



SHANKILL IS BACK!

The Shankill is on the way back and its future is secure. Recent figures confirm a year-on-year increase in the school population of the area from 2007. This is the first increase in the Shankill's population since the 1960's and the intervening dark years of the Troubles and redevelopment.

And now the area has been declared the Greater Shankill Children & Young People Zone, which it is claimed, will transform the lives of this generation of children.

The Zone was designated through the area's Community Convention, by all its politicians and

community organisations and has won the backing of eight Stormont Government Ministers and their Departments, across all parties.

"This is a 20 year programme which will work with the 5,968 children and young people in the Greater Shankill, to enable them to more fully

realise their potential", said Jackie Redpath, one of the Zone's co-ordinators.

As well as the Government Ministers, the Zone is also backed by some big name Patrons, including Senator George Mitchell, who chaired the Northern Ireland Peace Talks; Sir Nigel Hamilton, former Head of the Civil Service, who went to the Boys Model, our own Baroness May Blood and Professor Johnston, the Vice Chancellor of Queen's University.

Queen's has committed itself to working as a partner in the Zone and will ensure that its

progress is monitored.

"This has been 20 years in the making", said M.P. Nigel Dodds, "and it will take 20 years to fully realise its potential but the work has started and people will begin to see a difference".

The Zone is co-ordinated in behalf of the Convention, through the Greater Shankill Agreed Agenda Group, which includes all the area's elected representatives and key communities constituencies.



Editorial

STATE OF THE SHANKILL

It's official – the Shankill is on the way back! The green shoots of recovery have been there for some time but now the figures, showing an increase, year-on-year for the past seven years, of the Greater Shankill's school population, confirms that the corner has been turned for the first time in fifty years and those dark days of the Troubles and redevelopment.

The free-fall of the population during the redevelopment of the 1970's and then the seepage of the Shankill's very soul during the 1980's and early 1990's has ended and the growth of our young population, while small, is of massive significance.

However, the horrors of those decades of violence, redevelopment, population and job losses on an "industrial scale", have left a deep mark on our lives and psyche. It is often etched on the faces of our older people and sadly on the limited life chances of our children.

That is why the increasing population numbers game is not enough. If we just keep doing what we've always done, we'll get what we've always got. It is why the Greater Shankill Children & Young People Zone is of great significance.

The Zone itself has been twenty years in the making and it will take twenty years to fully realise its vision but the "game is on" to transform the lives of this generation of children and young people.

Our mission is to support every child and young person in our community on their journey to realising their potential. That mission, set by the Community Convention and its "Agreed Agenda", will only be accomplished if we all work together and stay as one. That includes Government Departments and their Agencies; our politicians and community groups; our schools, sports clubs, youth clubs and churches and everyone who makes up our community – especially our families.

The Zone is variously the framework, the space, the crucible within which this will be developed and co-ordinated. It is the best chance, a world class, a "made in Shankill" chance for this generation.

Put simply, we owe it to our children and grand-children.



DECLARED

There are 5,968 reasons why the Greater Shankill Children & Young People Zone is important – it's the number of 0-20 year olds in the area at the last count.

The Zone has promised that "one at a time, for as long as it takes", it will work to support every child in this generation to more fully realise their potential.

The Zone was declared by the area's Community Convention and has the backing of Ministers across eight Stormont Departments and across political parties.

The Zone will pull together all Government Agencies, local groups, youth clubs, churches and schools, with a singular, co-ordinated focus on the area's children and improving their life's chances.

However, the key will be an individual plan for every child in the area, worked out with them and a supported pathway for them to fulfil their hopes and aspirations.



THE PATHFINDERS

The 20 year journey of the Zone starts with a conversation with each child and young person in the Greater Shankill. The conversations are about "the story they want their lives to be" and the pathway to get there.

These conversations have now started with the first group of children and their families. The "pathfinders" in this early stage of the Zone's development are staff of the Integrated Services for Children & Young People

programme, who are talking to families they know from their involvement in ISCYP. Because of the level of trust, families and their children are helping design how to go about the conversations, so that they can be replicated with other children and young people and lessons learned for others who will carry out the conversations as the process expands.

Emerging from each conversation an individual pathway will be jointly developed with every child

and young person and when very young, their family.

Sustained support will then be put around each child as they begin their journey to realise their potential.

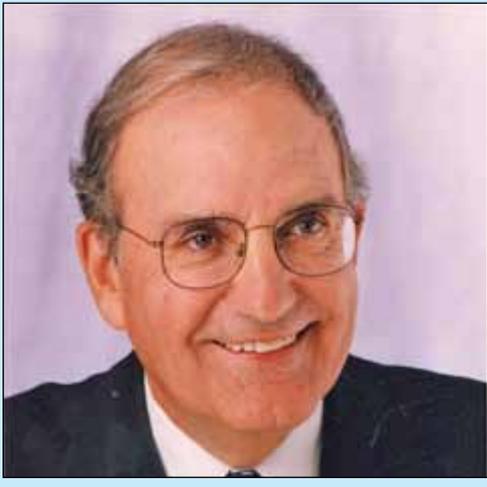
Following seamlessly, these initial set of conversations will be sealed up over the next year, involving individuals from groups across the Greater Shankill, who will be trained up in the "art of conversation" with children and young people.



Senator George Mitchell

Former Special Envoy of President Bill Clinton to Northern Ireland and architect of the Peace Process.

He is the Zone's North American representative.



Baroness May Blood

Former mill worker, trade unionist and community worker.

Sits as a Labour member of the House of Lords.

Chair of Shankill Surestart.





STORY SO FAR

The Greater Shankill Children & Young People Zone is a framework within which the lives of this generation of children and young people will be transformed.

The Zone was designated by the Shankill's Community Convention and endorsed by Ministers in September 2014, initially across seven Departments. The Zone was 20 years 'in the making' and will take 20 years to fully realise its vision of a Greater Shankill in which "all our children & young people will be realising their potential & shaping their future".

The foundation for this 20 year journey has been laid over the past year. That journey will start with 'conversations', one at a time, with every child and young person (5,968 at the last count) and their families in the Shankill community. At core,

conversations will be built around 'the story' the children & young people want their lives to be. The pathway to fulfil that 'story' will be co-designed and then sustained support will be 'wrapped around' each child & young person, on a personalised basis, as they move on their described journey towards their defined outcomes. That support will come from 'the willing' in agencies, organisations, groups - statutory, private, voluntary and community based - with an interest in children & young people in Greater Shankill.

The Zone is variously the framework, the space, the crucible within which this will all be developed and co-ordinated. For the community, the Zone will provide focus, coherence and alignment for programmes and initiatives, as it will for Government Departments, Agencies, Institutions and all relevant sectors.



The Zone's Mission
To support every child & young person in the Greater Shankill on the journey to realising their potential.

“ The objectives of the Zone are rock solid and I encourage everyone to be resilient now going forward. This is hugely important for the whole community and especially for the children and young people. I personally am even more committed to the Zone. ”

Sir Nigel Hamilton KCB



The Zone's Vision
“All our children & young people will be realising their potential & shaping their future.”

“ I am honoured to serve as a Patron for the Greater Shankill Children & Young People Zone. It is critical that we engender hope and possibility in this generation of children in Northern Ireland. The Zone is committed to that and in turn I am committed to the Zone and to the work that is taking place and stand ready to assist in any way I can. ”

Senator George Mitchell

GREATER SHANKILL GENERATION

A group of young people have been advising the Zone on its development.

