

CONFLICT TO PEACE

our
community
transformation


The
ResurgamTrust
*Connecting Individuals
Transforming Communities*



we are here

*our
community
transfer*

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Foreword

Having been elected as MP for Lagan Valley in 1997, I set about developing stronger relationships with the local communities I had been elected to represent. The IRA had just reinstated their ceasefire, high level political talks were underway and for the first time involved both Sinn Fein and parties representing the loyalist UDA and UVF. Whilst violence had reduced significantly, there was still fear on the streets and these were tense times as people awaited the outcome of negotiations and pondered what the future may hold. Might it be possible that our seemingly intractable conflict could be solved and lives transformed for the better? No one knew for sure but as I made my maiden speech in the House of Commons in June 1997 I referred to the hope that I felt was now developing amongst the people it was my privilege to represent. In an interview for a local newspaper I cited the motto of Lisburn 'ex igne resurgam' - out of the fire there is renewal. I had little appreciation at the time just how true those words would be as I undertook my own journey in the peace process.

One of the communities in my constituency most affected by the troubles was Old Warren, a sprawling social housing estate built on the banks of the river Lagan in the south west of Lisburn. It was predominantly loyalist and I was aware of strong support for

the Ulster Defence Association (UDA) in the area, although there were many residents who had no association with any paramilitary grouping. However, such was the reputation of the estate at the time that when I met constituents, mainly young families, who were looking for social housing accommodation and pointed out to them that the area where there were most vacancies was Old Warren, I was often rebuffed and told that 'this was no place to bring up children'. So, I decided that this area must be a priority for me in terms of engaging with and helping the community in Old Warren to step out from under the shadow of our troubled years.

I remember well a crucial meeting with the then Old Warren Community Association in a room in a converted house above the local pre-school play group. We were meeting with representatives of the various agencies involved with Old Warren including the Northern Ireland Housing Executive who owned most of the housing stock. It was a heated meeting and the representatives of the community were angry at the neglect in their area and the deteriorating condition of much of the housing stock. Their argument was clear, if there was peace without people feeling their lives had improved in practical ways, then there would be little by way of a peace dividend for them. We persuaded the housing managers to commit to a major programme of refurbishment and rebuilding of the housing stock, involving a multi-million investment in Old Warren and thus began the rejuvenation of this neglected community. The transformation that followed brought Old Warren to a place where there is now a waiting list for people wishing to live in what was once a no-go area for some.

That journey is not just about the community as a whole or the physical conditions in which they live, it is also a story of the individuals, the people, who lead and shaped the transformation and experienced it in their own lives. Having worked closely with many local community representatives to deliver this transformation, I am loathe to single out individuals but I would not do justice to this

social history of Old Warren if I did not give at least one example of how this journey has changed people. I first got to know Adrian (Adie) Bird when he worked with the Lisburn Prisoners' Support Project. If I am truthful, this was initially an awkward relationship as Adie was himself an ex-prisoner. I had opposed the early release of paramilitary prisoners and was very wary of a project that supported them.

One day Adie came to see me at my office in Lisburn, the first of many such meetings. He recognised that I had a problem with his project and we discussed the work they were doing and what it meant for the individuals concerned and their families. I pointed out that the name of the project tended to label ex-prisoners in a way that may be unhelpful to their future and did not accurately reflect the rehabilitation and reintegration that was the purpose of this work. Adie went away and thought about this and subsequently suggested that the project be renamed the 'People Support Project' and so began the change in direction that was to be critical in the transformation of the lives of those from the Old Warren and other parts of Lisburn intimately involved in the troubles. A rubicon had been crossed as our relationship became one of looking to the future, rather than dwelling on the past.

Since then, as local MP I have seen Adie take on the mantle of community leadership, embracing with it the responsibility to promote the positive, to encourage respect for the rule of law amongst the youth and to engage with government and statutory agencies to deliver improvements for his community. There have been a few setbacks along the way but Adie's resilience and determination and that of his colleagues has overcome them and the peace process is stronger for them having undertaken that journey together. Their personal journeys reflect the story of the transformation that has occurred in Old Warren and other parts of my constituency since 1997. That story is told in this book and it provides a fascinating insight into the change process that occurs

when people turn their back on violence and find another path, a path that leads to peace and social transformation.

Today, the Resurgam Trust is the driver of that change and brings together a number of community organisations that have been the catalysts for change. Fittingly, the Trust draws its name from the motto of our city and embodies the spirit of its people that we will arise from the ashes of our troubled past and build a new Lisburn and a new Northern Ireland that is more peaceful and prosperous, a place our young people can be proud to call home. This is our legacy for the next generation and it is one that would not be possible without the input, hard work and gritty determination of the people whose story this book reflects. Their journey has been one where hope has triumphed over despair and lives have been changed for good. In sharing their story, this book will offer that hope to others. 'Ex Igne Resurgam' - from the fire there is renewal.

The Rt Hon Sir Jeffrey Donaldson MP
Member of Parliament for Lagan Valley

Chairman

As Chair of The Resurgam Community Development Trust I'm extremely proud to be sharing an account of our 22-year journey from conflict to peace. A journey that is merely beginning and will continue when our current Board and staff are no longer with us. The work that Resurgam has and continues to do will be the legacy that its creators will leave behind. This book is not the full story but rather a snapshot in time. I hope that it gives a good insight into the journey that our community has travelled.

The community which we serve today is unrecognisable to the one where we lived and worked in 1996. Northern Ireland was emerging from a brutal and divisive conflict and its peace/political process was in its infancy. To be blunt, it wasn't a nice place to live. Sectarianism, deprivation, poor housing and a lack of leadership both demoralised and disabled the community. Nobody knew any different and it seemed that life would continue as before.

Thankfully a group of determined residents weren't prepared to accept this and decided to act. Who would have thought that some 20 plus years later what started off as a small peace building project would develop into a large Community Development Trust working on behalf of the entire community throughout Lisburn.

This has been a difficult journey and we have taken many risks in the pursuit of peace. You will read about the contribution made by hundreds of volunteers who on numerous occasions found themselves outside their normal comfort zones. Should it be supervising young people from the Loyalist community, building boats with young people from the Republican community in Cork, meeting the former Minister for Education, John O'Dowd to lobby for much needed resources for our local schools, supporting the development of the former Maze Prison site and accepting the Cooperation Ireland Pride of Place Award 2013, from the former Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness. Much of this work at the time was extremely unpopular within Loyalist/Unionist communities but necessary to move our communities to where we are today.

The Resurgam Trust is widely seen as a model of good practice throughout the community, voluntary and statutory sectors. We have gained recognition and won numerous awards for the work that we do but It has been a long and difficult journey that has had many setbacks along the road. Those same setbacks are easily outweighed by our successes that make our community a safe, friendlier and welcoming place to live and work today.

The success of Resurgam and our member groups is testament to the hard work and dedication of our staff and volunteers. I want to personally thank every one of them for their continuing support and their role in making Resurgam what it is today.

I hope that this account of our journey is both informative and inspiring and, in some way, helps other likeminded communities on whatever road they seek to travel.

Philip Dean Chairman, Resurgam Trust

Dedication

The main aim of this book is to document the journey traveled by our community and to acknowledge and recognise the contribution and sacrifice made by the many who have helped make this journey such a huge success. We accept that many challenges within our community remain unsolved and things are by no means perfect, but I feel that the contents of this book will clearly demonstrate that we have made a positive contribution to community regeneration and moved a long way during the last twenty years.

This success cannot be attributed to any one person or in fact any organisation as it has clearly been achieved through a sustained effort by huge number of people over a very long period of time. At times it has been a difficult journey, but it has also been extremely rewarding and it has demonstrated what can be achieved when a dedicated group of people come together with a common bond. Many observers have asked what is the most important ingredient to our success? There is no simple answer but clear principles, commitment and integrity have helped make it possible.

I would like to thank all our volunteers, staff, family and friends for their loyalty, dedication and hard work during the last twenty years. The book highlights the positive role played by volunteers

over a prolonged period of time and how this contribution ensured community support and buy-in for the transformational journey our communities have travelled. I would like to acknowledge the support that we have received from the Voluntary, Community, Business and Statutory sectors. Special mention should be given to the Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, the Public Health Agency, the Department for Communities Voluntary and Community Unit, the Police Service of Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. It is also important that we acknowledge the support from our locally elected political representatives who we have worked with in partnership for the betterment of our entire community.

This has been a long journey and at times we ask ourselves what has it all really been about? The answer is simple, we aim to develop a strong empowered safe and stable community which is a place where everyone is proud and happy to live. We want the next generation to inherit a legacy that has a sustainable economy, is peaceful, and has a well-maintained community infrastructure.

During our long journey of community transformation we have lost many good friends. One of which was our dear friend and colleague Chris Totten, who passed away during the writing of this book. Chris worked for the Public Health Agency and was the Chairman and founder member of Early Intervention Lisburn. Chris was a visionary and knew how to get things done, he changed the ethos of the Resurgam Trust and put the health of our Community at the front and centre of all our work. He fully understood the journey our community had travelled and insisted that it should be documented, and that the positive outcomes of our hard work be used to assist other similar like minded communities. Chris is greatly missed.

