on the platform. The voting

was open for two weeks where we encouraged the groups to share the link on their social media and with all their families and friends to get as many people as possible involved.

The total number of people who registered on the site in the two weeks it was live was: 2141, this equated to 6220 votes cast. 39 out of 52 groups received funding.

The successful groups had to complete their projects by the end of March 2022. Once complete, three celebration events were organised across the district for the groups to feedback how their project went. At each event the successful groups presented their projects and detailed how many people participated and how it positively impacted their community. The events were held in Newry, Newcastle and Downpatrick. Around 150 people attended the celebration events and we received some good feedback about the projects and the process, this is detailed in the PB Scorecard.

## Communities Leading Change Partners



# Applications per District Electoral Area

DEA	Total Applications	Successful Applications	Unsuccessful Applications
Crotlieve	5	5	0
Downpatrick	14	13	1
Mournes	5	3	1
Newry	11	8	3
Rowallane	3.5	1	2.5
Slieve Croob	8.5	6	3.5
Slieve Gullion	4	2	2
Multiple	1	1	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>13</b>

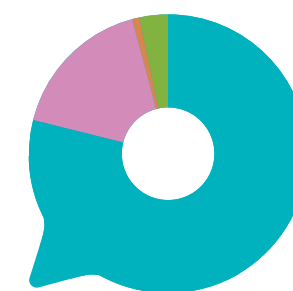
## PB statistics

In order to vote the person had to register on the SpeakNMD platform. To collect some further information, we asked some questions on demographics. These questions were not mandatory, below is some of the data collected. All statistics reported are based on the amount of data submitted via the registration forum. The number of active signups does not equate to data submitted as some registered individuals have not answered all questions on the forum.

## PB signups 2208

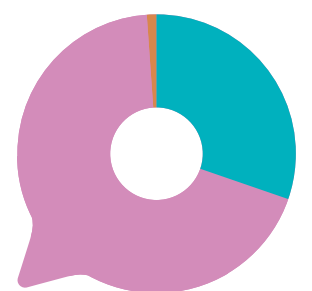
### Nationality

Irish	1128
British	242
Scottish	10
Welsh	0
Other	46



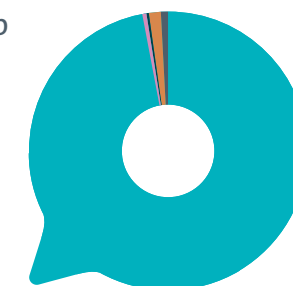
### Gender

Male	451
Female	1012
Other	14



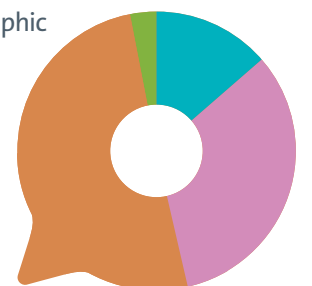
### Ethnic Group

White	1377
Mixed	4
Asian	17
Black	2
Irish Traveller	0
Other	9



### Age Demographic

Under 20	55
20-40	131
40-60	202
60+	12





# Successful Projects Feedback

## Case Study: Annalong Community Empowerment (ACE)

£1500



Annalong Together at Christmas brought the Annalong community together to decorate pre-made pallet Christmas trees which were displayed at shared spaces in the village – the community square at the bottom of Majors Hill and Annalong Community Centre. The trees, along with all Christmas lighting, were illuminated at an Annalong Together at Christmas event. Following the illuminations an event took place outside Annalong Community Centre. Children from local primary schools and local performers sang carols, Santa was in attendance and refreshments were provided. Over the Christmas period carol singing also took place across the village to ensure those less able could enjoy the singing.



*"So proud to be involved on behalf of The Jenny Foundation"*

*"It was a pleasure to be involved! Well done to everyone who put the display together and organised the project"*

*"Absolutely brilliant - well done to all involved"*

*"Just wanted to say thanks very much for leaving a tree to our house. It has been a hard few days for my kids and they really enjoyed painting it this morning.... My kids will miss Thursday night as they will be in isolation but delighted they still got to be a part of it!"*

*"Such a lovely event to be involved in and we look forward to taking part again next year"*

## Case Study: Cedar

£1360



The Funding enabled us to run activities in the DisAbility HUB for people with disabilities. Activities were based on Take 5 steps to wellbeing. Arts and crafts, music, wellbeing activities such as yoga and mindfulness, nature such as making bird feeders and litter picking. 85 people benefitted from this project.