Known as G.S. Generation, the group has emerged over the past three years from the Summer Transition School in the Spectrum Centre for children moving primary to their "big school".

Each year up to 100 children have gone through the Shankill Summer School, who then have

an option of staying on for a winter development programme supported by the Shankill Partnership's Sarah Jane Waite.

From this Greater Shankill (G.S.) Generation, a group have emerged who have been advising on the development of the Zone and inputting their ideas.

The Zone's branding is their choice, assisted by the design team of Creative 3.

ZONE FACTS

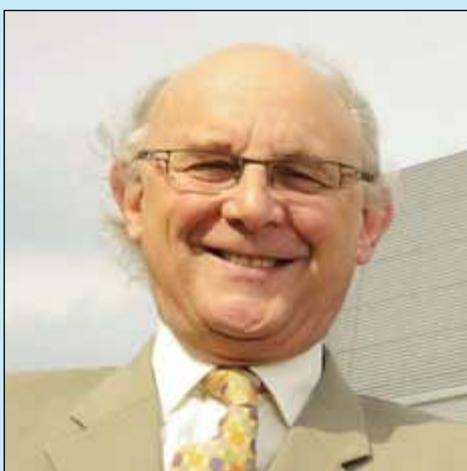
1. The Zone has four Patrons: Sir Nigel Hamilton; Baroness May Blood; Prof. Patrick Johnston & Senator George Mitchell.
2. The Greater Shankill Children & Young People Zone was designated on 2nd September 2014 by the Greater Shankill Community Convention and endorsed on 4th September 2014 by Minister's from DE, DCAL, DSD, Health, Justice and subsequently DEL & OFMDFM.
3. The Convention established an Agreed Agenda Group, of the areas politicians and key community constituencies, to 'take forward' the Zone.
4. A small Support Team, drawn from existing programmes, is currently responsible for the Zone's development, reporting to the Agreed Agenda Group and the Convention.
5. The Zone draws its mandate from the Community Convention and is ultimately responsible to the children & young people of the Greater Shankill.
6. Queens University Belfast is a declared partner of the Zone



Sir Nigel Hamilton

Former Head Boy at the Boys Model and former Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

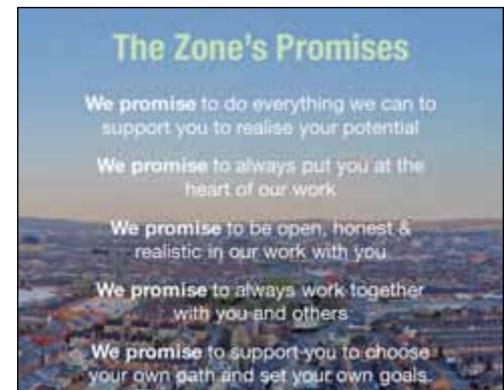
Has recently established a University bursary for Boys Model



Professor Patrick Johnston

Vice Chancellor of Queen's University and a world cancer expert.

Professor Johnston has committed Queen's as a partner with the Shankill Zone.



The Zone's Promises
We promise to do everything we can to support you to realise your potential
We promise to always put you at the heart of our work
We promise to be open, honest & realistic in our work with you
We promise to always work together with you and others
We promise to support you to choose your own path and set your own goals

“ Queen's is committed to making a positive impact on society & this includes our support for the Greater Shankill Children & Young People Zone. There has been positive engagement to explore ways to transform the life opportunities of young people in the Shankill. This will be a long-term project - transformational change always takes time - and we pledge to continue our support for this important work. ”

Prof. Patrick Johnston, Vice Chancellor, QUB





Baby massage.



SureStart mums.



Tiny Steps 2 year old programme.

GOOD START – SURESTART

You might live to 90 years old but what happens to you in your first 3 years will have the greatest impact on the rest of your life.

Science has now shown that those early years of a child's life are the period by far of fastest growth and development of the brain and social skills and they predict, in most cases, a person's life path.

That's why it's so important that children have a good experience of their early years and parents and families are vital to this – however, it's a tough job and that's where Surestart comes in.

The Greater Shankill Early Years Project, which includes Surestart, has just celebrated its 20th birthday on the Road and it has supported thousands of parents from before birth, through those first 3 years of

their child's life, with a range of programmes.

"Mellow Bumps" is a programme during pregnancy for mum and baby helping bonding and preparation for becoming a parent.

Once the baby arrives, Surestart has a home visiting, home support programme, if new parents want it and then mum and baby can join in classes for infant massage and even baby yoga.

As the baby grows into a toddler, Surestart can then offer specialist help, if problems start to arise, like any speech and language difficulties and of course there are a series of Mother & Toddler Groups.

The flagship programme of Surestart is "Tiny Steps", a programme for 2-3 year olds before they start nursery school. With places for 48 children, the programme runs out of a number of venues

including the Alessie Centre at 60 Shankill Road and the Hannah Centre in Ballysillan. This child-led learning programme prepares children for the step up into nursery and has been shown to have big positive impacts on the development of children who have benefitted from the programme.

Finally, Early Years doesn't forget Dads and the "Dad's Matter Initiative" supports

fathers to enhance their parenting skills.

Shankill Surestart can be contacted on telephone number 028 9087 4000 or call to
The Alessie Centre
 60 Shankill Road
Hannah Centre
 915 Crumlin Road
 or **Martin Centre**
 130 Ballygomartin Road,
 Belfast.

NURSERY EXPERIENCE IS VITAL

'Beginning at the beginning' is a foundation stone of the Greater Shankill Children & Young People Zone and a Nursery Head has backed this key focus of the Zone, believing that a Nursery School experience is a key part of a young child's pathway in life.

Emma Corry, the visionary Principal of Shaftesbury Nursery in Percy Street stated, 'Being involved in the Children's Zone has opened up a whole new window of opportunity for us to make a difference to the future of the children' and she went on to say she was 'delighted to be working closely with the Zone in order to shape & develop the way forward for children in the Shankill'. Emma made a keynote and inspirational address to the Greater Shankill Zone Convention last September, emphasising the importance of a child's 'early years' as a foundation for the rest of their lives.

Emma has been Principal of Shaftesbury for the past 9 years, arriving with years of experience in Children's Centres in England. She believes that 'children must have the opportunity to explore, learn & develop at their own pace' & she has set out in her Nursery to provide such an environment. 'We have large classrooms full of exciting learning opportunities & also have many outdoor learning activities in our amazing garden & playground, which incorporates an outdoor storytelling area in under the trees'. Involving families is another key facet of Shaftesbury's approach & parents & families take part regularly in a

range of activities. Meanwhile, further up the Road, the green light has been given, by the Department of Education, for the building of a new 'state of the art' Edenderry Nursery in Lanark Way. Work on the new building has commenced and Edenderry Nursery Principal, Nancy Magrath said, 'it has be a long road to get to this point but we are delighted that work is about to start & Shankill's new generation of Shankill children will be able to learn in a facility that they deserve.'



Shaftesbury playground.



The spacious classrooms.

Edenderry Nursery School
 Nancy McGrath - 028 9023 8651

Hope Nursery School
 Sandra Andrews - 028 9032 3185

Tudor Lodge Nursery School
 Diane Murdock - 028 9035 1684

Shaftesbury Nursery School
 Emma Corrie - 028 9032 1903

Harmony Nursery School
 Alison Hutchinson - 028 9039 1332

Blackmountain Nursery Unit
 Paula Doherty - 028 9023 7463

GREATER SHANKILL NURSERIES



Jill Black, Principal of Blackmountain Primary School.

