

CDCA - 21 years of Making Cloughey Better!

Cloughey & District Community Association



How it started

CDCA was established in 2002, when the County Down Rural Community Network (CDCRN) provided advice and guidance to enable CDCA to become a properly constituted Community Group.

Community events were organised (Halloween & Christmas Parties), various campaigns launched, and joint schools projects undertaken. Our first major improvement scheme was the Children's Somme Garden in 2005-6 which was designed to replace unsightly graffiti visible from the Main Road.

Since then there have been many projects, improvements to infrastructure, including boardwalks and picnic tables in the Warren, new tennis courts, and several landscaping and planting schemes to hide 'eyesores' and unsightly structures. Also environmental initiatives, including beach cleaning, establishment of an public amenity beach and improved sea water quality in Cloughey Bay. Community events include summer Fun Days and Christmas carol-singing and children's Halloween parties.

All of the projects have involved coordination with various government departments, local Council, grant bodies, and other voluntary organisations. CDCA initiated, campaigned, co-ordinated, and worked closely with these other organisations to achieve successful outcomes. This booklet acknowledges the contribution of the many Committee members and volunteers who have given their time and energy to 'Making Cloughey Better', as the photographs on the following pages will demonstrate.

CDCA as a 'hub' – contact point for consulting the community:

In the early days, CDCA produced and distributed newsletters on a regular basis. Since 2011, we have relied more on social media – our website at www.cloughey.org.uk, our Facebook page, and regular contact with our elected representative. In a village community word is more often spread by personal contact through the many other voluntary groups, clubs and organisations.

CDCA played a leading role in the creation of the 2014 Cloughey Village Plan, working with the appointed consultants and setting up the public meetings with local residents and stakeholders. This Plan set out a blueprint or 'road map' for the future development of the village, outlining many aspects requiring change or improvement, with input from all sections of the community.

2 stalwarts of the CDCA...



Joe Maclean

In 2002 he became the first chair of CDCA and steered the organisation through its formative years, with great skill, wisdom and humour. He was committed to improving community relations and was well-respected by all sections of the community in Cloughey & District.



Eric Rainey

Eric was our environmental 'champion' from 2008 until his death in 2019. He had been National Trust manager for Strangford Lough before retiring to Cloughey, and used his expertise to push through a number of environmental projects.

CDCA is a Community Association with a formal constitution, and is also registered as a charity with the Charities Commission. It is also recognised by ANDBC as representing the residents of Cloughey & District. An AGM is held every year at which the new Committee is elected for the incoming year.

All local residents are invited and are entitled to vote at the Annual General Meeting.

As a Community Association, CDCA is also represented on several other bodies including the Ards Peninsula Village Partnership, the County Down Rural Community Network, and the Coastal Erosion Group.

With a long and successful record of organising and obtaining funding for projects and events, CDCA has also facilitated the development of other Community Groups. These include Cloughey & District Tennis Club; Beach Care Group; Mums and Chums pre-school group; Knit & Natter group; Cloughey Heritage Group.

It is difficult for newly-formed groups to obtain grant funding as they have to tick a lot of boxes and to be properly constituted with insurance and bank account. CDCA has acted as an umbrella organisation applying for grants to get these other groups off the ground and, when successful, assisting them in becoming independent and viable. All of these groups stimulate social cohesion, and add to the sense of Community in Cloughey & District.



Cloughey Tennis Club in Action

Knit & Natter Group



Events

- Annual Fun Days in July 2006-2019
- Christmas Parties (children and seniors)
- Community Carol-singing round Christmas Tree
- Halloween Fancy Dress Parties 2005-2011
- Sand Sculpture Days 2010-2013
- Cross Community School Activities
- Pensioners Days Out
- Medieval Day at Kirkistown Castle
- Annual Remembrance Sunday & Somme Day ceremonies at Somme Garden
- Coffee Mornings
- Annual Beach Cleans (Spring & Autumn)

CDCA has organised Community Events from its earliest days...



Fun Days

From 2005 to 2019, CDCA organised an annual Fun Day at the Warren, which provided local children with a climbing tower, giant slides, archery, disco tents, face-painting and many other attractions. This was always a busy day for CDCA volunteers coordinating the event and rationing the free ice creams using cloakroom tickets.