Adrian Bird Director of Services, Resurgam Trust

Awards

Key Awards received to date:

- ▶ The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service 2011 (awarded to our Social Enterprise Lisburn Community Self-Build Ltd)
- ▶ Mayor's Award for Volunteering in the Culture & Diversity Category 2013
- ▶ IPB All-Island Pride of Place Awards for Enterprise and Youth Projects 2013
- ▶ Mayor's Award for Young Volunteer (Shannon White) of the Year 2014
- ▶ NI Enterprise's Social Economy Business of the Year 2014
- ▶ Best Social Enterprise (Resurgam Trust) Business Award from Lisburn City Business Awards 2015



IPB All island pride of place 2013



Best Social Enterprise
(LaganView Enterprise
Centre) Business Award from
Lisburn & Castlereagh City
Business Awards 2018



- ▶ Community Development Person of the Year from Ulster Star People of the Year Awards 2015
- ▶ Mayor's Award for Bringing Communities Together 2017
- ▶ Best Social Enterprise (LaganView Enterprise Centre) Business Award from Lisburn & Castlereagh City Business Awards 2018
- ▶ Future Leader (Tracey Black) Award from TWN's WICT Programme 2018
- ▶ Queen's Award for Voluntary Service 2018
- ▶ Advancing Health Care Awards 2018 – Help Kids Talk Initiative PHA Building Capacity in Communities and Prevention

Mayor's Award for Bringing Communities Together 2017



NI Enterprise's Social Economy 2014

Acknowledgements

The Resurgam Community Development Trust would like to thank everyone who has been involved in the process of writing this social history which documents our journey of community transformation from the days of conflict and unrest to peace. It is a snapshot of our history and does not attempt to document the entire story. During this process we have endeavoured to be honest, transparent, and as accurate as possible. We thank Gail Malmo for writing the text of this social history. We would also like to thank everyone who has made a contribution to this book, including staff, volunteers, and recipients of our numerous projects, and especially acknowledge the support we have received from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

Reviews



Robbie Butler MLA UUP

Transformation of any kind is a difficult and critical journey. The Resurgam Trust has come a long way along that vital path and, despite difficulties, has come out the other side bearing fruit. Its success is not just about expressing the positive message of hope for the future, it is about implementing practical policies for the people and community which they serve. This book demonstrates how the Resurgam Trust is building a sustainable and stable foundation from which current and future generations can benefit. It is, in essence, the ethos of effectively and efficiently putting people first.

Cecilia Whitehorn Managing Director of CM Works

A well-documented read of the development of a sustainable, dynamic community through the capacity building of people, places and enterprises underpinned at all times with articulated ethos and values into practice. The work illustrates the step by step growth and commitment to innovation and change.

*Anne Molloy Former Employee of Northern Ireland
Cooperative Development Agency*

This is an amazing account of the long and challenging journey you have had. It is a detailed and comprehensive record of the evolution of the community in Old Warren and the development of LPSP, Resurgam Trust, and the various social enterprises and projects. I am proud to have been associated with Old Warren.

Trevor Lunn MLA APNI

It is important that records are kept about Northern Ireland's journey over the last 40 years from a very bad place to where we are today. This book is a useful contribution, detailing the experience of Lisburn and Old Warren in particular and the progress that can be made when people open their minds and start to accept and encourage change, to realise that others are entitled to respect for cultures which may be different to their own. Resurgam Trust is an example of steady achievement from small beginnings which others can usefully study and those involved over the years deserve credit. "Progress is impossible without change and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything." (George Bernard Shaw)

Paul Givan MLA DUP

I'm impressed by the level of detail that goes back 20 plus years. I've learned new aspects to the journey and gained a better insight to the effort that went in to get to where Resurgam and the communities are today.

Ivan Davis, OBE, Freeman of the City of Lisburn

What a boost for Northern Ireland if it could only adopt the Resurgam Trust's six strategic themes: health; education; community safety; youth, social enterprise and employment; regeneration and management and governance.

This is truly a collective vision and for a better future, long may it continue and my sincere best wishes to everyone in the Trust going forward.

*Conal McFeely Former Employee of Northern Ireland
Cooperative Development Agency*

Your journey is an amazing example of determination and endeavour, and everyone involved should be very proud of what has been achieved.

Pat Catney MLA SDLP

The journey to peace isn't easy. This book clearly demonstrates that commitment, hard work and sheer resilience can make significant changes for communities. The Resurgam Trust should be very proud of their achievements.

Edwin Poots MLA DUP

It has been a privilege to have been of some assistance to the project, which is now Resurgam, over the last 20 years. No one could have envisaged how successful it has been but with strategic vision and hard work, the lives of many people have been dramatically improved as this book clearly demonstrates.

Prof. Peter Shirlow FaCSS Director Irish Studies, University of Liverpool

The Resurgam Community Development Trust has achieved much over the past two decades. They have challenged reductionist understandings of self and other, stimulated intra and inter-community healing, de-legitimised violence, achieved personal cognitive and emotional transformation and acknowledged that peace-making is broad and long-term.

This document shows that the value for peace can only be achieved in

highlighting how community leadership is in-process, operates through various creative approaches and brings individuals and communities unfamiliar with peace-making into reconciliatory processes. Resurgam has offered senses of security, trust, emotional exploration and a capacity to meaningfully engage with conflict and harm. Their work is not restricted in terms of intentions, reconciliatory interpretation and capacity and points to how such strategies and activism can better effect personal, interpersonal, societal and political reconciliation. The work of Resurgam is of global significance and the model they advance should be exported to other societies. They are to be commended.

Sammy Douglas East Belfast Network Centre

I've followed the development of the Resurgam Trust since coming into contact with the organisation over 20 years ago. Their extraordinary journey has been one of community transformation based on community development principles, integrity and ambition. The Trust has shown real leadership and courage to allow hard questions and honest conversations throughout this journey. They are a shining example of what can be achieved when local communities come together to work towards the same goals and aspirations.

Gareth Walker Resurgam Trust Board Member

Twenty years on from the signing of the Belfast Agreement which was designed to seal peace between our two divided communities there remains much uncertainty. The Political institutions are in turmoil and there remains levels of distrust on both sides of the divide. Therefore, it is heartening to read a social history account laced with positivity and pride. From what began as a marginalised Loyalist group with no real future direction to develop into a vibrant Community Development Trust encompassing all sections of the Greater Lisburn community is somewhat remarkable. The journey was hard, and those who planned, directed and drove this project forward deserve the utmost respect and praise. By doing so they have challenged every negative stereotype that is out there and shows the dedication that exists at community level to move forward with the community at heart. The foundation stones have clearly been laid for future generations and this book clearly demonstrates that this community will be left with a positive legacy to be proud of.

Our
Journey



BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Lisburn pre-1970

Throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, the town of Lisburn was a peaceful place to live. Reflecting on growing up during this period, one local resident, interviewed in 2017, described her community as one which was “peaceful and tight-knit”.¹ She goes on to say: “Everyone knew each other and the doors to our neighbours were always open. We just ran in and out of each other’s house. The majority of the residents were Protestant with most being church going but there were several Catholic families who in those early days lived in peace.”

She relates, however, that this peaceful way of life changed for her in 1971 “when the government introduced internment and turned the former aerodrome at the Maze into a makeshift prison and base to house prison staff and soldiers. I suppose in many ways this was my first real introduction to the troubles as everything changed. There were constant army and police patrols on our roads. There were helicopters with large spotlights almost every night. There were regular republican protests outside the prison which was directly opposite where we lived. Sometimes their protests became violent as loyalists held counter protests which resulted in mini riots. I remember the buses taking the visitors into the prison driving past our estate and on many occasion we threw stones at the buses. Our community was angry and opposed the introduction of the Maze/ Long Kesh prison. Little did I know then as a child that many years later I would be one of those visitors going to the prison on a weekly basis to visit my husband.”

The Royal Air Force Long Kesh air base, a few kilometres from Lisburn, had been much in use during the Second World War and

¹ Personal communication, July 2017.

was one of Hitler's targets during the proposed invasion of the United Kingdom. In 1971 the then disused base became Long Kesh Detention Centre, which brought the Troubles to the vicinity of Lisburn. Later, the Detention Centre became Her Majesty's Prison Maze where those convicted of conflict related offences, on either side of the political divide, were housed.

The "Troubles"

The introduction of internment by the Government of Northern Ireland in August 1971 was a major turning point towards violence in certain parts of Northern Ireland. During Operation Demetrius, carried out by the British Army, suspected Irish Republican Army (IRA) members were "lifted" and detained. Yet before internment, and indeed the cause of internment, was the threat of paramilitary Irish Republican Army violence and also serious and widespread civil unrest in parts of Northern Ireland from 1968 onwards and even before.

Long simmering resentments and frictions between the Protestant and Catholic communities surfaced. During the civil rights campaign of 1968, demonstrations and counter-demonstrations, protests and counter-protests gave way to increasingly serious inter-community conflict - riots and counter-riots, attacks and counter-attacks. There was a deepening involvement of the Special Constabulary (B-Specials), Royal Ulster Constabulary, and then the British Army. There was also government instability and crises of leadership. The dormant paramilitary Irish Republican Army emerged and began its campaign of violence. The first fatalities of the modern "Troubles" were in 1969. In 1971 the IRA split into the Official and Provisional IRA and the loyalist Ulster Defence Association (UDA) was formed.

Until the middle of the 1970s when the first fatalities occurred, Lisburn itself was impacted by the Troubles chiefly through the proximity of Long Kesh, though of course everyone in Northern

Ireland suffered the psychological if not the physical repercussions. Moreover, Thiepval Barracks in Lisburn, which was the headquarters of the British Army in Northern Ireland and of the Ulster Defence Regiment (formed in 1970), was of hostile interest to the IRA. (It was later bombed in 1996.) Of hostile interest, too, were Lisburn's prosperous businesses and businesspeople.

Thirty years of terrorism and counter-terrorism were punctuated by various efforts to achieve ceasefires and resolutions. At the level of British government and international involvement, there were the Sunningdale Agreement (1973), Anglo-Irish Agreement (1985), the Downing Street Declaration (1993), the Framework Document (1995) and finally the Good Friday (or Belfast) Agreement (GFA, 1998).

Among other commitments in the Good Friday Agreement, the British and Irish governments (both parties to the GFA), committed themselves to the early release of prisoners sentenced for paramilitary offences as long as ceasefires were maintained. Hundreds of prisoners were released by 28th July 2000. Hundreds more had been released before the GFA, for one reason or another; a Lisburn man Adrian Bird, for example, had been released in 1995, before the final emptying of the Maze. By the time peace came, there were thousands of ex-political prisoners living throughout Northern Ireland.

The psychological and social impact of the Troubles generally and of mass imprisonment in particular was very great. People had lost their kin or their friends forever through bombings and shootings. And apart from the effects of incarceration on the prisoners themselves, there were the effects on families, with wives and children having been separated from husbands and fathers. The effect on neighbourhoods, particularly working-class neighbourhoods, was profound. In the later stages of the conflict and after, there were high levels of anti-social violence and high levels of paramilitary activity of a kind that did not directly violate the GFA.