SCHOOL HELPS PARENTS HELP THEIR CHILDREN



Left: Julie Johnston with her son, Harley

Below: Blackmountain Primary School



A school needs to be in partnership with the community.

That's the theory behind the Zone and it is the proven experience of the school up the mountain, Black Mountain Primary.

By working with the families of pupils the school has made itself so attractive that its pupil numbers have shot up in five years, from 87 to 145.

And that's because the school has found the formula for working with parents whose own experience of education in the past has been disheartening.

The principal is Jill Black.

Jill says, 'We came across parents who did not feel very comfortable coming into school. Maybe they didn't get much out of school themselves so they don't really place a value on education. Some lack the confidence and self esteem to walk through the door.'

'We feel here that we need to build a good partnership with the parents and that the children of parents who do have that partnership do a

lot better.'

She insists that there are 'no parents who don't want their children to succeed.'

So the school helps parents to help their children.

They do it in two ways.

There is the Fast programme, developed by Save The Children.

'We get parents into school to see that the teachers want the same as they want. It's a relationship building activity.'

Up to thirty families are taking part in this, and that means that everyone in the family is invited, from babies to grannies.

Jill says, 'They are shown active play and relationship building and how to have fun with your child.'

But, as part of this programme, children are taken away by teaching assistants to let the adults discuss what they have learnt. Then they all eat together.

But the crucial thing is that parents themselves get trained to be facilitators in the same programme.

The school also provides support for parents to read with their children, and that's a challenge sometimes because some parents don't have the habit of reading.

Jill says, 'We have a mixed bag, maybe forty percent who do get involved but we have a strong core there who don't because they don't have the skills and are embarrassed to show it. Some may come across as really brash, as if they don't care, but they really do care.'

Some parents want to go too fast; they think that by P2 their children shouldn't be reading from picture books, but Jill emphasises the need to take things gently.

And she knows that sometimes schools get criticised and have the whole responsibility for educating children dumped onto them.

'Society needs to pull its socks up and help the schools.'

Black mountain has proven that it helps.

MALVERN VICTORY



'It's a victory for the children', that was the verdict on the successful campaign to save Malvern Primary School from closure.

Word seeped out of the BELB's intention to close Malvern (formerly Hemsworth) during the summer holidays of 2014 and a year-long campaign was launched which united children, parents, teachers, local politicians, community representatives and trade unions.

It ended when Education Minister John O'Dowd stepped in and reversed the BELB's decision.

The Education Board claimed that there were not enough pupils at the school and that the

school had overspent its budget. However, campaigners put the 100 pupils at the heart of the argument, claiming that until there was a new school built in Agnes Street, the children were better served in Malvern than being dispersed to other schools throughout the area.

Following the Minister's decision to keep the school open on certain conditions, community and political representatives, with the Education Authority, are now working on a range of options to make the best future for all children in the Shankill area and to make sense of the school provision in the area.



TOP MARKS AT BOYS MODEL

There's nothing a school likes better than top marks and Boy's Model has reason to be pleased with itself.

For its own marks are soaring. Not just those of the pupils but those of the school itself.

Last year the Model was given a complete inspection, something teachers privately dread, but the school came out of it with a glowing report.

And this wasn't just for the academic attainment of the boys but for their enthusiasm for learning, their courtesy, their motivation and their self confidence.

The awesome Education and Training Inspectorate, which swoops on schools with little warning, to examine their results and the quality of their teaching, found that over the last three years Boy's Model has been above

average for similar schools in Northern Ireland, when measured by the percentage of pupils who are getting three or more A levels at grades A to C.

And at GCSE level the marks are high too.

Boy's Model has been in line with or above average in two out of the last three years, in its GCSE results, with a 'significant improvement' in English.

And progress extends to disadvantaged pupils too. Nearly a third of pupils on free school meals are now getting five GCSEs at grades A to C including English and maths.

And it isn't just pupils who have been getting high scores.

The inspectors reports comments in the actual teaching and says that four out of five classes observed were 'very good or better'.

Better than 'very good'!



Sir Nigel Hamilton with High Sherrif, Guy Spence & Model Head Boy, Cooper Sheridan

The teaching was characterised by 'well planned, innovative strategies that meet the pupils needs; incisive questioning by the teachers to extend their knowledge and understanding; and learning that optimises the pupils' inquisitiveness and interests.'

So this is a school that stimulates inquiring minds and that is official.

Principal Alan Logan, who has been in post for just four years, says the credit goes to the whole leadership team.

Vice principal Mary Montgomery says, 'we start from the principle that all children are smart in their own way, and we try to support them to be the best they can.'

OLD BOYS PROVIDE BURSARY FOR MODEL PUPILS

Former Boys Model pupils have stepped up "to the plate" to help current 'A' level pupils.

The "Old Boys", pulled together by former Head of the Civil Service Nigel Hamilton, who was a Model Head Boy back in the day, have dug deep to set up a bursary scheme for Model Boys going on to university. Bursaries of up to £3,000 will be offered initially to a small group of boys going on to university. As the fund grows the bursaries will be extended to other groups of boys.

Any Old Boy wanting be part of this should contact:

Mary Montgomery at the Model

T: 028 9039 1156



Boys Model Head Alan Logan talks to two "Old Boys"



Former Model "Old Boys" at the Bursary launch

SHARING EDUCATION AND EXCELLENCE

Schools in North Belfast are lending out pupils to each other.

At least that's what it looks like some times.

There is a girl at Girls Model who travels to Belfast Royal Academy to study A level French.

And boys from Boys Model go to the Girls School for some of their subjects.

The principal of Girls Model Emlyn Wright says ten schools in the area are sharing courses now.

'If you come to a Sociology class here you would find girls from Girl's Model, boys from Boys Model and St Malachy's, all learning together. We have a student who goes to BRA to do her French and some who goes to Boys Model, and vice versa, so at sixth form there is a real sharing across the area.'

BOYS MODEL PUPILS GOING STATESIDE



Carter Magee received a soccer scholarship to Otero College in Colorado and is studying Engineering while playing full time football for the University. Carter helped Otero College win the region 9 championship last year and is working hard on the field and in the classroom. He is enjoying life and Colorado and returned to Belfast Boys' Model School at Christmas to talk to our talented footballers about his experience.



Aaron Knowles, a talented midfielder for Belfast Boys' Model, has recently been offered a soccer scholarship to Northwest College in Wyoming and is also attracting the attention of Northeast Texas College. He is considering offers and might join Carter Stateside to play soccer and study PE or Business.

MODEL GIRLS A★



The new principal of Girls Model says that pupils at his school can achieve as much there as at any grammar school.

Mr Wright says, 'We have girls here who would compete with any student at any school for A stars and As.'

And he says that any girl who has the ability to achieve high marks at A level can get them at Girls Model.

He says, 'Girls who come to this school with the potential for A stars will get them, just as well as they would anywhere else.'

He says he talks to parents and some are definitely considering sending their children to 'the Model' rather than to a grammar school.

He says parents have free choice.

'My vision for the school is that this is seen as one of the best schools in Northern Ireland. It's very simple but it's very complicated.'

He worked within a selection system in Merseyside before taking up

his post at Girls Model so he is not daunted by it.