Halloween Parties

From 2004 to 2011, CDCA organised annual Children's Party for Halloween. These events produced some impressive outfits and competition for best costume was keenly contested. Most of these were held in Cloughey Pavilion, but in 2009 we held it in the Barn at Kirkistown Castle, an appropriately spooky place for a Halloween party!



Community Singing at Christmas Tree + Children's Party with Santa

Every year on the first Wednesday in December, 2 VIPs come to Cloughey, the Mayor to switch on the lights on the village Christmas Tree, and Santa to the children's party afterwards in the Pavilion. As usual, the CDCA organises the social side including carol singing around the tree, usually supported by Kirkistown PS school choir.

Sand Sculpture Competitions

This was an annual event for several years from 2010 to 2013 with varying degrees of success. The event was very weather-dependent as nobody wants to work on the beach in the howling wind and driving rain. On the good -weather days, these events were well-attended with 100s of visitors coming from as far as Belfast and further to build their sculptures and have a good day out at Cloughey Beach.

Demonstration by professional sand sculptor at the sand sculpture day 2010



Improvement Projects

CDCA has facilitated, organised, and initiated many projects to improve the environment and the appearance of the District. We have engaged with the Council, Governmental Departments, and various Grant Bodies to enable these schemes to come to fruition.

Somme Children's Garden Project (2005-2007)

The Garden was designed to replace unsightly graffiti with a respectful memorial to the men and women who served and those who gave their lives in all of the Irish regiments. Community Relations at Ards Borough Council were closely involved in the discussions for the regular wreath-laying ceremonies which are held on 01 July (Somme Day) and Remembrance Sunday in November every year, organised by CDCA.

The garden is a place of calm reflection and includes murals of poppies made by the pupils of Kirkistown and Ballygalget Primary Schools and a central feature in the shape of a headstone with carving of children against the sunrise, a symbol of hope for the future after the terrible loss of life in the two world wars and other more recent conflicts.

Following a handover in 2012, the garden is now maintained by Ards and North Down Borough Council and the Mural was refurbished in 2022.

Somme Garden 'Hope'





Beach Cleans - Litter Picking

Community litter picking has been organised on Cloughey Beach and Warren every year since 2004 in the Spring and Autumn. These events attract local residents of all ages, and we have also welcomed Councillors & MLAs to don a pair of gloves and fill their bags.

Once these main litter picks have been done, the Cloughey Beach Care Group take over and continue all year round to gather litter on different parts of the beach on a regular basis, keeping the beach looking pristine between the big beach clean events.



Local schools helping to clean up the Beach

Sea Water Quality Testing

Initially, the Environment Agency refused to include Cloughey in their list of bathing beaches for regular sea water quality testing, as Cloughey was not a recognised bathing beach. CDCA's environmental champion, Eric Rainey obtained some funding for us to commission our own tests. These weekly tests results were reported and published by CDCA until the Environment Agency agreed to take over when Cloughey was finally recognised as a bathing beach.

Beach Cleaning Awards

CDCA has numerous Clean Coast and Green Coast Awards for our beach cleaning campaigns.

[Eric Rainey and Brian Powell receive the Green Coast Award from Ian Humphries of Live Here Love Here in 2012](#)

Waste Water Treatment Works

In 2007, CDCA supported and welcomed the development of a Waste Water Treatment Works at Slanes Point in 2008 to the sewage from the village and ending the discharge of raw sewage into the sea. This greatly improved the quality of the sea water in Cloughey Bay. The WWTW was intended as a temporary measure until a larger scheme for the whole district was built, but it appears that this will not happen in the near future and the Slanes Point facility has become a long-term solution.

In consultation with CDCA, Water NI agreed to install some landscaping to screen the installation from view, but this proved inadequate. CDCA pressed Water NI to create mounding which has now been planted with hardy plants by volunteers and this will, in time, provide better screening of the WWTW.



Protecting the Warren

Cloughey Warren had been degraded and damaged by overuse including race tracks for motorbikes and scramblers. CDCA campaigned for the prohibition of motorbikes, scramblers, and quad bikes, and action was taken by the Council's ASBO team resulting in several convictions and fines.

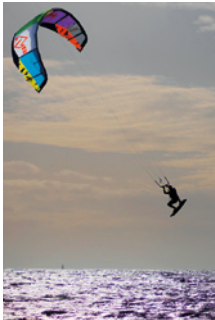
Cloughey Warren Boardwalk and Screen Planting around Pavilion

In 2010, CDCA prepared a comprehensive concept for improving the Warren. This involved screen-planting around the sports complex and network of boardwalk paths across the Warren.

