

CASTLEWELLAN REGENERATION
LIMITED



Working in Partnership

ANNUAL REPORT

2006

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Castlewellan Regeneration Ltd

Mission Statement

The mission statement, which was developed by the group to give a sense of direction and organisation, is as follows:

“Castlewellan Regeneration Ltd aim to regenerate the economic, environmental and social life of Castlewellan by encouraging statutory, voluntary and private bodies and individuals to invest their time and money in the town and district. By sharing and participating in partnerships with others, Castlewellan Regeneration Ltd also endeavours to improve the fabric of the wider South East Down region to the benefit of all its people.”

CASTLEWELLAN REGENERATION

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Ladies and gentlemen,

This past year has been a very busy one for Castlewellan Regeneration. Our major new project "The Lodge" has been worked up to completions stage.

1. The funding package is in place – a terrific job showing the hard work of the committee members and officers and the confidence the funding bodies have in Castlewellan regeneration Ltd and this project.

The Lodge Project , Castlewellan capital funding secured

D.S.D	£282,000
R.D.C	£150,000
I.F.I	£250,000
D.D.C	£22,000
ENERGY SAVING TRUST	£34,000
N.I.E	£15,000
ULSTER BANK LOAN	<u>£25,000</u>
TOTAL	£763,000

Other bids to be made:

Down LSP - fitting out sound and lighting etc	£30,000
Carbon Trust – additional energy efficiency measures	£33,000
Comhaltas – potential future revenue income from regional centre status.	

My deep thanks to all involved especially Nicholas McCrickard and Margaret Cunningham

2. The plans for the project have been the subject of several discussions but I can announce tonight that the application is coming to Down District on Monday 6th March with full permission. I would like to thank the architect Joe Walsh and his team and to Down Council for sponsoring the application.
3. This leaves us now ready to start preparing for the tendering stage and hopefully awarding the contractor soon.

We also this year completed too smaller but very significant projects.

1) Castlewellan information leaflets.

This was an important up dating of the services and accommodation available in Castlewellan. It is well put together and attractively designed. Already is has been circulated widely.

2) The Clumps

This project restored the Clumps around the trees in the Lower Square and brought them back to what they were. This was a very welcome scheme dealing with a special and unique aspect of Castlewellan's history.

I can also report that Down Council Outreach pilot scheme has gone well into its second year. This is a pioneering project where Castlewellan Regeneration has gone into partnership with the Council to provide an officer in the Corncrane Centre to provide outreach services for the Council. Anne Devlin is the officer and I would like to thank her for all her work and for the continued success of the pilot scheme.

We are very fortunate in having the services of Philip Cunningham who came to us through a Connect scheme. Philip had been working on the Community survey 2006 for Castlewellan. We were fortunate in that he had the ability to prepare, carry out and produce a really excellent survey, we have this as the ground plan for further activities.

Already two areas for action are emerging:- provision for young people who are not engaged in sporting activity and facilities for the older members of the community. We are organising a number of in-house meetings to sort out the findings of the report into agendas for lobbying. Therefore, with the construction of the work on the Lodge project and the outcome of the survey we have a very busy year ahead of us.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who helped in any way over the past year and especially the traders of Castlewellan town for their continues support and financial contribution regarding the Christmas Lights.

Yours Sincerely
Eamonn O'Neill
Chairman of C.R.L

Background of Castlewellan Regeneration Ltd

Castlewellan Regeneration Ltd was established to help regenerate the area, this was due to the amount of derelict properties within the town centre and the decline of visitors to the area. 1993 saw the town of Castlewellan designated a **CRISP Community** (Community Regeneration and improvement Special Programme). The scheme was developed by the International Fund for Ireland involving community organisations, which were supported by the Department of the Environment. This was launched to assist communities with a population up to 10,000 living in areas of social and economic deprivation.