There are three bands of ability in the school with some girls pitching their efforts directly at exam results while the school provides more intensive support for those whose gifts are elsewhere or who just need extra

help. The school has a support area staffed by a mix of classroom assistants and other staff, where students can get a range of additionality.

He is a believer in single sex schooling.

'I have worked in single sex for ten years. The girls have the confidence to express themselves more freely because they are among girls. All the statistics show that they do better.

He says the school is currently 'sitting on a five years high for GCSE result.'

NEW HEAD IN GIRLS MODEL BACKS THE ZONE



A radical plan to transform the lives of a generation of children and young people in the Shankill area has been adopted by schools.

Originating from the Greater Shankill Community Convention, the plan to create a Children and Young People Zone has changed the way teachers in Girls Model work to help pupils.

A key idea of the Zone plan is that there should be a conversation with every child about their aspirations and hopes.

The new principal, approaching the end of his first year in the post, says, 'We have taken on the message of the Zone in trying to personalise it and to understand a pathway for every young person.'

Emlyn Wright says that one of the first people he met to discuss education with was Jackie Redpath of the Zone.

'And I was just completely bowled over by his enthusiasm for education and for the young people of the Shankill. The more I have got to know the team there the more I feel part of that.'

He invited Jackie to present his ideas about the Zone to the senior staff at the school.

'I feel part of the work that is being done and certainly do feel part of the

Children and Young People Zone.'

An essential idea of the Zone is that every child will have an individual pathway, and every child will be spoken to so that the best way forward can be found.

Mr Wright says, 'So, rather than just give them their grades back on a sheet of paper the girls of year twelve went through a series of weeks when they got feedback from teachers so that there was a meaningful learning

conversation and every child had an interview with a senior member of staff who went through the grades with them, discuss whether they had done enough revision or wanted to resit some of the subjects, and it was a real personalised approach. The inspiration for that came from the idea of the Zone.'

But what do you do with a child who wants to be a rock star?

'You teach her music.'

Emlyn Wright says that the motto of



the school is Achievement For All.

'Every child has something that she can excel at and it is our job to find that, tap the potential and let it loose.'

He says there is a 'real groundswell of optimism in the school. The kids come in every day, they want to work hard, they work hard and they do really well.'

He says the school is part of a community that supports it and gives credit to local politicians and the school governors, four of who are parent governors.



SHANKILL



Buzz Logan on the Shankill

For fourteen years, from 1975 until his untimely death in 1989, the Shankill had a world-class photographer recording its story. Buzz Logan, a big bearded bear of a man, strode the Shankill streets, recording the horrors of re-

development and the Troubles but also the celebration of life in those dark days, through Shankill culture, sport and most of all, its indomitable people and spirit. For many of these years he was the Shankill Bulletin's photographer. A retrospective exhibition of Buzz

Logan's photos will be mounted in the Spectrum Centre, running from 31 March for two weeks. In addition to the exhibition, every photograph Buzz took, which has now been digitised, will be available and view on a series of touch-

screens and volunteers will be on hand to help people look and record their stories of the pictures and a new oral history of the Shankill during that period. **Exhibition curated by Red Barn Gallery photos loaned by Linenhall Library**

BUZZ LOGAN

Shankill – Buzz Logan Retrospective 1975-1989
Spectrum Centre, 31 March-15 April 2016



Hammer railings



Budgie Allen trial



Percy Street Accordion Band



Mrs Matthews in her Wigton Street home



Group in Langford Street



Group near Agnes Street



Group in Lower Shankill

AGREED AGENDA FOR HOUSING

The Greater Shankill Community Convention last April, called for a new Housing Strategy for the area, to replace the Housing Executive's 10 year old strategy.

In response, the former DSD Housing Minister indicated when attending the Convention, that his Department would consider any new strategy submitted to it.

The Agreed Agenda Group has seized on this opportunity and has established a group to produce a new strategy that will take the Greater Shankill through to 2030.

The Strategy Group brings together senior NIHE officials along with Belfast City Council officers, local Councillors and Community Representatives. Its overarching aim is to ensure that adequate housing is developed to secure the Greater Shankill as a sustainable community, with its future guaranteed.

The sweep of the strategy takes in from



Former Housing Minister, Mervyn Storey, with local politicians and representatives of the Agreed Agenda Group

Brown Square at the foot of the Shankill, right up to Springmartin at the top of "the Road".

The strategy will examine how many new houses need built in the next 15 years to complete the area's

regeneration; what type and size they need to be and where they should be built. It will also propose the balance of new private homes for purchase and social housing. Conditions in the private land-lorded

houses will be highlighted and a plan to up-grade the existing stock will be timetabled. The strategy will embrace environmental improvements, including re-energising

the Greater Shankill Greenway and proposing developments for vacant sites and interface areas.

"Without such a strategy we will continue to stagger from one small

development to another with no plan in mind", said Councillor Billy Hutchinson, who sits on the Strategy Group.

Councillor Brian Kingston welcomed the NIHE and City Council officials working together with the community and political representatives. "It means that whatever we agree is more likely to stick and be implemented", said Councillor Kingston.

When completed, the Greater Shankill Housing Strategy will be submitted to the new Minister in the new Department of Communities after the May 2016 Assembly elections.

The new housing strategy is being developed against the backdrop of the Greater Shankill's population increasing for the first time since the 1940's.

See below for a list of commitments made to the Greater Shankill at the Community Convention in April 2015 held in the Spectrum Centre.



HOUSING MINISTER COMMITS TO SHANKILL

Speaking at the Shankill Community Convention last April, the former Housing Minister, Mervyn Storey made a housing promise to the Shankill.

New Build

£22 million invested in new homes in Shankill over the next 4 years. 186 new homes built in Tudor, Lawnbrook, Malvern Way, Somervale and Lower Shankill.

£3.2 million invested in 18 new homes in Forthriver Road.

22 new houses planned for the vacant land at Lawnbrook.

Kitchens

In the last 4 years, the NIHE have installed new kitchens in 960 Shankill homes at a cost of £3.5 million.

Minister Storey says he will provide 220 more houses with new kitchens at a cost of over half a million pounds.

Exteriors

A scheme is currently running at Lower Shankill to improve the exterior of 231 homes and this, along with a similar scheme which ran in the last few years has seen an investment of almost £2million in 1,131 Shankill homes.

Minister Storey says: 'This year I will ensure that over 90 homes will have improvements to the exterior of their homes'.

That's going to cost him just under £150 thousand.

Heating

He's going to spend almost a million pounds on heating improvements.

He says the Department has spent over £750 thousand replacing the windows of 350 Shankill properties, with new double glazing windows.