This scheme was watered down several times but eventually in 2013 windbreak and screen planting of native species was implemented along with the first stage of boardwalk making a path from the carpark to the sea and from the playground to the toilets on Main Road.

The boardwalk was extended in 2017 by Outdoor NI (with funding sourced by Peninsula Healthy Living). This network of paths enables walkers to explore the Warren with minimal impact on the plants, and enabled access for the first time to those with limited mobility.

Kite-surfing at Cloughey **Picnic tables in new car park**



Beach becomes 'Amenity Beach'

CDCA persuaded Council to adopt the Northern part of Cloughey Beach as an Amenity Beach. In order to make this happen, a lease was negotiated with the farmers group who owned the beach and had rights for removal of stones and sand. This right was restricted when the beach and warren became an ASSI (Area of Special Scientific Interest) around 2006.

With CDCA's assistance, the legal issues were resolved over a 3 year period, and ANDBC is now in control of the Warren and adjoining beach area.



Community Defibrillator

We had been looking for a suitable site to house a village defibrillator, and with help from Community Heartbeat Trust, we were able to negotiate the purchase of the old kiosk for £1 from BT, on the understanding we would use it for a community defibrillator.

In the spring of 2022, our volunteers cleaned up the kiosk in readiness for installation.

CHT provided the outside stickers which transformed the kiosk in its new livery. BT agreed to provide us with electricity supply for the light and the heated Rot-Aid cabinet, which houses the AED, ready for use and immediately available in this unlocked facility.

In the first 6 months since installation, our Community AED has been used 4 times.



Water Fountain at Cloughey Warren

In 2022, with financial help from Seachangers and Live Here Love Here, CDCA installed this fountain beside the public toilets and Warren car park in Cloughey. Ards & North Down Council consented to have it installed on their building and provided the connection to mains water supply. An example of cooperation between several organisations to get things done.

These communal water fountains for refilling water bottles are an effective way to reduce plastic waste. Cyclists, walkers, beach-goers, and even dogs are making full use of the fountain.



Why plant trees?

Northern Ireland has the lowest percentage of forest in all of Europe. Tree planting plays an important part in the strategy to combat the effects of Climate Change. Trees and shrubs also provide a habitat for birds, insects and small animals.

Cloughey occupies an exposed position on the coast and is subjected to strong winds from all directions. There are no forests or substantial trees nearby that could 'slow down' the wind. The planting of as many trees as possible will provide additional shelter to everyone in the village, and make it easier to enjoy outdoor activities. Native species provide habitat for birds and wild mammals, improve biodiversity, and help to save the planet!



Below are some examples of tree-planting by CDCA over the past 15 years.

Main Road Tree Planting 2003–2022

In 2003, approx. 25 trees were planted along Main Road, with each tree accompanied by a plaque with names of school children in the village, from both Primary schools.

The plaques have survived but in the harsh conditions exposed to the cold east winds, all of the initial trees struggled and most died. In 2010 another attempt was made using professional landscapers and again the trees struggled although most of them survived. In 2021 several of the surviving trees were replaced with Austrian & Scots pines. Most of these are now thriving with regular watering by our volunteers.

Palm Trees at Main Road

In 2010, CDCA purchased approx. 100 palm trees (*Cordyline Australis*) and persuaded

the Council to plant them along Main Road between the public toilets and the Somme Garden. These are planted in clumps of 3 or 4, and are now well established, creating a distinctive, almost tropical, appearance along Cloughey seafront.

Pine Trees beside Tennis Courts

In 2020, CDCA and the Tennis Club planted 12 Scots Pine trees with help from Council Parks Department who supplied a load of topsoil. After our earlier problems with the poor ground, this time we excavated a large hole for each tree and substituted good topsoil for the existing sand and stones.

Tree Planting at Portaferry Road

In 2021 CDCA planted approx. 250 native species saplings donated by Woodland Trust along a strip of land beside the Francis Watson Farm Tackle store. This will eventually provide a green screen for visitors arriving in Cloughey from Portaferry direction and a habitat for birds.



Tile Mural and Landscaping around new Pumping Station at Main Road

This art project was a joint cross-community exercise. Individual tiles with local themes were designed by pupils from the 2 primary schools (Kirkistown and St Patrick's Ballygalget). The tiles were then mounted in a mural on the outside wall of the pumping station opposite the Primary School – a lasting legacy.