Lisburn after the Good Friday Agreement

Lisburn suffered its quotient of negative effects during and after the Troubles. Old Warren Estate, a working-class neighbourhood, had been the scene of violence in the aftermath of the Anglo-Irish Agreement.² Paramilitary activity continued even after the peace, and this, along with physical dereliction and loss of local pride and civic morale, led to the estate projecting an unenviable image. The Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) described Old Warren to be the second least popular estate in Northern Ireland among prospective residents.

As well, life was not easy for ex-prisoners who were still regarded with suspicion by the authorities who often conducted house and car searches. In addition, there was a strain between ex-prisoners and those pro-Union political parties, such as the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), who had been opposed to prisoner release. Some ex-prisoners, including Adrian Bird, worked hard to establish positive relations with the politicians and eventually succeeded. Old Warren Estate became the focus of a lengthy and radical social project aiming for peace and productivity.

² Henry McDonald, "Because loyalists have a past doesn't mean they shouldn't have a future," *Belfast Telegraph*, October 13, 2016.

YEARS 1996 – 1999

The journey of the Old Warren estate from conflict and dereliction to peace and regeneration really began in 1996, two years before the Good Friday Agreement. Two events happened in that year which were to lay the foundation for much of the success now enjoyed by this community today. One, the emergence of a new organisation called the Old Warren Partnership, and two, the emergence of a new group called Lisburn Prisoners’ Support Project (LPSP).

By this time the Old Warren Estate, a Government recognised ‘Targeting Social Need’ (TSN) area within Lisburn, built by the Northern Ireland Housing Trust between 1966 and 1972, was, in common with other estates, under the control of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

During the 1990s, the estate had become increasingly unpopular as a place to live. Increased community polarisation, paramilitary “policing” of the estate, poor relations between the residents and the police, and discontent with the quality of the housing and the estate environment, led to a steady decline in requests for dwellings, with many who could afford housing elsewhere moving out.

The Lisburn Prisoners’ Support Project

In May 1996, two community activists and ex-prisoners, Adrian Bird and Colin Halliday, attended a community meeting in Belfast organised by what was then known as the Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust (NIVT), and now known as the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland (CFNI). Looking back, it is safe to say that Adrian and Colin’s attendance at this meeting was to become perhaps one of the most pivotal moments in the history of this community.

Attended by approximately twenty former Ulster Defence Association (UDA) prisoners and ten community representatives from across

South Belfast, the purpose of the meeting was to brief attendees on the opportunities available through the European Peace funding for groups to work with politically motivated ex-prisoners to ensure a successful transition back into the community following their release.

Adrian left that meeting with the dawning realisation that the impending Good Friday Agreement had the potential to lead to huge opportunities for his community, the most urgent of which, from his perspective, was that of gaining access to the Maze prison to help prepare prisoners for their eventual release into the community.

Adrian already understood by then (and perhaps aided by his own recent experience as a released prisoner) that without the right support, newly released prisoners would be facing a host of challenges which would significantly hinder their chances of successfully integrating back into their community. These included the prospect of limited educational and vocational opportunities, the potential for significant family disruption and conflict, and the likelihood of serious mental and physical health problems.

At the time of this critical meeting there was already in existence an ad hoc organisation devoted specifically to working with ex-prisoners called the Loyalist Prisoners' Aid (LPA). Established in 1973, it was formed as the Welfare branch of the then legal UDA. The LPA's principal remit was to look after UDA prisoners and their families, and more specifically, ensure that close relatives had access to transport to enable them to visit the various prisons throughout the Province.

With the advent of the paramilitary ceasefires of 1994 and the anticipated early release of politically motivated prisoners along with the re-introduction of 50 percent remission, the Loyalist Prisoners' Aid focus had by now already shifted slightly from their original focus on helping families access prisons, to how best to help those that were going to be most affected by early release.

As the years passed the remit of the LPA gradually continued to expand as the range of problems prisoners were experiencing became increasingly evident. And while the Committee began to regularly enlist the help of community activists with the necessary knowledge and skills to address effectively these prisoner concerns, they quickly realised that without additional resources they would not be able to meet the growing demand for help.

Interim solutions to the problems such as developing a drop-in centre where ex-prisoners could support each other or providing short-term hostel-type accommodation for those just released were deemed ineffective responses to the newly emerging challenges the ex-prisoners were facing. Neither were the solutions to be found within the statutory sector, as the LPA had by then concluded that the statutory bodies had failed both to understand or anticipate the extent of the problems newly released prisoners were to face, nor had they made it a priority to do so.

By October 1996, then, the Loyalist Prisoners' Aid Committee in Lisburn felt that they had no option but to convene a meeting to review their position on the extent of their involvement with prisoners, ex-prisoners and their families, and how best to improve their response to this steadily growing constituent group.

As a result of this review the LPA undertook what was for them a major decision: to integrate activities from the existing Loyalist Prisoners' Aid into a newly formed group called the Lisburn Prisoners' Support Project (LPSP), whose express purpose would be to assist with the re-integration of political prisoners back into the community.

The group initially comprised the existing members of the original Loyalist Prisoners' Aid Committee, ex-prisoners, relatives of prisoners, and additional community activists with the skills required to help develop a new strategy for the way forward. Originally based in the Community House in Old Warren Estate, the new project worked

primarily with prisoners from the Ulster Defence Association (UDA) and Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF).

The mission statement of this new organisation was to provide a specialised facility and services directed towards meeting the unique needs of ex-prisoners and their families in the process of re-integration back into the community.

Their initial tasks included the formation of a management committee comprised of ex-prisoners, families and community representatives; seek funding to secure premises and employ a full-time coordinator/administrator; conduct a survey assessing the needs of ex-prisoners and families and how these needs could be addressed; establish a pool of trained volunteers; and seek charitable status for the LPSP.

With a constitution agreed and adopted, and a dedicated Committee elected, (founding members were: Adrian Bird, Kenny Bradford, Kenny Coyle, Eric Philips, John McStea, Denis Paisley and Stephen Lyness), the new group began formulating their first action plan for the year ahead. Supported by a non-elected advisory group of individuals with skills based in welfare rights and community work the Project decided that it was essential that services to the target groups should be extended as quickly as possible, and that whatever services were to be offered should be of the highest quality.

A highly attended open meeting with ex-prisoners and their relatives was held in West Lisburn Community Centre in January of 1997, and the content of the group's first action plan was based primarily on feedback from attendees. Invitations to the meeting had been sent to all 80 or so of the identified ex-prisoners living in the greater Lisburn area, requesting they also bring along at least one relative, with 45 people attending in total. Prior to the meeting a short survey was distributed to all 80 identified ex-prisoners, requesting feedback as to which of the many problems facing them the new Project should

address. In total, 70 forms were completed, 35 by ex-prisoners and 35 by family members.

It was quickly apparent both from the survey results and from on-going discussions with ex-prisoners that their most pressing concerns centred on the need to obtain employment and to access adequate housing, state benefits, job training, and further education opportunities. This feedback went on to guide the development of the LPSP's all-important first action plan.

It also became apparent that if the Project was truly to have an impact on the lives of ex-prisoners and their families, both substantial funding and a physical presence within the community would be required.

To this end, the LPSP went on to rent premises located at 126 Grand Street, Lisburn in February 1997. Initial costs for the rental of the property, given the name of 'The Resource Centre,' were met by local fundraising efforts.

In due course, the LPSP Management Committee applied for and received a development grant of £3,000 from NIVT which allowed them to cover the Centre's initial running costs such as telephone and electricity as well as the purchase of a computer. A core of volunteers was also recruited and trained to staff the office three mornings per week.

At this time, the LPSP Management Committee also made an application for additional funds to the Lisburn District Peace and Reconciliation Partnership to allow for the purchase and renovation of the building at 126 Grand Street. Despite eventually receiving £11,000 less than they had requested, undaunted, they forged ahead with plans, and, with the help of volunteers working flat out, raised the shortfall themselves and successfully purchased and renovated

the building. The courage of the LPSP leaders of the time and their refusal to bow down in the face of setbacks, is worthy of note here.

A further application to NIVT followed shortly thereafter which then allowed for the hiring of the project's first paid staff member, running costs, and the purchase of several more computers.

Subsequently, on the 17th of January 1998, Adrian Bird took up post as Project Coordinator for the LPSP. His experience as a founding member of the organisation meant that he brought to the position a thorough understanding of the history of the Project, who it represented, and what its aims and objectives were.

Throughout this initial period the Lisburn PSP was slowly but surely building up both its own organisational capacity as well as that of the community's, through the continual skilling up of its volunteer base, the sourcing of funding and other resources, the securing of assets, and the increasing of its membership base.

And while all of this was going on, the organisation continued to participate in difficult, risky, but positive cross-community programmes and conducting low level engagement with republicans. This work was to lay the foundation for even more intensive cross-community work in the future. In 1997 Lisburn PSP participated in a study visit to the Irish Institute in Leuven to meet with EU Commissioners, part of an initiative to engage politically motivated ex-prisoners, funded through EU PEACE I.³ Gaining experience from Commissioners involved in other recent conflicts in the Balkan

³ The European Peace Programme was established in July 1995 following a recommendation from a Special Commission Task Force. The purpose was to promote economic and social progress in Northern Ireland and the border region of Ireland. Initially established for a period of four years, the programme was continued until 2004 under PEACE II, and subsequently extended until 2006. In 2007, PEACE III was established, with funding continuing until 2013. A new programme (PEACE IV) was launched in January 2016 and will carry on until 2020. The funding programme has two main aims: 1) cohesion between communities involved in conflict in Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland, and 2) economic and social stability. The programme addresses the specific problems caused by the conflict with the aim of creating a peaceful and stable society. Between 1995 and 2013 a total contribution of €1.3 billion was made, while PEACE IV will see a contribution of €270 million.

regions helped to focus Lisburn PSP on their role in peacebuilding and conflict transformation at home.