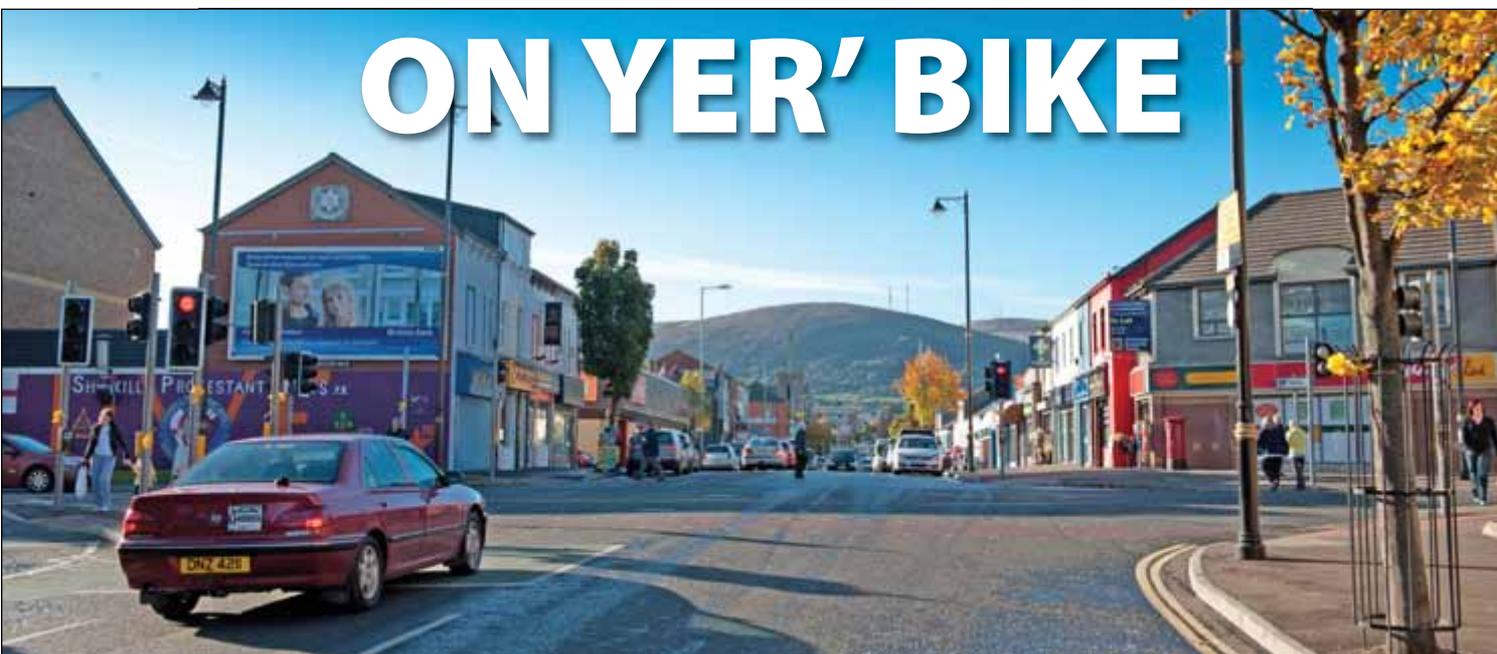
He says that in the last four years his department has committed over £22 million to building new homes in the Shankill area.

The NIHE has also given £5million to 1,063 Shankill families to ensure new heating systems were provided for their homes and in fact, at the beginning of this year, the NIHE started another two heating schemes for 228 more homes to ensure that they also enjoyed warmer, cosier homes.

So far, 127 have already been completed, with 59 more currently under construction. By the end of this year, the 41 houses at Somervale will have completed, with the remainder following soon after.

A further £3.2m is being invested with 18 new homes programmed to start this year at Forthriver Road and, subject to statutory approvals being received in time, 11 new homes are planned to start on the vacant site at Lawnbrook.

ON YER' BIKE



Ok, it's uphill most of the way but the good bit is that it's downhill in the other direction.

So why shouldn't the Shankill have cycle lanes? Why should it not have a Greenway? Why should it not be landscaped to encourage health and fitness, a place that people will come to enjoy themselves.

It's not a fantasy, it's a plan.

Transport Minister Michelle McIlveen is busy opening new cycle lanes in Belfast after the huge success of the Belfast Bike scheme, and she is urging councils all over

Northern Ireland to open up Greenways.

These can be along abandoned railway lines or an old river, and the Shankill has a river of its own though you wouldn't know that because it is currently mostly covered up.

The Farset runs from Squire's Hill, down the Shankill and through High Street - where you can still smell it on a hot day.

It is the main artery that brought life to the city.

Minister McIlveen's

announcement could give new life to the Shankill Greenway, which has been supported in principle by Belfast City Council.

The Community Greenway and Concept Plan and Mapping Study was drawn up five years ago.

In a series of 22 Stepping Stones it plots the path for a Shankill Greenway from North Street to the top of Blackmountain.

It shows how the Farset River could be reopened and bring back wildlife to the area and new development at the Ballygomartin

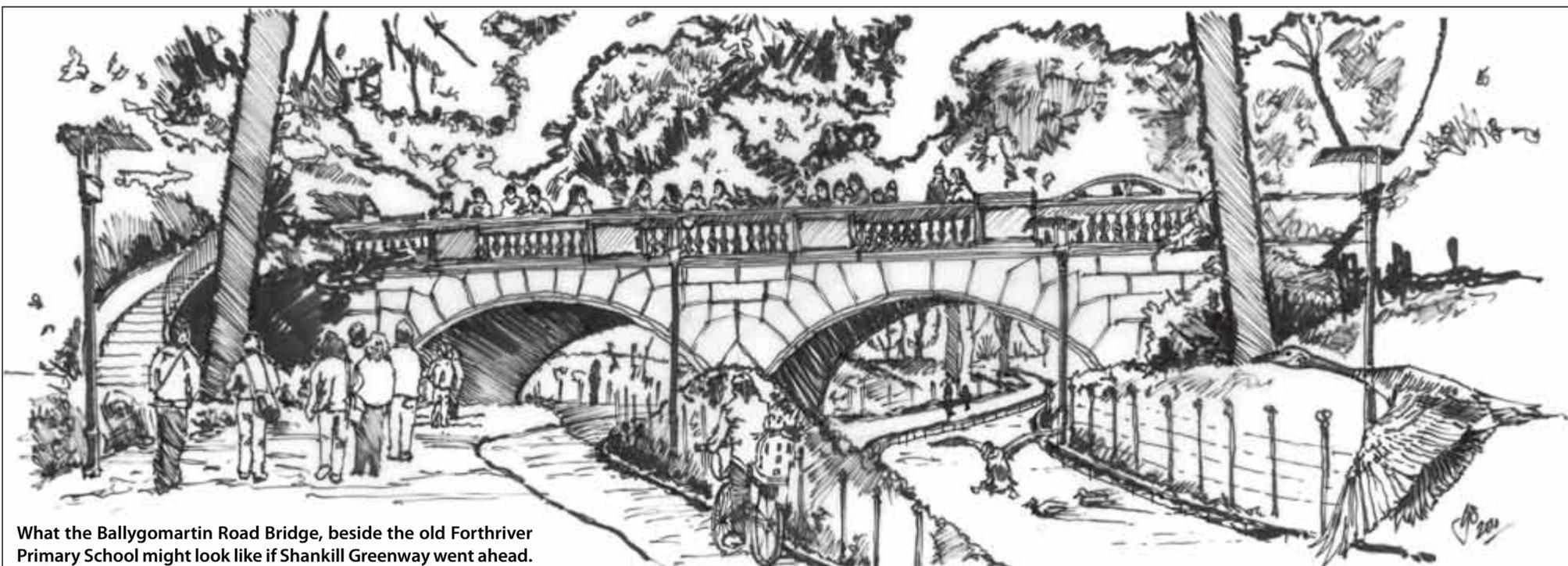
and Forth rivers among others.

If flocks of wild greylag geese come to the Shankill, because the area as it is attracts them, then think how many varieties of birds and other animals would find their way to a river running through the area.

The plan proposes access being opened up through the Shankill Rest Garden and the river.