KEY AIMS

- **Urban Regeneration**
- **Relief of Poverty**
- **Provision of Education and Training**
- **Creation of Employment**

The Corncrane Building

This large two-storey building was primarily used for weighing, storing and the selling of grain at the turn of the century. It acted as an epicentre of trade for the Castlewellan and surrounding area, with some products being exchanged in the immediate locality, whilst others followed the international route via Dundrum Harbour. The building has since varied its use from Parochial and Governmental functions to the modern community commercial enterprise activities, which it now offers. However, this local landmark has an underlying premise of serving the local community through offering educational training, providing information on health and safety welfare, tourist information, youth activities and other environmental and social facts that the town area may possess.

The prime focus of Castlewellan Regeneration Ltd in the past has been on environmental improvements in the town, projects including Hillyard House and the renovation of the Corncrane Building in the Lower Square. C.R.L. have always helped promote Castlewellan as a tourist destination, and in 2000/2001, C.R.L. secured funding in conjunction with D.A.R.D. to implement a Gateway Centre/T.I.P. in the reception area of the Corncrane. This has made a significant impact and attracted a number of visitors/tourists seeking information. Castlewellan Regeneration Ltd will continue to highlight Castlewellan's tourism potential in order to boost the economic regeneration of the town and surrounding area.

Entity Type – Company Limited by Guarantee

Date Founded/Incorporated – 5th March 1993

Under the CRISP Scheme C.R.L. have achieved a number of projects, these include:

U.D.G.

Planting trees on Main Street

Hanging Baskets

New Footpaths/Removal of overhead cables

Spruce Up Campaign

Christmas Lights

Santa & Christmas Entertainment for local children

Hillyard House (Now in the hands of the private sector)

Corncrane Building

The Walking Trail (History & map of Castlewellan town)

Tourist Information point within the Corncrane Building

I.T. Training for Voluntary Groups (DSD)

Energy Advice Centre

Cross Community Art Project for local schools

After School Club

C.R.L. have been instrumental in helping with the Peace Maze and Celtic Fusion

CURRENT USERS OF THE CORNCRANE BUILDING

Bible Studies

Yoga

Weight Watchers

Karate

Local Nursery Schools

Greenmount Agricultural Group

Down Lisburn Trust

Black face sheep raiders

Art Class

Autism Initiatives Day care

Colour healing

P J Curran Photographer

Basic English for foreigners

Diabetics Class

Current Tenants of the Corncrane Building

The Highpoint Group

Second Nature

Autism Initiatives

Hickory Dickory Dock

Apostolic Work (Mission shop)

THE CLUMPS

The town of Castlewellan was designed by a French architect in the 18th century. This design consisted of many special features:- the broad main street and the two squares have made Castlewellan the only town in Ireland with this layout. Several ideas used in the layout were influenced by planners and designers from the period of the French King Louis xiv. One of his most prominent ideas was the planting of trees both inside the town and on the roads leading into the town. Indeed, he is reputed to have said he wanted Castlewellan to be known as the “Champs d’ Elysee of Ireland”.

From Gaelic times Castlewellan has always been a traditional market location and the new town was to be a vibrant market town. The Clumps were a simple and effective method of protecting the roots and the base of the trees from the hooves of the animals sheltering under the trees on market days. They of course doubled as public seating and were used over the years for all kinds of children’s games.

The restoration of the Clumps by Castlewellan Regeneration Ltd is upholding the social history of the town. The Clumps have been a unique feature of the town since its layout in 1749 and the restoration has been well received by the local community.

LEAFLETS

CRL successfully received funding from the Mourne Heritage Trust to design and print leaflets, providing visitors and tourists on information on Castlewellan and the amenities and services that are on offer throughout the town. These leaflets were distributed throughout the district and additional copies are available at the Corncrane for people to take.

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

The Christmas Lights Scheme was a great success with most of the trees in the town lit up for the festive season. This year we were able to light up most of the trees in the Upper and Lower Square area of the town and repair/replace existing lights. This was achieved by CRL securing funding from Down District Council for the sum of **£3094** and **£730** in donations from local traders.