An example of LPSP's commitment to this work was to be demonstrated many years later by their participation in the Conflict Transformation Working Group. A sub-group of the PEACE II and PEACE III funded 'Prison to Peace Project', this initiative saw representatives from all mainstream politically motivated ex-prisoner groups (Ulster Defence Association, Ulster Volunteer Force, Red Hand Commandos, Irish Republican Army, Irish National Liberation Army, and the Official IRA), come together in structured and facilitated conflict transformation and peace-building dialogue and programmes.

One of the earliest and arguably most important actions undertaken by the Lisburn Prisoners' Support Project at this time was to lobby the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) then in control of the Maze prison, for the right to secure access to the prison in order to engage with prisoners due to be released as part of the Good Friday Agreement. This involved conversations with senior NIO officials and senior members of the prison service. The LPSP was successful in its negotiations and were granted permission to go into the prison and engage with soon-to-be released prisoners on topics such as welfare rights, housing, vocational training and employment opportunities.

The Project identified over 130 former prisoners, 80 of whom were already living in Lisburn, and a further 50 from rural areas, extending as far as parts of South Down and North Armagh, with the majority living on Northern Ireland Housing Executive estates. Due to a decision made following the initial January 1997 meeting in Belfast referred to previously, for a need for more than one ex-prisoner support group in South Belfast, a series of conversations were held between Lisburn and Dromore LPA regarding the formation of a new self-help ex-prisoners' support group. Also discussed was the

question as to whether there should be one in Lisburn and Dromore respectively, or whether one new organisation could cover both areas. In the end the decision was made to establish the Lisburn PSP which was to cover both Lisburn and Dromore LPA areas, as well as the areas noted above, South Down and North Armagh.

It is worth pausing at this point in the story to reflect on two critical elements which characterised the workings of the newly established LPSP, and which would lay solid foundations for the community's successful journey for years to come.

The first of these had to do with the personal qualities of the leaders and champions within the LPSP. Right from the beginning, strong and dedicated leadership, commitment, and the willingness to take calculated risks, were very much in evidence. These essential qualities were to go on to be an integral part of the community's success every step of the way.

In a foreshadowing of things to come, Adrian Bird, for example, was quoted during this start-up period as expressing his utmost confidence in the new Project despite its being in its infancy.⁴ He went on to say that he believed that the Project would indeed flourish provided they put in place both a strong Management Committee and a core of dedicated community volunteers, and that the right opportunities came along. And flourish they did. In retrospect, how right he was.

The quality of the Project's leadership was just one of the reasons for its success and ultimately, the success of the entire community's journey from conflict to peace. The second characteristic exemplified by the LPSP was that right from its inception it adopted and worked by three essential principles, principles which remain very much in evidence even today.

⁴ Lisburn Prisoners' Support Project, 'Working for Today, Planning for Tomorrow.' November 1998.

The first of these was the firm belief that the intended beneficiaries of any work undertaken by the Project should be the whole of the community, not just a part of it. While the Resource Centre itself was clearly established initially as a focal point for ex-prisoners and their families where they could seek information and advice on a range of issues, receive job training, access educational courses, meet other ex-prisoners with whom experiences could be shared and access counselling, the Management Committee wisely decided that if these services were provided only to ex-prisoners and their families, the Project was doomed to eventual failure.

The Management Committee understood that the provision of services to just one sector of the community would surely provoke feelings of jealousy and exclusion, leading only to further instability. By adopting the principles of inclusion and integration, meaning that the Project's activities would be open to everyone, not just ex-prisoners and their families, the organisation successfully avoided community division and further conflict.

The adoption of this principle as an integral way of working meant that from its inception the Lisburn PSP did things differently to other similar groups in existence at the time. A good example of this was the Project's approach to accessing funds from the first tranche of PEACE monies. While their original application to PEACE I was indeed, as required by the funding criteria, for monies to support prisoners either facing release or newly released, the Project leaders ensured that any initiatives funded by the grant would be open to anyone living in the community, not just prisoners and their families.

In practice, this meant, for example, that when the LPSP convened a group for the partners of newly released prisoners, they ensured an equal number of non-prisoner partners were also invited to participate. This way of working quickly emerged as a common thread which was to be woven throughout the entire history of the community's transformation journey and is still very much in

evidence today in the work of the current Resurgam Trust. Simple, yet highly effective, the approach taken was founded on the belief that by involving the whole community in projects initially established for ex-prisoners, not only would the former prisoners be more effectively integrated, but the wider community itself would benefit.

The second underlying principle of the Project was a strong belief in the need to forge links with the wider community of Greater Lisburn and with those beyond Lisburn. In practice this meant that the LPSP set about building strong relationships with existing local community organisations and groups, including at that time, the Old Warren Community Association, the Halftown Residents Association, Hillhall Community Association, and the Hilden Community Association.

Looking beyond their community walls, the LPSP also started working to establish relationships with external organisations, including relevant statutory bodies, politicians, and the wider community and voluntary sectors. Eventually, for example, the LPSP had successfully built up solid relationships and links with bodies such as the Training and Employment Agency, the Northern Ireland Probation Service, the Lisburn Enterprise organisation, and the Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust.

The LPSP did not, however, restrict itself to its own community, and taking considerable risk, ventured beyond their comfort zone to go on to establish connections with both a nationalist community organisation namely Creggan Enterprises, a social enterprise initiative in Londonderry and the trade union motivated Northern Ireland Cooperative Development Agency represented at the time by social economy practitioners, Conal McFeely and Anne Molloy, both of whom contributed a wealth of knowledge, as did Cecilia Whitehorn, Consultancy Mentoring Works, Sammy Douglas, East Belfast Partnership, Avila Kilmurray, Community Foundation for Northern Ireland, and Mary Montague, Corrymeela Community.

On the 28th March 2003 members of Lisburn PSP had the opportunity to be part of a delegation from the Loyalist Community to visit the President of Ireland Mary McAleese at her residence, Aras an Ucahtarian in Phoenix Park, Dublin. For the membership of Lisburn PSP this was a significant step on their Journey of community transformation. Apart from being very enjoyable for those that were fortunate enough to attend, they also witnessed first-hand the friendship and hospitality shown by the President. This engagement also sent a clear and unambiguous message to the wider community that they were fully committed to the peace process.

Another huge milestone in the transformational journey of this community was building relationships with the local mainstream political representatives. Prior to the signing of the Good Friday Agreement relationships in Lisburn between political representatives of all parties and the Loyalist working class communities were fractured. At that time Loyalism was represented by the now defunct Ulster Democratic Party (UDP). The Ulster Democratic Party was a small Loyalist political party formed in 1991 and although had minimal success at the polls it did play a huge role in developing the Northern Ireland peace process and ultimately the signing of the Good Friday Agreement.

The UDP having a place at the negotiating table during the development of the peace process and being closely associated with Loyalist paramilitaries infuriated many mainstream political representatives, especially the Democratic Unionist Party who at the time were vigorously opposed to the Good Friday Agreement and the ultimate release of paramilitary prisoners.

When Lisburn PSP was formed in October 1996 there was very little political support for their work, especially in relation to the reintegration of former prisoners back into the community. The release of paramilitary prisoners was extremely unpopular with the public and even more so within Unionist communities. The

Management Committee of Lisburn PSP at the time felt isolated but held a resolve to be successful with or without political support. They were driven by their desire for peace and the need to transform the communities in which they lived. They knew what they wanted and at the time believed they could do it all on their own without support from any political party.

In the early days the strategy of the LPSP was to avoid publicity. They simply got on with their work and were extremely busy, with many successes. Soon, however, they began to encounter barriers which if were to be overcome, required political guidance and backing. Initially local elected members of the then Lisburn City Council avoided the LPSP, with some councillors refusing even to speak with LPSP members. While the local MP, Jeffrey Donaldson was the exception to this rule, it would nevertheless be fair to say that he was sceptical at the time of the LPSP's work.

Being treated with suspicion within political circles, however, did not deter LPSP, and they went on to develop a long-term strategy of political engagement. The group worked under the premise that they had to prove themselves, accepting that as many within the community had come from a backdrop of political conflict widespread distrust was understandable. There was recognition from the start that although political engagement was going to be difficult and hugely challenging for everyone involved, it was essential to overcoming barriers and achieving the best for the community.

Lisburn PSP and its member groups initiated an engagement process with all political parties, starting with invitations to politicians to attend meetings, festivals and community events. Presentations were made to politicians outlining the group's strategy and vision for a better community, including the creation of employment, addressing health inequalities, improved housing and community infrastructure.

In 1999 the LPSP also presented plans to transform the Old Warren

estate which included upgraded and new housing and the removal of the high-rise flats in Drumbeg Drive to be replaced by a new purpose-built Community Enterprise Centre. At this point in time, many of the elected members rejected the ideas of the group, thinking they were deluded. While some continued to refuse to meet with the LPSP, other notable politicians did quietly listen to their plans and gradually started to engage. These elected members included the area's MP, Jeffrey Donaldson and MLA, Edwin Poots.

This engagement process was the start of a journey which 20 years later was to reap many rewards and bring huge resources and benefits to the community. In 2018, for example, the Resurgam Trust has developed good working relationships with all political parties and collaborated on, and delivered, numerous projects. In partnership with Local Government the Trust has delivered new affordable housing schemes both for sale and to rent, built several new community resource centres, created new community-based social enterprises, and developed early intervention programmes which ensure the best opportunities for every child. Resurgam Trust has also worked collectively with political representatives and the local authority for the benefit of the community in relation to health, community safety and policing.

By establishing such strong internal and external relationships, both political and non-political, the LPSP was able to broaden their own knowledge and skill set substantially, something which would come to stand them in good stead far into the future.

Arguably the most important link forged during this time, however, was that established with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE). From the beginning NIHE were highly supportive of the LPSP's work. As will be seen throughout the course of this document, this support was wide-ranging, from the provision of community houses throughout Lisburn to serve as focal points for community group operations, to small grants for training and support, and finally, to

land transfers for the erection of the Laganview Enterprise Centre and the building of nine houses at Rathvarna Heights. In addition to the gifts of land the NIHE also offered regular technical support to the community consultation processes, drawings, and help with the process of seeking and obtaining planning permissions.