It proposes a series of stepping stone projects like this which would link up into a route through the Shankill which would be healthy and peaceful and attractive.

SHANKILL TO GO GREEN



What the Ballygomartin Road Bridge, beside the old Forthriver Primary School might look like if Shankill Greenway went ahead.

The idea for a Greater Shankill Greenway came from a Community Convention back in 2010.

One year later, the idea was turned into a "big plan" to create a Greenway from Peter's Hill, up the Shankill right to the top of the Black Mountain, where it would connect to the Ulster Way.

In a series of twenty-two "Stepping Stones", starting at Peter's Hill Gateway, a "path"

was plotted taking in various sites on the Shankill Road, including re-opening the Farset River as a walkway. The Woodvale Parkland would be a second phase and already Woodvale Park has been up-graded by Belfast City Council.

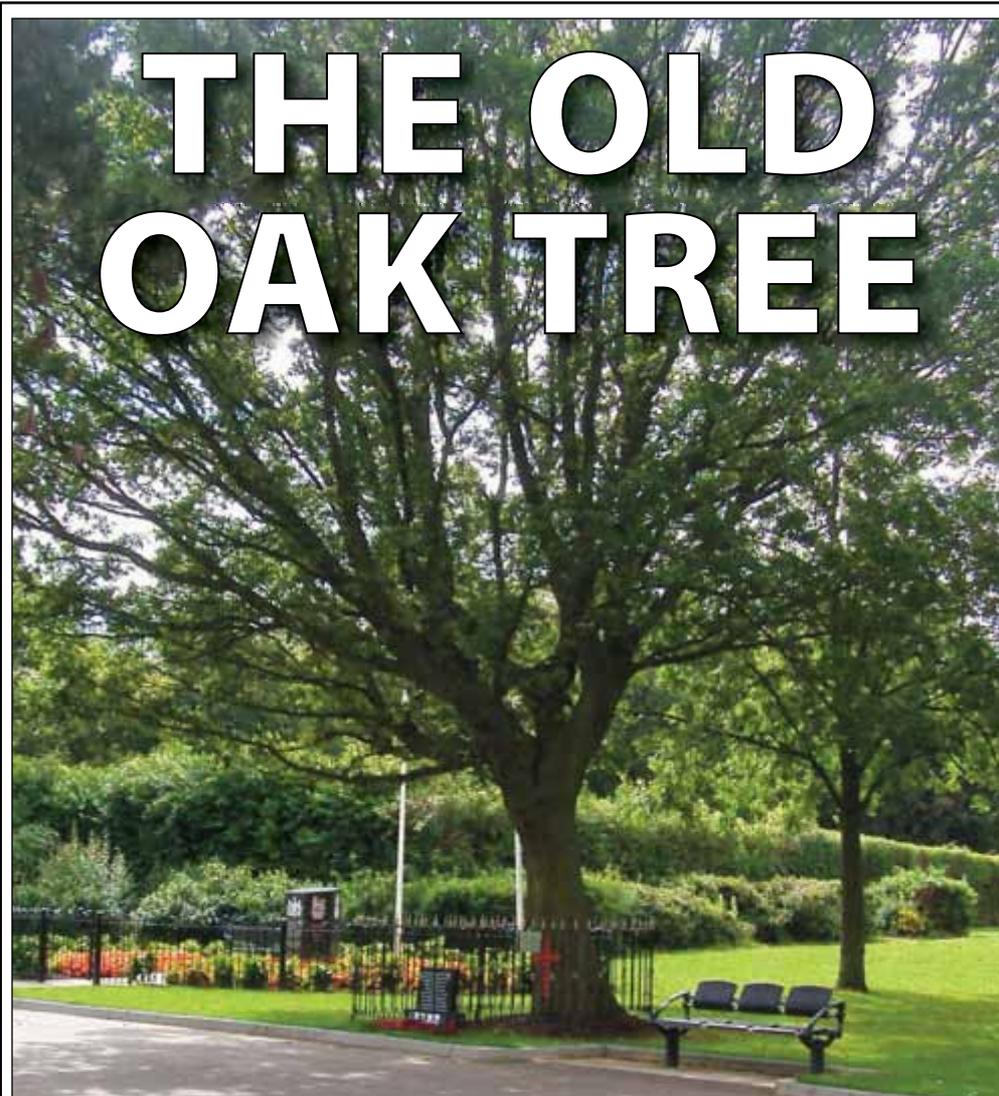
The Greenway then would stretch down the Forthriver Valley to include an up-graded Springfield Dam, beside Farset Hostel and on the North side it would push up an improved

Old Glencairn Road to the top of the Belfast Hills.

Recent ideas have included reopening the old 2nd World War blitz "bomb hole", on the side of the mountain, only remembered locally by those of a "certain age".

Information on the Greenway can be found on Greater Shankill Partnership's website

www.greatershankillpartnership.org



A tree in Woodvale Park has been voted "Northern Ireland Tree of the Year".

The tree, forgotten for many years, was planted in 1919 in memory of the hundreds of Shankill and Woodvale men who never returned home from the First World War.

The origins of the tree were rediscovered at the time of the 90th Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme, back in 2006.

Local men, Bobby Foster and Sam Coulter, who both work in the Spectrum Centre, worked hard to raise funds to erect a unique European War

Memorial beside the "old oak tree" last year, through the City of Belfast Army Benevolent Fund and then they entered it for the Woodland Trust, Northern Ireland Tree of the Year.

Up against stiff opposition from other entries, including the Game of Thrones "Dark Hedges" trees, the Woodvale Park tree won out in a public vote and was entered for the European Tree of the Year.

Now dubbed the Woodvale Park "Peace Tree", it is believed that its sister tree, planted in 1919 in Falls Park, which died of natural causes, will be replaced by a new baby oak.



JOBS FOR THE SHANKILL



Job Assist participants receiving their certificates.



**GIVE'S
A JOB -**

**GO TO
JOB ASSIST**

A major local jobs initiative has its roots in the Greater Shankill Community Convention and its "Agreed Agenda" back in 2012.

Impact Training in Lanark Way and its Job Assist Centre is leading for the Greater Shankill in an initiative that is creating up to 300 full and part time jobs for local unemployed 18-65 years.

The major initiative is part of the West Belfast/ Greater Shankill Social Investment Fund Programme set up by OFM/DFM and the ideas for the employment programme were fed into it by the Shankill Convention's Agreed Agenda Group.

The paid work placements will be with existing employers, locally and across Belfast, and a whole package

of support is on offer to those on the programme.

In addition, unemployed people and those in low paid jobs (under £8.25 an hour) can benefit from a flexible training programme. It is aimed at getting people into a job or into a better job than they are in through better qualifications.

The "West Belfast Works" Programme is delivered by a consortium of groups across West Belfast and is led in Greater Shankill by the Shankill Job Assist Centre at 236 Shankill Road or Tel: 02890 322003.



Job Assist group training for jobs.

The majority of jobs that are available to people on the Shankill today are what Gary McKay calls 'lower level positions'

That is, they are jobs you might not want to do and can't expect to get paid much for.

But - and there is a but.

Gary is the manager of the Job Assist Programme which is mentoring people to get them into work. Sometimes his clients have not worked for years or live in trying circumstances that aren't conducive to steady employment.

The 'but' is that he believes he can get people into jobs that have the potential to turn into careers, jobs in which people can progress and rise through an organisation.

He says he works with the 'economically inactive'.

'And part of our job and the job of our mentors is to start turning the tide and getting people to think about work.'