Mayor Stephen McIlveen with P7 pupils from Kirkistown PS and St Patricks Ballygalget PS who did the artwork for the tile mural.

In March 2023, Volunteers from Cloughey FC planted 34 oak trees on Council land beside football pitch at Calhame. Trees provided by Woodland Trust.



CDCA community garden created from rough waste ground beside playground, looks good all year round.

Daffodils in Cloughey

CDCA volunteers have planted some 7000 daffodils along Main Road and Kircubbin Road in 2021 and 2022. These clumps of daffodils provide a spectacular spring display which can be enjoyed by residents and visitors alike.



Heritage and Conservation

Kirkistown Castle

The Castle is the most notable building in Cloughey and the CDCA has supported the view that it could be an important factor in promoting tourism in the area.

It was built in 1640s and is well-preserved example of a fortified Tower House. The building and grounds are in State care and currently undergoing refurbishment by HED. The Castle has been closed since the covid lockdown in 2019 and should be reopening in 2023.

Since 2016 CDCA volunteers have manned the Castle on Open Days in the Summer months, allowing local families and visitors to explore the inside of the tower house and learn about its history.



Cloughey Old Presbyterian Church

Known as the Meeting House, it had not been used for many years and was falling into disrepair. Cloughey Heritage Group was formed with initial assistance from CDCA in 2019 and has 'stopped the rot' while preparing a refurbishment scheme for this historic building which has recently been 'listed'.



Cloughey Village Plan 2014

In preparation for the transfer of planning powers to the new district Councils, Village Plans were drawn up for several villages on the Ards Peninsula. CDCA worked in cooperation with consultants appointed to ensure that local preferences were reflected in the plan.

CDCA organised several public meetings at which options were presented and local residents were able to express their views. Also consulted were business and other local organisations (including Sports clubs, schools and churches) in a stakeholders group.

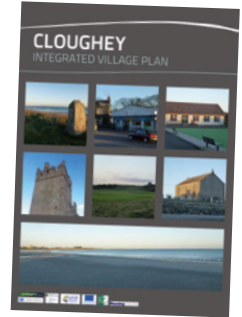
Children from the local primary schools were also canvassed on what changes they would welcome. There was a high level of participation from all these groups, and the final plan was published in 2014.

Launch event for Village Plan.
L-R Lee Jenkinson CDCA, Stephen McIlveen, Mayor, Vince McDevitt, DEARA, Alan Graham, Deputy Mayor.

In 2018, Council carried out a review of the village plan and again CDCA was closely involved with the update which is part of the regular Area Plan procedures. The revised plan can be viewed on the Cloughey website and also on the ANDBC website.

The proposals set out in the plan provides a 'road' map' for the Council Planning Officers when considering new developments in Cloughey. Many of the recommendations for future development have already happened in line with the Plan.

The plan can be viewed online through the ANDBC website and www.cloughey.org.uk



CDCA Committee and volunteers

We would like to acknowledge and thank all CDCA committee members and volunteers, past and present, who have contributed, through their time and effort, to our achievements over the last 21 years.

YES YOU CAN play a part in MAKING CLOGHEY BETTER!

Opportunities for volunteers for many aspects of our activities. Do you have specialist skills or experience that can help us & contribute to the local community?

Regular Activities:

- Beach cleaning & Litter picking
- Community Garden maintenance
- Tree-planting
- Helping out at events
- Communications - Social media – Twitter, Facebook and Website
- Defibrillator maintenance and monitoring
- Reporting faults and damage to facilities – potholes, street lights, signage, vandalism, graffiti
- Lobbying Council officials and elected representatives on local issues

Maybe you have idea for a pet project for improving life in Cloughey, that you would like to promote, or an idea for a new activity group. Get in touch and we can discuss how to make your ideas happen and keep you informed of upcoming activities. We can point you in the right direction and help you to source funding for your project or interest group... *Sports, Hobbies, Special interests, Local history & Infrastructure ideas.*

Contact CDCA

Email: clougheycdca@gmail.com
www.cloughey.org.uk



We would also like to thank the following organisations...

Housing Executive, Peninsula Healthy Living, European Development Fund, Outdoor N.I. Community Heartbeat Trust, Ards Community Partnership, PSNI, National Lottery Awards For All.