And finally, the third guiding principle underpinning the LPSP was a firm commitment to the practice of full involvement of ex-prisoners and their families, (and eventually of the entire community), in all aspects of their work, from policy-making, to fundraising, to assuming volunteer positions in the Centre. The Lisburn PSP at the time, wanted to be heard as, and very much was, the 'accepted voice' for ex-prisoners and their families.

Indeed, the support of the LPSP's membership, visible right from inception, was to become another of the organisation's critical success factors. The support provided down the years by LPSP's members for all aspects of their work, from fundraising to social events, has allowed the leadership to successfully implement a strategy for the regeneration of the community, the centre of which was the introduction of thousands of pounds of funding for good causes into the area. This strong membership support also contributed to building a socially cohesive community, characterised today by a large, extended family atmosphere, something which can easily be seen at events such as the annual Family Fun Day in June, the Night at the Races in September, the Talent Night in October, or the annual children's Christmas Party which sees well over 100 children under 12 in attendance.

By 1998 the thriving LPSP decided to hold its first conference at the Beechlawn Hotel in Dunmurry, Belfast. Attended by 35 people from various backgrounds, including ex-prisoners, family members, and local community members, all sharing a common interest in the LPSP, the conference was organised to begin developing both a short and medium-term strategy to ensure the Project's continued viability.

Attendees at the conference took part in what is known as a 'SWOT' (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis, an exercise designed to identify an organisation or project's strengths, weaknesses, as well as both the opportunities and threats it faces.

Even at that early stage, the strengths identified by the participants far outnumbered the weaknesses. Already the group expressed considerable confidence in their achievements to date, including establishing credibility with funders, having a highly dedicated staff and committee members in place, owning their own property, and being viewed as the voice of prisoners by prisoners themselves and others.

The weaknesses related largely to the need for more personnel, namely paid staff and LPSP Committee members. The LPSP, of course, were to address this as the years went by. As to challenges to the organisation's sustainability, participants identified the lack of political progress and lack of funding as the main ones. Other challenges cited were the violation of ceasefires and a return to conflict, civil unrest, street protests and opposition from political parties.

Conference attendees also addressed the question of sustainability for the new organisation, noting that "sustainability is the new buzz word." Attendees were invited to generate ideas which might contribute to achieving the organisation's financial sustainability, and it is interesting to note that of the ideas put forward, two of these were to go on and become the very foundation of Resurgam Trust's eventual financial sustainability: the purchasing of property and reinvestment of profits from the accompanying leasing/business opportunities generated, and the setting up of local businesses to create employment for residents.

The guest speaker in attendance at the conference, Sammy Douglas,

remarked on the difficulties of initiating projects in loyalist areas, particularly those areas where the UDA was present, while noting at the same time the large number of republican initiatives which were occurring elsewhere in Northern Ireland. This was a prescient comment, given that a similar sentiment was to be expressed nineteen years later at the Resurgam Trust Annual General Meeting held in 2017.

Just over one year later, at a second conference in 1999, the SWOT analysis was to be repeated and it is interesting to note that the original list of strengths and opportunities identified in 1998 had now expanded to twelve. These new strengths included their participation in the Old Warren Partnership, Lisburn town's support network, and their link with Lisburn Enterprise Organisation. The centrality of their physical location and the sustainability generated by the Laganside Print Shop and rental income at Grand Street were also cited.

Three main priorities emerged from the 1999 conference: 1) for workers and volunteers to engage in whatever training and educational activities required to ensure that they were capable of delivering the service; 2) to ensure achievement of aims and objectives; and 3) to ensure all work on their building was complete and premises fully operational by year-end.

It is worth pausing for a moment at this juncture of the LPSP's history to reflect on what both of these conference reports reveal about additional factors which were to contribute to the overall success of the journey undertaken by this community, and which are still in evidence today.

The conference reports indicate, for example, that right from its inception, the LPSP was committed to ensuring staff and volunteers were well trained while still ensuring they were meeting their obligation to the people they were set up to serve. Even as early in their journey as 1998, for example, Project staff and volunteers had

enrolled in a wide range of training programmes, including career path development, self-employment training, sustainability training, community leadership training, community development training, I.T. training, and presentation and facilitation skills training. To this day, well-trained staff and volunteers are essential to the way in which Resurgam Trust conducts its business.

During these early days the Lisburn PSP received guidance and support from many quarters but one of the most influential people they engaged with at the time was a woman called Mary Montague. A Catholic woman from west Belfast, Mary worked with the Quakers and was a member of the Corrymeela community. She was also a mediator and worked with all sections of the community in Northern Ireland as it emerged out of conflict.

Adrian Bird recalls the first night they brought Mary to Lisburn to meet a large group of women in the West Lisburn Community Centre on the Old Warren Estate. She had been invited by the Lisburn PSP Management Committee to meet with the group to give an overview of the services available through the Corrymeela Centre which included family support, peace building, and mediation.

All of the women present were from the Loyalist community and most had a member of their family who was either in prison or recently released. Mary walked into the room and said, "Hello my name is Mary and I am from Andersonstown, a strong Republican community in west Belfast." Adrian recalls that "you could have heard a pin drop and the look on some of the local women's faces was of horror and extreme shock."

Mary, however, was a talented woman and knew exactly what she was doing at this first meeting. Within a matter of hours, because of her honesty and respectfulness, she had won over the hearts and minds of the women's group. She explained that it was important that the group knew from the start who she was and where she was

from. This first meeting was the catalyst which laid the foundation for many years of Lisburn PSP's participation in peacebuilding and conflict transformation programmes in partnership with both Mary herself and Corrymeela.

Many friendships were formed which have endured over time and it came as no surprise to Lisburn PSP that in 2015, at an international peace event in Bucharest, Mary was presented with the 'Peacemaker of the Year' award for her work throughout the world. Corrymeela went on over the years to provide numerous family support programmes, summer camps and education and support programmes for members of Lisburn PSP.

By 1998 the Lisburn PSP had grown to the point where it was responsible for 130 prisoners, ex-prisoners, and their families. With plans to open an Outreach Office the LPSP had succeeded in establishing links with voluntary groups in the area and with statutory agencies, thereby ensuring access to a reservoir of expertise which could be drawn upon when necessary. These links also served to ensure that by participating in these larger community programmes, ex-prisoners and their families were not isolated. In May and June 1998, ten members of the LPSP participated in a training programme facilitated by Lisburn Enterprise Organisation (LEO). Delivered two evenings a week for seven weeks, the course involved basic business studies and community business start-ups. This training was to lay the foundation for the acquisition of the business acumen from which flowed the establishment of the many social enterprises in place today. The relationship established with LEO at that time was one of the first of many examples of the LPSP reaching out and working collaboratively with an outside body for the betterment of the community.

The range of programming and services provided by LPSP in the early years was critical to the successful integration of ex-prisoners back into their community. As one ex-prisoner stated in November 1998,

six weeks post-release, life has been difficult, but “The help which I have received from Lisburn Prisoners Support Project has been second to none. They have been on call 24 hours a day to help and assist with all the problems the ex-prisoner faces. Without them I don’t know how myself and my family would have coped.”⁵

Another ex-prisoner at the time reported that the support provided by the LPSP was appreciated not only by prisoners but also by their families. He also spoke of the peace of mind surrounding re-integration that comes from receiving support from the LPSP. The conference reports also revealed the LPSP’s early focus on the question of sustainability and financial independence not only for the ex-prisoners, but for the organisation itself, and the community at large. Members realised early on that if they were to see the fruits of their labour extend beyond the life of the initial PEACE funding, they needed a plan to ensure that participants could achieve and maintain their own personal financial independence, and that the LPSP itself could also thrive financially.

Discussions regarding the viability of securing property to achieve this financial sustainability had been ongoing from the late 1990s, as evidenced in a November 1998 report on the Lisburn PSP, *Working for Today, Planning for Tomorrow*:

The Project’s present funding will run out during 2000 and it is now that all involved with Lisburn Prisoners Support Project need to plan a strategy for the sustainability of the Project after 2000. Lisburn PSP is looking at the possibility of starting up two small businesses which although not employing a lot of people will generate revenue to help with running costs of the Project. A pilot for one of these businesses is hoped to start before the end of the year or in January 1999. The purchase and development of property is also seen as a method of generating income and suitable sites and properties are

⁵ Lisburn Prisoners’ Support Project, “Working for Today, Planning for Tomorrow,” November 1998.

already being identified. The purchase of one property has already been negotiated and it is hoped that this will begin 'making a return' by mid to late 1999. Our Project Coordinator has now the added responsibility for identifying further sites and properties as well as bringing forward suitable business start-ups for the committee to investigate and study further. The self-fundraising capacity of the Project will also be exploited to the full over the next two years and beyond to help provide the capital to put into small businesses or repay loans. The challenge of sustainability is facing us, but it is a challenge which we, perhaps with a little help, are relishing.⁶

The seeds of the business approach now employed by the Resurgam Trust can be seen here. The LPSP members had hit on a simple, but ground-breaking business model: develop social enterprises to provide training and employment for those in the community with poor employment prospects. At the same time, re-invest the profits back into the community to support further local initiatives and training, thereby addressing the sustainability of both the projects and the community at large.

To that end, planning began for the first of the Lisburn PSP's community-owned and based businesses, a car maintenance and repair company. Planning for a second business, a print company, soon followed, as did planning for a self-build company which would open the following year in 2000. 2001 would see both the car maintenance and the print company become a reality.

The Old Warren Community Association – The Old Warren Partnership

Meanwhile, a second prominent organisation was operating within the estate at this time, a tenants' association called the Old Warren Community Association (OWCA). Originally established in 1986, the

⁶ Lisburn Prisoners' Support Project, "Working for today, Planning for Tomorrow", November 1998.

Association's purpose was to address the needs of residents in the Old Warren Estate by undertaking a range of social and community projects. Located at 79 Glebe Walk, the Association hosted NIHE surgeries as well as social events, fun days and family centred activities.