He says, 'People engage with us voluntarily.'

'First and foremost we stick the kettle on downstairs, ask people to come in and have a chat. We pride ourselves on being local and understanding local issues.'

Not that is it entirely casual.

He says, 'We will take people through a rigid assessment process, looking at people's personal circumstances; is there a work history there. And none of it is shocking to us if all the answers are No because we have progressed many people with little or no experience of the workplace.'

He says that people often have marketable skills that they never really thought they had.

That includes the person who has been caring for a sick relative

or running a tight household budget. The skills acquired in life, even without a job, can, he says, be the start of a journey to employment.

Some of the people who go to the Job Assist Centre are older people who doubt they will ever be attractive an employer again.

'We had a big sector here for manufacturing and the shipyard, so what we have is a raft of guys with all those skills but wondering where do I go now. And that is the question they present to us now when they walk in the door, Look, I built ships, how am I going to get back into the labour market again.'

Gary says the age issue is no problem. 'People are entitled to work, at any age. They have a right to be employable. That's what we give them.'

Care for those that help



Dympna Johnston

A new initiative on the Shankill concerns itself with the well being of community workers.

It is now better understood that people in front line services suffer from vicarious trauma.

And this doesn't just apply to ambulance drivers and the police, for instance but to the community workers and health professionals who often deal day by day with people with complex problems.

Dympna Johnston who chairs the Greater Shankill Health Forum says that health professionals and community workers often suffer from carrying the worries and fears of the people they are trying to help.

'People get beaten down,' she says. 'They worry about the people they are trying to help. They find it hard to switch off. Sometimes they give out their mobile phone numbers and then get called at home at night or over the weekend.'

And the problem is complicated by the insecurity of funding, so that community workers sometimes feel the need to take on every task they are asked to do.

They are afraid of losing their jobs so they try to make themselves appear indispensable.

'And then when cuts are made they hit staffing and resources first, and those who have tried to prove they can do everything end up doing even more.

Dympna says there is now a growing concern to teach Self Care to health professionals and community workers.

'There is not much in the way of debriefing for them.'

She says that she wants people to develop reflective practice, 'look at the things we are saying yes to. Ask yourself, if you do a lot for people will they ever find out what they can do for themselves.'

Health workers, says Dympna, can't listen properly to the people they are dealing with, if they are thinking too much about themselves and their objectives.

People are realising now that that progress is made in small steps.

NEW CENTRE MUST COMMIT TO LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

It isn't just the economy that needs a boost, it is society.

That is the thinking behind a new Innovation Centre taking shape on the Mackie's site at Forthriver.

The point is no longer simply to provide spaces in which small businesses can establish themselves, it is to actually foster the ideas that will create jobs and bring money into the area.

Belfast City Council which is behind the Innovation Centre is now inviting tenders for a company to run it, a Service Provider, and it is laying down a set of rules governing how the Centre should benefit the wider community.

They are radical.

For a start, the Centre has to contribute to a 'cohesive and inclusive community'. That means adopting the Council's principles on shared space.

Set in an area of high unemployment and where a lot of people have not done well at school, the Innovation Centre will be expected to make a difference.

It will be working to revive an area which had double the average Northern Ireland level of unemployment.

It will have to promote 'buy local' policies. That's one way in which they will have to meet their responsibility to help local businesses and preserve jobs in the area.

The Centre will have to offer placement opportunities too.



Mackies Innovation Centre

The tender document says the new Service Provider will have to improve the prospects of local people getting jobs, and it will do that by investing in their skills.

If this works as intended local people will be able to see visible growth on the wider Mackies site. It is a requirement of the tendering process that bidders to run the centre should commit themselves to making that happen.

And the Centre will have to encourage its own tenants to do their bit for social and economic regeneration.

The centre will have to establish 'Effective partnership' with local community groups and statutory bodies.

It will be housed in a big and impressive four storey building and the council says it could employ up to 382 people.

But that plan is that will make a difference to more than the bare landscape of Forthriver; it will change the economic and social climate of the area.

That's the plan, and the tenders are committing themselves to it/

FAMILY SUPPORT BREAKS NEW GROUND

The Shankill has been a pathfinder for community-led family support. Led by Nicola Verner, the areas Integrated Services Programme (ISCYP) has been at the cutting edge of family support. ISCYP has worked with over 500 families with children over the past few years, despite frequent funding crises.

And now the Shankill has broken new ground

with the establishment of one of Belfast's first Family Support Hubs.

The Shankill Family Support Hub brings together all those organisations which deliver services for children and families in the area, including statutory and community organisations, including schools.

Co-ordinated by local woman Joanne

McNabney, the Hub has the potential to play a key role in the Shankill Children's Zone.

"It's not an easy thing bringing up children in this day and age" says Joanne. "We are here to help and advise any families who are looking for some support and we can make sure that we can co-ordinate what they need".



Hub Information Day.

The Hub service is completely confidential and can be contacted by telephoning 028 9031455 and asking for Ashleigh, or call into Spectrum Centre.



Sarahjane Waite, GSP Education Co-ordinator.

SHANKILL GOES GLOBAL



Smiles out front and cold work behind the scenes at Ewings.

One local industry that connects the Shankill to the world is Ewing's Fish Shop, and it's the oldest surviving local business on the road.

It was opened at 124 Shankill Road in 1911 by Matthew Ewing who bought his fish from Portavogie. It is now run by his grandsons Crawford and Warren. They still buy fish from Portavogie but also from as far away as Turkey and Sri Lanka. Tastes have changed. People want exotic fish. But they have to go further for the fish now also because the waters around the British Isles are not as rich in fish stocks as they were in Matthew's day.

Crawford Ewing says: 'Matthew was getting his fish from Portavogie, Kilkeel and Ardglass, and that was when fishing was good. Local fishing today is destroyed with regulations about quotas and days at sea.'

A subject he is passionate about.

He is not afraid to say, 'Regulation has this wee island crippled. We are a small island, we are surrounded by sea; there should be plenty of fish. It's not happening.'

The Ewings have buyers in several countries who purchase fish for them and know what they are willing to pay.

Crawford says, 'Sea bass from Turkey, Tuna from Sri Lanka is all delivered fresh every day, for the restaurant trade.'

The Ewing family now employs twenty people on the Shankill, most of them local.

The customers coming off the street to buy a piece



of cod or some kippers for their breakfast might think that this is just a little traditional fish shop, one of the last to survive the spread of the big supermarkets.

They'd be wrong.

Crawford Ewing says that only 5% of the company's business is accounted for by over the counter sales in the shop.

The company supplies three hundred restaurants with fish. It also supplies some of those supermarkets too, including Sainsburys.

And the Ewings win prizes, for their traditionally pale smoked cod, for their smoked salmon.

Behind the shop is a busy production line.

There the salmon are being smoked, the cod gutted, the prawns steamed.

Crawford says business is thriving. 'Anyone that leaves us always comes back because we can't be beaten on quality and consistency and price.'

Good for nothing? - Think again!

It's not exactly like having an ice bucket poured over you but the principle is the same.

That's how Billy Drummond explains the Good For Nothing project.

Taking a slur against kids and finding a better deeper meaning in it.

This is about kids doing good and doing it for no reward, Good for Nothing.

At first, he says, the idea was that they would do random acts of kindness and then pass on the challenge to others to do something similar.

'But then you can't really just go into someone's garden unannounced and cut their grass; you could be arrested for that.'