*"This is the 1st time I have been out in a group since before lockdown – I was nervous when I first joined, but everyone is so nice and supportive"*

*"When I was told I'd got a spot on the course I cried a wee bit – I was nervous but also excited to join the sessions"*

*"Great staff encouragement and support to get out in fresh air and helps my mobility"*

*"Great informative sessions with a really nice group of people"*

## Case Study: Saintfield Community Garden

£1500



Funding for a Community Garden including consultation site plan, raised flower beds and planting for the garden. People who benefit include the founders 10 volunteers 1 recruited coordinator with 28 other group members involved and 26 supporters.

*S.C.T. see great potential and future opportunities for community garden members and volunteers to show their skills and enthusiasms in the environment for growing, wildlife, horticulture, biodiversity with added civic pride in their place being promoted always"*

*"Very pleased with support received from funder the Council and the organisation of the build at a difficult time"*



# Successful Projects Feedback

## Case Study: The Happiness Café

£1480



The project was to create a 6ft X 4ft mural and ensure it was a brightly coloured 3D depiction of topics that provide comfort and stimulation for people who have Dementia and their carers. We use the mural to increase Dementia Awareness and during Café sessions. It is an educational tool to prompt discussions of 'safe' subjects of conversation. It also can invoke memories of happier times.

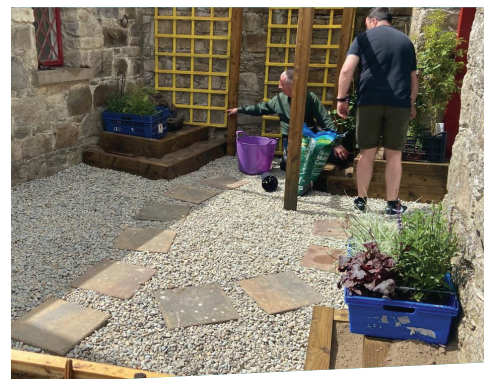
- 33 participants – everyone played a part in making items for the mural
- Outsourced building of the frame to Rostrevor Mens Shed
- We spent 10 weeks making a mural to illustrate the activities that our folks enjoy – these were additional sessions

*"Love that this will help people understand that we can still achieve things and have fun"*

*"This will help people understand people with Dementia are still people"*

*"This made me realise just how much we can still achieve together"*

*"I couldn't wait to continue our project each week"*



## Case Study: Clanrye Group

£1500

The funding was used for the believe in tomorrow project. With this funding we bought native shrubbery, flora, shrubs, made pathways, a water feature; this provides a haven for our community enabling a quite space for mediation, wellbeing classes and encouraging positive mental health. Having a garden where everyone can access, will assist to reduce the negative effects that covid19 has created, as this shared space is an environment where socialising can be incorporated into a safe space.

## Case Study: Knockevin Special School Dundrum

£1500



The funding was used to provide an accessible Outdoor Beach Hut for Knockevin Early Years Centre to afford all pupils a safe space together, to promote physical and emotional wellbeing through social interaction and play. The provision of this Beach Hut gave the children the much-needed opportunity to socialise and play safely outdoors, an opportunity they have been deprived of due to ongoing and necessary Covid19 restrictions.

- 27 pupils plus 10 children attending Parent and Toddler Group currently benefit at our Early Years Centre

## Case Study: Ballyholland GAC



£1500

The funding was used for our GAA project, hiring halls, equipment and kits.

*"This project helped to keep our local kids connected over the winter months. With covid19 impacting the whole world, the GAA community and especially our children, missed that social connection. That engagement and opportunity to play, have fun and CONNECT, can never ever be replaced. The memories of childhood last forever."*

## Case Study: Indian Families Newry

£1500



The funding was used for our project Happy trails, which was planned walk coffee and chat sessions for women in our community from January on fortnightly basis. The funding was also used for our Pongal celebrations and Holi celebrations which involve families and friends.