By the year 1994, the OWCA was on the verge of collapse due to a depleted membership. Remaining members, however, identified a need for a new organisational strategy in response to the introduction of EU PEACE programmes, and in November of that year, they established a new committee charged with developing this strategy. This new strategy, published in 1995, would see the OWCA expand their remit beyond tenant housing concerns to taking a broader community development approach in the hopes of bringing about much needed social change in the area.

The new strategy identified a range of projects to be developed, including youth provision, a pre-school, homework club, and a welfare rights advice service. The need for a new community resource centre was also identified, and to that end the OWCA Committee approached NIHE and the International Fund for Ireland to discuss securing the land in the centre of Old Warren Estate upon which two high-rise flats were situated.

In the meantime, OWCA went on to secure 171 Avonmore Park (known then as the 'Playhouse') and established several sub-groups to address topics such as children's play opportunities, youth work, training for women, senior citizens provision and local fund raising. Over time, the activities of these sub-groups gradually gained momentum and led to the establishment of five autonomous groups working closely with the Association as a whole: Lisburn Welfare Rights Group; Raggety Bap; Old Warren Women in Training; Old Warren Seniors; and Old Warren Youth Initiative.

In that same year the Association successfully applied for and

received a £150,000 funding package from Lisburn Borough Council, the International Fund for Ireland, and NIVT to help develop the work of the sub-groups.

Up until this point the organisation had functioned as an informal partnership between the five sub-groups, however in 1996 it was felt that a more formal partnership would improve coordination between the sub-groups and their various activities, as well as allow for improved networking, and the attraction of new resources, projects and groups to the area.

Following a planning day held in August 1996, this partnership was officially established. Called the Old Warren Partnership, comprising both some original members from the OWCA, as well as the LPSP, it was intended as “a new start to create an environment in which people are proud to live”. Objectives of the Partnership included delivery of the new Strategic Plan, with its expanded focus on providing education and training opportunities for residents of all ages; provision of services to member groups; facilitation of links between community groups and statutory agencies; coordination of joint activities; support for new groups and projects, and continuing with the work previously begun by the OWCA, to obtain a new building to function as a community base for member groups and activities. The latter objective was to come to fruition in 2004 with the erection of the Laganview Enterprise Centre on the location of the two derelict flats in the centre of the Estate.

With the formation of the Partnership, the Old Warren Community Association itself was able to return to its original concerns of housing and the environment. Representatives of the Association, for example, attended monthly meetings of the Housing Executive Housing Forum and quarterly Housing Strategy meetings.

The OWCA remains operative to this day, and as of 2018 has a management committee of twelve people. The organisation’s focus remains on housing and the environment.

The Old Warren Partnership continued to function until 2011 when it was dissolved to make way for the new organisation, the Resurgam Community Development Trust.

Youth Initiatives

Despite the good work being undertaken throughout the mid-nineties by the Association, it was becoming apparent to some that a huge gap was the lack of youth provision in the area. In 1995 a group of young people led by Denis Paisley from the Estate approached the Community Association saying they were fed up with being moved on from street corners. The Community Association challenged them to come up with a viable proposal and promised, if they did so, that they would support them in developing and implementing their ideas.

A Youth Committee was duly formed and in 1996 a community profile was produced which highlighted several key issues in relation to the needs of children and young people in the area. The 1996 OWCA Strategic Plan highlighted that a major initiative was required if the spiral of decline was to be arrested and the area made more attractive for the young people to stay and raise families.

In the 1997 document entitled *A Sense of Belonging*,⁷ it was observed that young people in the community were feeling disillusioned and powerless, with many highlighting frustrations at their inability to contribute to community decision-making processes. As a result, initial development programmes and social and recreational activities were organised and in 1998 a social audit clarified the vision and strategic direction of the Youth Initiative.

As described by an Old Warren Youth Worker, the programme "... focused on good agencies and brilliant tutors in drama, culture, leisure, community leadership and self-help projects. With the drama

⁷ As quoted in "Lisburn P.S.P. South Streets Ahead Project, A Practical Analysis and Audit of Services: The Road Ahead" by Tony Morgan, Patrick Henry, and Sean Gallagher, University of Ulster, page 24.

something clicked. We made links with the YouthAction Young Men's Development Project. Youth Net also supported their involvement with the wider community but emphasised that it had to be their own work.”⁸

As a YouthAction Team Leader at the time went on to describe, “It began with worker support training sessions...They have accessed knowledge and skills from YouthAction to sustain and develop the work.”

Pilot programmes organised in collaboration with YouthAction included ‘Young Men and Violence’ and ‘Men and Health’. Further needs emerged; for example, issues of stress, isolation and access to children were commonly identified among young fathers.

Funding was accessed through the EU PEACE I Lisburn District Peace and Reconciliation Partnership to organise a programme of courses including Community Leadership, IT skills and Personal Development. This programme focussed on young men who might otherwise have been recruited into paramilitaries. Their participation in these programmes meant that they made a positive contribution to their community at the same time as developing important life skills.

Individual and personal development and community capacity building needs were addressed within the Community Leadership Project that was designed and formulated by Lisburn PSP and the Young Men's Community Leadership Groups within target communities – Community Action Groups. This project focused on older youth and addressed topics such as confidence building, goal setting, presentation skills, community organisations and partnerships, fund-raising, and conflict resolution. Participants from the Community Leadership Groups described the range of activities in which they had been engaged and their increasing confidence in giving presentations and lobbying as follows:

⁸ Celia Whitehorn, CM Works, “Lisburn Men's Education Network Evaluation.” 2001

“I’ve been to a lot of job workshops.”

“We were involved with the Traffic Calming and the survey about the gas in the houses.”

“We went on a course about how to do presentations. We learnt about rights, local history, and first aid.”

“We’re organising a Halloween party for the younger ones.”

“We’re looking for new projects.”

“We did presentations to politicians.”

The provision of the pilot Community Leadership course, however, also highlighted several other important problems which would require attention: 1) the need for autonomous young men’s groups to be formed and supported; 2) the ongoing need for the Community Leadership course itself; 3) the isolation and lack of opportunities for participants to meet other young men outside their own communities; 4) the potential and actual conflict between young men from similar cultures and backgrounds but different geographical areas. As stated at the time by the Old Warren Partnership Co-ordinator, “There were problems between groups of young men from different sides of the town, it wasn’t cross-community stuff”.

Consequently, Old Warren Partnership staff and volunteers facilitated the development of new young men’s groups in Hillhall and Maze (and later, Hilden through PEACE II).

Lisburn Men’s Education Network

Following the success of the young men’s work, there was a need to engage older men in the Citizenship and Political Engagement

programmes. Consequently, several men's groups were established under the umbrella Lisburn Men's Education Network (MEN). These groups were established in the Lisburn PSP active areas of Old Warren, Hillhall, Hilden and the Maze. The chairs of each group, community leaders from each of the respective areas, formed the management committee of the body and provided a structure for the delivery of education, history and cultural courses designed to engage older men in community and political engagement.

Lisburn MEN was established in areas of multiple deprivation, where men did not traditionally participate fully in community activities, civic structures, or in the electoral processes at any level of governance. It mobilised men and developed their capacity to serve as a positive resource in their respective communities through becoming volunteers, leaders, and acting as a positive role model for younger men. Participants in MEN then also went on to support and mentor the work of the young men's community leadership groups, often linking in with projects.

Core and programme costs for Lisburn MEN were accessed through the EU PEACE II Programmes 'New Skills and New Opportunities,' and 'Building Community Capacity and Promoting Active Citizenship,' managed by intermediary funding bodies, Educational Guidance Service for Adults, and the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland respectively. The funding received enabled the development of the various education and engagement activities in the targeted areas.

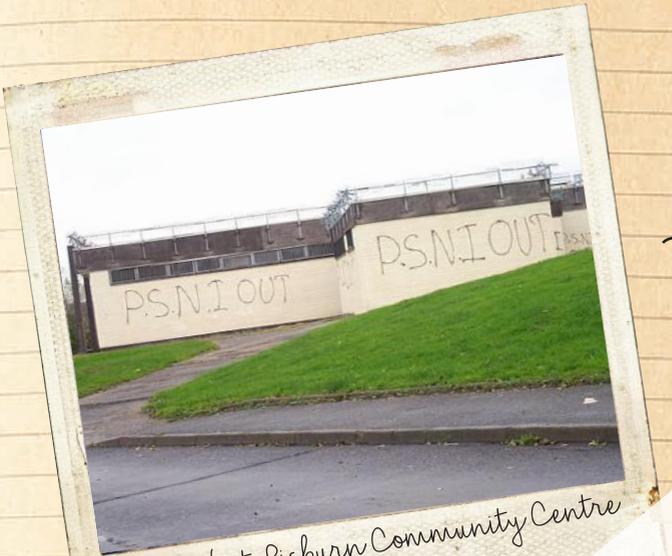
Lisburn MEN addressed the issues of exclusion and apathy amongst men living in communities which had suffered significantly because of the conflict. The specific areas addressed by the project were: increased awareness of disadvantage, enhanced educational attainment, benefits of volunteering, cultural and political understanding, a shared vision, rights and equality, tolerance, and developing community leaders.

At the launch of the Men's Education Network, the Project Manager outlined the key aim of the Network as a forum for men's training groups, located in mainly working-class housing estates. Key objectives included organising 1) facilities to provide educational guidance and advice; 2) meetings, lectures and workshops to address issues of concern; 3) provision of a range of vocational and recreational classes; 4) meetings to support Network development.

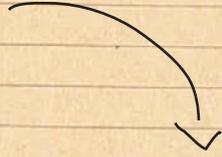
The Network went on to register as an Essential Skills Learning Centre with the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) with the Lisburn PSP staff supporting the project by becoming programme trainers. Based on further engagement with men from sports, political, and cultural backgrounds, MEN adapted the RSA Essential Skills course to include sports and culture as a medium, leading to endorsements from the Department for Employment and Learning. Academic achievements by those involved included Essential Skills in Literacy and Numeracy, and Open College Network Level II in Community Leadership. Participation in these programmes was shown to have had a positive effect on men attaining third level qualifications.