To coincide with the switching on of the Christmas Lights, Santa was in attendance at the Corncrane in a specially designed grotto that went down well with the children and their parents. A total of 250 children were able to meet and receive a small gift free from Santa. This has become an annual event with the numbers of children and adults increasing each year. Castlewellan Regeneration would like to thank Down District Council and the local traders for their ongoing support to enable the implementation of the Christmas activities.

SPRUCE UP CAMPAIGN

In the past our Spruce Up Campaign has been extremely successful in contributing to the over all outlook of the town.

THE LODGE PROJECT

The proposed project represents an exciting opportunity for Castlewellan Regeneration Ltd to:

- Create a sustainable business centre that incorporates the commercial rental of office accommodation and training rooms to a mix of private sector and community business tenants; and
- Regenerate a run down property that detracts from the aesthetic value of the town of Castlewellan.

The proposed project seeks to refurbish a listed building in Castlewellan. The building is known locally as “The Lodge” and occupies a prime site in the centre of the town.

The refurbished property would be used as a business centre which would provide space for office/training accommodation. The accommodation will be let out on a commercial basis.

FUTURE PLANS

With the impending withdrawal of EU funding community and voluntary groups are investigating new ways of ensuring that their projects are sustainable and last beyond the life of funding packages. Castlewellan Regeneration Ltd have been successful in that they are a viable and sustainable community business particularly with the Corncrane Building. We need to ensure that we look at different ideas and methods, with reference to the building as a whole. Castlewellan Regeneration Ltd carried out a Community Audit that was well received and had a favourable response rate by the community of Castlewellan.

Castlewellan Regeneration Ltd held their launch for their community audit at the Corncrane Centre on Friday 27th January at 12.30pm. Those in attendance included a broad range from local community groups to statutory and independent sector organisations.

The study highlights some of the key issues and concerns of people in the Castlewellan community. Philip Cunningham who is the area’s Social Economy Development Officer carried out the audit. The audit represents many months hard work by the community of Castlewellan, and reflects the views of people living in the area on many aspects of living that affect their quality of life.

It explored a range of issues including :

- Services in the area
- Recreational facilities
- Shopping
- Senior citizen provision
- Employment/Adult-education advice
- Environmental issues

- Problems in the Community
- Community Spirit
- Development Priorities
- Youth Priorities

It is a detailed comprehensive insight into the views and needs of the local community and it will provide an invaluable tool in providing an agenda for local Government and it merits close examination by all agencies interested in promoting positive change in the Castlewellan area of Down District.

Some of the needs identified in the audit include youth provision, environmental issues and senior citizen provision. It is going to require an orchestrated approach from all the agencies to ensure that issues identified are addressed. We in CRL will be looking in particularly close detail at the lack of youth provision, and provision for the elderly as our priorities. It has given us some fresh ideas and an impetus to channel our energies into a number of different areas.

Castlewellan Regeneration Ltd have approached Active Ware in setting up of a Castlewellan website that would provide information on activities, services, community issues, advertising space for traders etc.

The Regeneration Committee have been in existence for over 10 years and during that time have achieved a lot – both in terms of providing facilities for Castlewellan and encouraging people in Castlewellan and surrounding areas to invest in the town and its property. This has led to Castlewellan having a very vibrant commercial life and we are anxious to continue and build on this progress.

The existing members of CRL are:

Mr Eamonn O’Neill
 Mrs Jean King
 Mr Sam Brannigan
 Mr Eamon King
 Mr Terry O’Reilly
 Mr George Lavery
 Mr John Rice
 Mr John Shilladay

Castlewellan Regeneration Ltd hope to continue and build on what we have achieved for the good of the people of Castlewellan and the surrounding area.

Once again we thank all those individuals, statutory and voluntary organisations who we have worked with in the past and hope to continue to work with in the future.

Castlewellan Regeneration Ltd
A.G.M
22 February 06
Venue Corncrane
Agenda

Welcome and Apologies

Chairman's Address

The Lodge

The Clumps

The Leaflets

D.D.C Information Officer

Community Audit

Future Plans

Financial Report

A.O.B