*"In these hard times we believe walk, coffee, talk brings people out of their homes, gives them a chance to make friendships and brings communities together. Celebrating Pongal together makes a lot of difference in the community, gives us hope, happiness and unity."*

# Next Steps & Scorecard

These pilots and analysis below show us that participatory budgeting is an excellent way to engage communities in decision making and that people would like to continue to participate and make decisions on how they would like public funding to be spent. It also shows what working together with other organisations can achieve. PB creates stronger links with partners and gives people the opportunity to decide what matters most to them.

The next steps for participatory budgeting in Newry, Mourne and Down is to consider how we can use this process to enable the community to make decisions on bigger issues in the district.

## Appendix

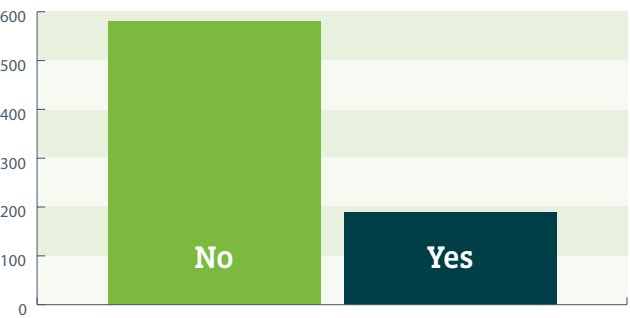
Outcome: ALL PEOPLE IN NEWRY, MOURNE AND DOWN LIVE IN RESPECTFUL, SAFE AND VIBRANT COMMUNITIES	INDICATORS		
	1 Level of Social Connections	2 Level of Social Capital	3 Level of Civic Participation

Outcome: ALL PEOPLE IN NEWRY, MOURNE AND DOWN ENJOY GOOD HEALTH AND WELLBEING	INDICATORS	
	1 Level of Preventable Death	2 Level of Health Status

## The Baseline

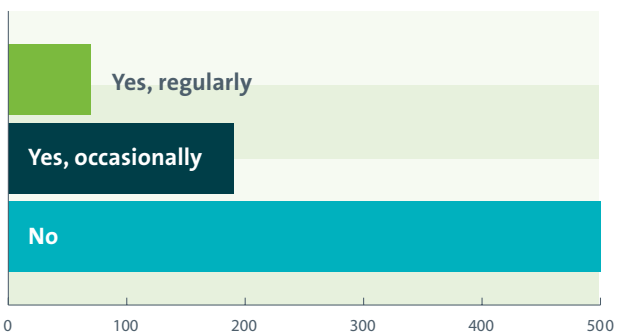
### Social Connections

NMD: Do you regularly take part in any local groups or community activities?



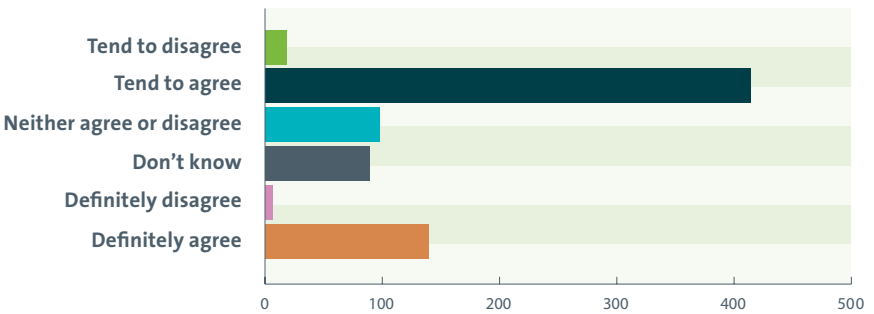
### Volunteering

NMD: Have you undertaken any work or activities on a voluntary basis in the last 12 months