The area-based men's groups went on to oversee and manage elements of community development in the target communities, a prime example being the County Down Community Leadership Group (Hillhall) delivering an EU PEACE II Project, 'Weak Community Infrastructure.' This project established a community resource in two houses under lease from NIHE with the Leadership Group later going on to secure funding to develop the Hillhall Community Resource Centre.

These groups continued to function for the next decade or so but were stood down in 2011 when the funding stream ended. The membership of these groups, however, went on to become involved in further activities under Lisburn PSP's EU PEACE III's 'Prison to Peace Programme'.



West Lisburn Community Centre



Resurgam 3D Youth Centre

Before and after...

Before and after...



Derelict Housing Old Warren



New Social Housing Old Warren



Rushmore Old



Rushmore Business Hub



Before and after...



Paramilitary Mural 1999 - The Entrance to Old Warren



New Social Housing in Old Warren - 2003



Sod Cutting at Hillhall Community Resource Centre



Hillhall opening 2013

Hillhall Community Resource Centre



Huguenot Drive



*Digging the foundations
of Huguenot Drive Apartments*

Volunteer Labour

CONFLICT TO PEACE Our Community Transformation

124 Grand Street...then and now



From this...



126/124 Grand Street



To this



Front view of both 124/126 Grand street. New Horizons Credit Union is housed in the first building.

Young People's History Project

Old Warren History



I never knew before the course that Old Warren was a big Loyalist Estate and people would fear turning into the estate if they were not from here.

Old Warren History




YOU ARE NOW ENTERING LOYALIST OLD WARREN

Old Warren History




Old Warren History



The Old Warren Estate, located one mile to the west of Lisburn town Centre, was built between 1966 and 1972 in three phases with each phase being separated from the others by an area of open space. The Estate, the largest in Lisburn, comprises around 1200 dwellings with a population of approximately 2500.

Old Warren Estate's early population was made up mainly from those displaced as a result of the troubles from areas in West Belfast including Moyard and Suffolk. Old Warren had seen violence as early as the aftermath of the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985, to which its Protestant and loyalist inhabitants were fiercely opposed. During the 1990's the estate became increasingly unpopular, due to a range of factors including increased community polarisation, discontent at the nature of the housing and the general quality of the environment. This led to a reduction in demand for dwellings, with many of those who could afford housing elsewhere moving out. Even after the ceasefire of 1994 this estate was said to be the second least popular estate in Northern Ireland by prospective residents.

A community regeneration journey began in the mid 1990's and this has resulted in new community facilities - Laganview Enterprise Centre and Resurgam 3D Youth Centre.

Old Warren



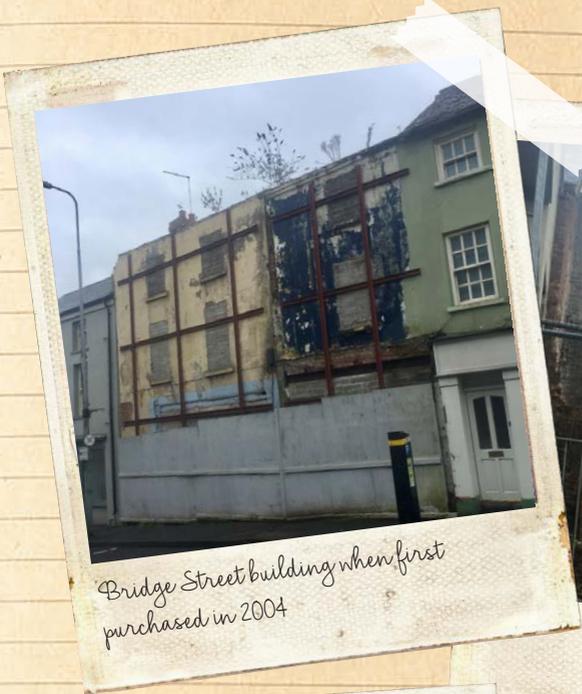
Then and now



Rathvarna Heights Lisburn



Before and after...



Bridge Street building when first purchased in 2004



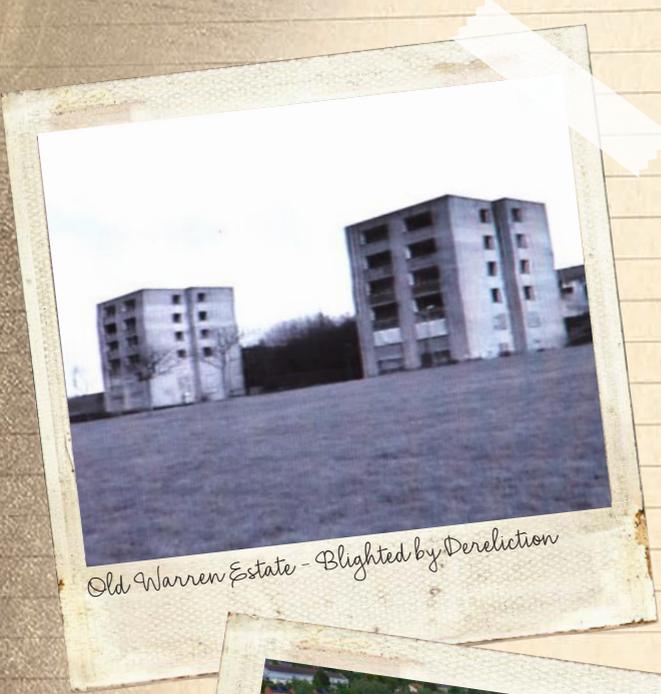
Bridge Street under construction



Back of Bridge Street January 2019

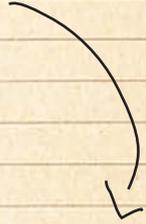


Bridge Street



Old Warren Estate - Blighted by Dereliction

Before and after...



Laganview Enterprise Centre

Our community transformation

YEARS 2000 – 2001

2000 to 2001 were critical years for the Lisburn PSP, and were, one might even argue, the years in which the stage for the future success of what was eventually to become the Resurgam Trust was well and truly set.

For it was during these two pivotal years that the first three, out of what was to eventually become a total of six social enterprises, were set up: Laganside Auto Maintenance and Repair Limited; Lisburn Community Self-Build Ltd; and following soon thereafter, the New Horizons Credit Union Ltd.

The idea behind these enterprises (then and now) was first and foremost that of providing employment to local people. An added benefit, was that by engaging people in meaningful employment, they were much less likely to become involved in either paramilitary or criminal behaviour. In other words, the Lisburn PSP decided to use sustainable employment as a vehicle for conflict transformation. By re-investing the profits back into the community for the benefit of all, they ensured widespread community support for the businesses they had built by this stage and for any future businesses they would go on to build.

The planning process behind the establishment of each of the businesses the Lisburn PSP opened during these two years was to become the model for the development of all of LPSP's business endeavours in the years to come. In general, the steps the LPSP followed looked something like this: develop business concept → undertake extensive consultation → carry out research → develop a business plan → secure finances → agree business structure → register company → enter pilot period of trading.

There were of course minor variations to this model. For example, in some cases, the pilot period came before company registration, as

was the case with the Premier Taxi Company. As shall be seen in later years, rather than continuing to start up new businesses, new social enterprises were occasionally simply incorporated into established businesses. Examples of this are the Laganview Gym, which operates under the legal structure of the Laganview Enterprise Centre Ltd and the vehicle lease service, which operates under Premier Taxi Company Ltd.

It is worthwhile noting that all the businesses started in this period were done so initially with little financial support, and all were, and continue to this day to be, heavily supported by a core of volunteers.

Meanwhile in 2000 the LPSP was to build two apartments located at 2a and 2b Huguenot Drive in Lisburn. Although they didn't know it at the time, this venture was to become the precursor to the LPSP's community-led housing model, a model which would see the formation of the Lisburn Community Self-Build business in the year 2001.

The funding for the two apartments was raised by volunteers who conducted raffles, sponsored events, and social functions. They successfully raised the required amount of £40,000 and the houses were built. The wisdom of this first business decision was to be seen not too many years later, when in 2005, these same apartments were valued at £250,000.

The significant contribution made by volunteers to the development of this first building project was to be a common thread running through all of the social economy projects that were to follow.

By 2000 the LPSP's organisational structure and staff had expanded considerably to include, a Project Coordinator, a full-time and a part-time Outreach Worker, a Print Shop Manager, a Family Support Worker, Business Link Workers, and a Self-Build Key Worker.

Laganside Auto Maintenance and Repair Limited

By early 2000, with a grant of £20,000 from the Northern Ireland government's Local Enterprise Development Unit, the car maintenance and repair business opened its doors. It was initially located at Unit 6, Rosevale Estate, 171 Moira Road, within easy walking distance of Old Warren.

The founding members of the newly established Board of Directors were Jason Abraham, Secretary, and Colin Halliday, Fiona McCausland, Kenneth McComb, and John McStea.

Beginning with just one mechanic, the company, in addition to undertaking car repairs and maintenance work, and in keeping with the overall ethos of the Lisburn PSP, also quickly introduced education and training opportunities for young people.

By 2001 the business was completely self-sustaining and employed two full-time vehicle technicians and one apprentice. The company had an annual turnover of £70,000 and had to register for VAT. The staff were supported by a local businessman, Colin McCoosh, and backed up by a dedicated team of volunteers who assisted with management, administration, and marketing. Staff and volunteers were from both sides of the community and worked together extremely well.

The management of Laganside Auto Maintenance and Repair represented a steep learning curve for Lisburn PSP and was its first real attempt at running a community business. The Directors had to learn new skills including employment legislation, financial management, and marketing.

While profitable in its original site, the business was unfortunately forced to relocate as the land on which they were situated had become extremely valuable and the landlord wanted the premises

for other purposes. While an alternative space was found at 3 Ballygowan Road in Hillsborough and the business operated there for two years, the customer base simply did not follow, and the business was wound down in 2006.