Billy at Shankill Alternatives says that Youth Safety used to be an issue that serious adults talked about, usually blaming the 'blue bag brigade' for all the trouble, operating on there assumption that young people were a problem with their violence and sectarianism and racism.

But he wanted to hear the voices of young people themselves; what did they need in order to feel safe? What were their concerns?

And one of the key issues they

discussed was the stereotyping of young people and the easy prejudice that alienates people of other backgrounds.

Out of that came a project to make a video about stereotyping.

The stark thing about the Good For Nothing project is its name, since it is usually an insulting way of referring to your people who are judged useless. But it came out of a brain storming session in which other ideas for the name were batted around, like The Night Kings.

That was the idea of Thomas McKeown, one of the young volunteers with GfN.

Thomas has taken part in projects like the Community Clean up at Woodvale, where they tidied up the park.

He was also involved in a project to bring soup and stew to residents in a care home who had felt harassed by young people.

Thomas says, 'People have a stereotype of young people but this is a new generation which is different, which is more aware and wants good relationships with the other community.'



Billy Drummond and Thomas McKeown are happy to say they are 'Good For Nothing'.

THEY HAVEN'T GONE AWAY YOU KNOW!



Lawnbrook Avenue is on a traditional route. And it is undisputed.

In fact when the flock of greylag geese that visit the green there, local people come out to feed them.

That's what John Matchett was doing last week when more than fifty of the geese dropped in.

He says he believes they come over to the Shankill from the Waterworks on the Antrim Road. They have been seen on a lake at Springfield Park and there have also been sightings in Rathcoole.

The geese have been sighted at Lansdowne Crescent in Portrush, where the local seagulls are bewildered by the sight of them, long used to being the biggest birds on the block.

But they keep coming back to the Shankill.

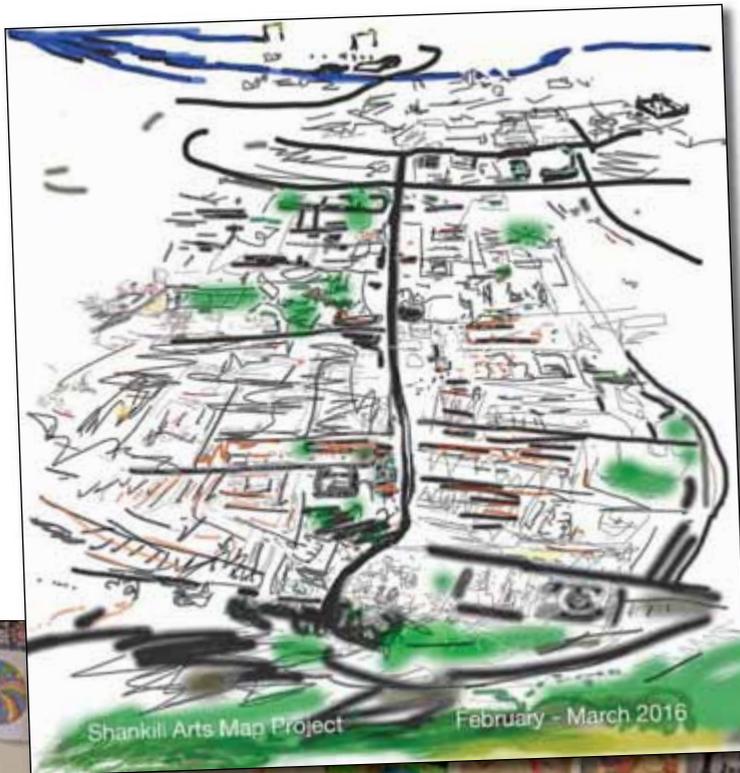
And they are so familiar with the area, and so well received, that they don't even take fright when people walk among them.

They are much more confident of a friendly welcome on the Shankill than many of the pigeons and other birds which swarm in to get a share of John Matchett's crumbs.

John says, 'It is lovely to see them.'

Isn't he worried that some people might set dogs on them or even try to catch one for the pot?

'Not a bit of it', says John. 'the people of the street would protect them. They'll come to no harm here.'



Shankill Arts Beat

The Belfast Beat Carnival, headquartered in Brown Square, is leading on the development of a new Arts Strategy in the Greater Shankill area.

Supported by Greater Shankill Partnership staff, Helen Lavery of BEAT will be holding discussions, workshops and creative events to get ideas fed through from anyone interested in Arts development.

David Boyd, who leads the

BEAT said, "we are going to map all arts activities in the area and develop ideas about what should happen in the future".

Recent years have seen a flourishing of arts activity in the Shankill with the establishment of the Heel & Ankle Theatre Company, growing out of the Crimea Square play two years ago and the Spectrum based SASH social history group.

The high quality sculpture of local artist William Conor at Agnes Street, developed by West Belfast Culture & Athletic Association and the "Band of

Brothers" mural by Lower Shankill Community Association, have recently added a war dimension to local art works.

A "shout out" has also been made for local bands to get in touch who want to have a say - "we have a rich local musical tradition" says David Boyd, "and we want local bands of all types involved".

Anyone wanting to participate in the Shankill Arts Beat programme contact Helen Lavery Tel: 02890 434767 or email: projects@beatcarnival.com



Spectrum's Womens Arts group.



Open Arts music group.



TAKING THE LEAD



SHEER SKILLS - SHEER BRILLIANCE

A new generation of young leaders in the Greater Shankill is emerging through a sports development programme in the Girls' Model. It's organised by the Belfast Community Sports Development Network, that started life on the Shankill, and is being delivered by Caitlin Gilroy of BCSDN's Sheer Skill programme



Caitlin works with schoolchildren in Belfast to help them develop the confidence to lead groups of people and to present their experiences to young audiences. And she does it through sport.

Chloe and Alexandra from Girls Model School have come through her training scheme at the Belfast Community Sports Development Network.

Chloe says, 'I've got to know new people. It has built up my confidence.'

The training method is to get people like Chloe to learn to coach younger children in sporting activities, particularly through what is quaintly called leprechaun rugby, a version of rugby in which the children pull tags from each other

without the robust physical clashing that distinguishes adult rugby.

Caitlin says that the primary purpose of the course is to help children score points for their university application form UCAS.

Universities are now looking for much more than academic achievement expressed in high marks, and the young person who can demonstrate other skills and community experience has an advantage.

Caitlin says, 'And that won't be for everyone. Some will take these skills to their youth clubs and other areas of experience and it is all good.'

Alexandra says she is impressed by the confidence the course has given her, though to hear her talk you would not think she had ever had difficulty in speaking to people.

'Now I think I could teach a young class', a challenge that would

scare most of us.

Alexandra says the course was important to her because she had moved to Girls Model without knowing anybody there and had to make new friends.

The Sheer Skill programme takes in 24 children from different schools, recently bringing girls from 'The Model' to train alongside boys from St Patrick's Bearnageeha.

So how does that work out, bringing kids from single sex schools together? Do Chloe and Alexandra like mixing with boys?

Chloe says, 'It's different and cross community too.'

They both say they value that.

Caitlin Gilroy says, 'You get out of this course what you put in.'

Now Chloe would like to go to the University Ulster at Jordanstown and Alexandra, who wants to study Dance and Sports Studies, has her eye on Liverpool.



Caitlin Gilroy, the leadership trainer, flanked by Alexandra Beattie, (left) and Chloe Gibson, from Girls Model.