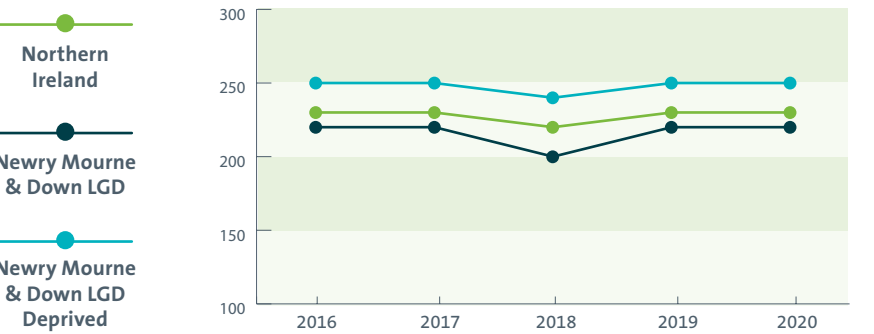
### Social Capital

NMD: To what extent do you agree or disagree that your local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together?



### Mental Health – Prescription Rate: Mood & Anxiety

Standardised Prescription Rate - Mood & Anxiety - NI, NMD & NMD Deprived (2016 - 2020)





# About Participatory Budgeting

Participatory Budgeting (PB) can be described as “Local people deciding how to allocate part of a public budget”. It is a way for citizens to have a direct say in how public funds are used to address local needs.

With a focus on community engagement PB can create an innovative means of engaging and supporting groups that may normally be excluded from traditional and more bureaucratic means of accessing financial support. PB allows for oversight of process by the relevant authority. It is far from a ‘free for all’ and is recognised as a means of supporting representative democracy.

Within the context of Community Planning in Northern Ireland, PB is one form of a more ‘deliberative’ democratic approach with the potential to assist people to learn about local needs, to prioritise issues and to extend decision making on resource allocation directly to local communities.

Within Newry, Mourne and Down in 2022 there were three PB events held across the District in Downpatrick, Newcastle and Newry. Community groups across the district were invited to apply for funding for projects that promote positive mental health by improving social connections. The participatory budgeting process involves members of the public being invited to vote for projects they think will benefit their area most.

This event was supported both financially and in kind by a range of community planning partners including The Council, Department for Communities, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust, Southern Health and Social Care Trust, Confederation of Community Groups and County Down Rural Community Network.

## Outcome

All people in Newry, Mourne and Down live in respectful, safe and vibrant communities  
All people in Newry, Mourne and Down enjoy good health and wellbeing

### How much did we do?



3 events held across the district



39 organisations awarded funding



2,141 people voted, equating to 6,220 votes



Over 3,700 participants took part in PB projects

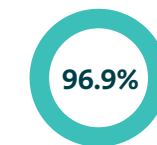


£57,000 given out to local groups / organisations

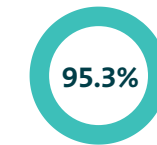
### How well did we do it?



of respondents agreed they found the process easy.



of respondents agreed that this method of financial assistance / grant delivery would encourage them to become more involved in future community projects.



of respondents agreed the process helped them feel more included in the decision-making process there was adequate information and communication provided about the process and the event.



of respondents agreed they would take part in another PB project.

### Is anyone better off?



of respondents agreed that the projects that were run had a positive impact on people's mental health.



of respondents agreed the projects promoted good social connections amongst participants.

“  
Bringing the women together from rural areas after covid19 added to their already isolated lives...”

“  
They reported back that the course gave them a ‘new lease of life’  
”

“  
Many people were discouraged by filling out the questions as they didn't want to provide information over the internet and were concerned about it being invasive to their privacy...”

“  
Older people were not confident in voting online either so an older demographic was omitted from the voting process  
”

“  
I like that the process was put to the public vote to see who got funding  
”

“  
An easy to fill in application and good that we were involved in the voting process...”

“  
It was also good that not too much reporting and paperwork is involved in feedback  
”

“  
Strength of Connections amongst the young people, improving confidence and support systems. The young people felt safe and comfortable to express themselves within the group and...”

“  
there was a noticeable improvement in the strength of the group relations after the project allowed the young people to have an opportunity to be involved and passionate about their own project, including promoting people to vote  
”

“  
It was community led from start to finish  
”

Living well  
together :-)