All equipment was sold, and the money reinvested in future business development. The vehicle technicians found new employment and remain to this day in contact with The Resurgam Trust. The apprentice at the time reskilled and moved onto manage the Highway Inn, one of LPSP's most successful social enterprises. The decision to dissolve the company, however, had a devastating impact on the management committee and membership of Lisburn PSP. In fact, the decision to dissolve had been delayed for over a year due to loyalty and a refusal to accept that the business had ultimately failed. Due to circumstances beyond their control, the business was losing money despite LPSP doing everything in their power to save it.

The closure itself also represented a huge learning curve in business development skills for the Lisburn PSP. In short, LPSP found itself torn between their community ethos and the real world of business. While in hindsight the group admits they should have dissolved the company sooner LPSP also acknowledges the positive learning for future business development gleaned from the experience.

Lisburn Community Self-Build Limited

In the year 2000, community leaders were approached by Avila Kilmurray, Director of NIVT, later known as the Community Foundation for NI (CFNI) with an invitation to attend a meeting about the possibility of becoming involved in a self-build project which would see former prisoners re-skilled and building houses in which they could then live.

At the meeting, attended by Avila and Adrian Bird, Avila provided details of a self-build project which took place in west Belfast in the

early 1990s, well before the peace process, involving a group of six Republican ex-prisoners who had been released in the normal course of the parole process. Having been gifted a piece of land by NIHE the group of six formed a cooperative, took out an interest-free loan from a charitable organisation, and built six houses on the property.

Built for approximately £20,000 each, on completion they were valued at £60,000 each, making it easy for the ex-prisoners to raise a mortgage and repay the initial loan. The ex-prisoners were the sole beneficiaries of the project.

In an assessment of Lisburn Self-Build Limited some years later, Brian Gormally⁹ noted that the Republican project was ‘technically’ a success in that it demonstrated that such an approach was financially viable. The Lisburn PSP, however, was not interested simply in financial viability. For them any project they might develop also had to be for the good of the whole community, not just a certain sector of the community.

Following the meeting with Avila Kilmurray, the LPSP discussed the self-build concept described in detail but quickly ruled the model out as unworkable in its present form for their organisation. They believed the model was at odds with their stated commitment to integrate former prisoners into the community, not to provide housing which would see them living side by side in a row. The LPSP held to the notion that projects for the benefit of a single sector of the community would ultimately be disastrous for community cohesion.

Furthermore, the LPSP believed that given the strong Unionist tradition present at that time in the Lisburn area, they would not have received political or community support for a scheme which provided houses solely for ex-prisoners.

⁹ Brian Gormally, “Evaluation of Lisburn Community Self-Build Project,” April 2006.

Not wanting to throw away an opportunity completely, the membership of the LPSP spent several months researching and thinking about other potential models that might better align with their operating ethos. In the end they came up with their own innovative business model, which was to see the establishment of a new Limited Company called Lisburn Community Self-Build Limited (LCSB).

It was envisioned that this new company would be the vehicle for taking ownership of land and building houses. It was also decided, that unlike the original model described at the Belfast meeting, the main aim of this company would be to provide education and training opportunities for unemployed young people living in Lisburn regardless of their religious background. And most important of all, their model would see the Self-Build Company, not ex-prisoners, become the owners of the properties.

Following extensive negotiations Lisburn PSP was eventually gifted land at Rathvarna Drive, Lisburn, by the NIHE which was suitable for the building of nine semi-detached dwellings. In addition to the land, the Housing Executive also provided the newly formed Self-Build Company with the necessary technical expertise to undertake the construction project.

The Self-Build Company then sought and received an 18-month £130,000 interest-free loan from the Ulster Garden Villages and entered a five-year construction phase for the erection of nine homes on the Rathvarna site.

During the years between 2003 when the building started, and 2007, when it was completed, the Company skilled up to 50 young people in bricklaying and joinery construction skills (NVQ levels I, II, and III). Following completion, they then went on, using the services of Co-Ownership NI, to sell six of the nine houses to young, first-time

buyers, thereby providing young people with an opportunity to get onto the housing ladder.

With the completion and sale of the properties, Lisburn Self-Build was able to clear all of its debts and although left with no cash profit, it did own three houses valued at over £200,000 each.

Meanwhile, prior to the official formation of the company, the Lisburn PSP, following consultation with key stakeholders, had submitted a business proposal to the intermediate funding body, NIVT, requesting £10,000 to purchase 124 Grand Street, a derelict property adjacent to their own premises at 126 Grand Street.

The proposal set out a plan which would see the purchase of the building, and the establishment of a community-led volunteer fundraising project to finance the renovation work required. In conjunction with this the Lisburn PSP also conducted research into the establishment of a community printing business which would offer printing and administration services to community groups, the public, and to the business community in Lisburn. The funding application was successful, and the property purchased. A fundraising committee was established and raised the £16,000 required to undertake the necessary building renovations.

The renovations were undertaken largely by volunteers recruited from throughout Lisburn. These volunteers had a mix of skills and experience, and included bricklayers, joiners, labourers, painters and decorators, administrators, fundraisers, and ordinary members of the community who simply wanted to become involved and help. The building was successfully renovated to a high standard and an initial investment of £10,000 had transformed a run-down house into a small but vibrant office space property valued at over £60,000.

With this initial success, both the concept and the reality of Lisburn Self-Build Community Limited were on their way. Realising the

benefits of a community-based volunteer project in which people worked collectively on a building project, the Company decided, following intense internal and external consultation, to build two new apartments on the land to the rear of Grand Street. LPSP and the Self-Build Company managed to secure funding for a technical support worker and negotiated the assistance of an architect who produced the drawings for the apartments. The business case was ambitious: The aim was to fundraise the estimated £40,000 required to purchase materials and services, mobilise volunteers to undertake the new build and offer education and training opportunities to young people from Lisburn. While Lisburn PSP owned the land in question, they used their own reserves to submit the plans. During the twelve-month long wait for the plans to be approved, volunteers conducted the fundraising campaign to raise the £40,000. While the fundraising goal was achieved, money, however, remained tight, and at one point the starting point for the foundations had to be dug out by hand.

Looking back, it is easy to identify the key decisions taken in the early stages of the Lisburn Community Self-Build Company that would continue to serve the community so well over the years to come. The first of these, alluded to earlier, was the LPSP's belief that the beneficiaries of the Self-Build Company's work must once again be the whole of the community, not just a single group within this community.

The second critical decision was to capitalise on the opportunities that a self-build project naturally offers, i.e. job-skill training. Again, the LPSP was guided by the principle of business development as a tool for community regeneration. By providing job skills to those fifty young people, they ensured a brighter future for those youth than they otherwise might have had.

In essence, the LPSP took the basic concept of 'self-build' and expanded on it by ensuring opportunities for the whole community

to benefit—whether through volunteering, taking up residence in one of the houses, or learning building skills on the job. In so doing, the LPSP once again avoided the harmful “us and them” divisions which could so easily and quickly arise amongst the community.

This belief in the merit of using volunteers was to become a central component of every project the Company was to undertake. Indeed, this first construction project was completed solely by volunteers, including volunteer tradesmen who passed building trade skills on to the youth involved in the project. In addition, volunteers also received training in health and safety, first aid and job-seeking techniques. The project was also managed by a voluntary board of directors with a key worker in place to coordinate the construction schemes.

The words of one volunteer involved in the Self-Build Company during these early stages aptly summarises the prevailing feelings of the time: “Many people ask why volunteer community workers would want to put so much time and effort into a community project in which they receive no financial rewards. The answer is simple, as we see our buildings develop and our young volunteers and trainees achieve their qualifications and move into full-time employment it gives us a tremendous boost with pride and personal satisfaction.”¹⁰

Overall, the impact of the decisions made regarding how the Self-Build Company would conduct its business was significant and long lived: community conflict and divisions were successfully avoided, young people and volunteers acquired skills to assist them in becoming economically self-sufficient, community cohesion and capacity were expanded, and, last but not least, the foundation for the financial sustainability of the Lisburn PSP itself and, many years later, its successor, the Resurgam Trust, was laid.

¹⁰ As quoted in Gormally, p. 6.

Throughout this relatively busy period the Lisburn Community Self-Build Company was also steadily building a positive relationship with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. Community ownership and asset transfer became a key component of the Self-Build ethos, with NIHE over the years continuing to support schemes whereby vacant, unused land could be transferred to Lisburn Community Self-Build to maximise opportunities for social housing.

Community-Led Housing Model

The community-led housing model reflected in the approach taken by the Lisburn Self-Build Company, was to go on to serve as the model underpinning the building of all of the previously described dwellings. Perhaps even more importantly, this model has gone on to become what is now the central component of the current Resurgam Trust's long-term financial sustainability plan. As noted previously, this commitment to ensuring a robust financial and sustainability strategy was present as far back as 1996 during the time of the formation of the Lisburn Prisoner's Support Project. The main aim of such a strategy was always to ensure that the organisation was financed in such a way that its long-term financial health would be secured.

As of 2018 the Trust has indeed achieved a considerable degree of sustainability, currently with four sources of self-generated income: property management, membership fees, social enterprise donations and fundraising and sponsorship. A core sustainability strategy of the Resurgam Trust has been, and continues to be, the generation of income from property which has been achieved in part through the development of our community-led housing model.

1a Rushmore Drive

In May 2004 Lisburn PSP identified a derelict property owned by NIHE at 1a Rushmore Drive, Lisburn. Following initial research on

potential use and internal discussions, Lisburn PSP approached NIHE to take ownership of the building. After intense negotiations, political lobbying and community consultations, Lisburn PSP secured a ten-year lease at low rent of £2,000 per year from the Housing Executive. Lisburn Community Self-Build then mobilised its team of staff and volunteers, moved in and completely refurbished the building. In so doing, ten unemployed young people were introduced to the construction industry and received experience in working on a building site.

The building was completely restored and brought back to life. It was converted from one single shop unit into three smaller units with the intention that Lisburn PSP could use the smaller units as an incubation centre for education, training and new small business start-up.

The finance required to complete the renovation of this property was raised by Lisburn PSP through small loans, organised social events and fundraising. This insured broad community support and community buy-in for the project.

The premises have been used to develop several small business start-ups including the Premier Taxi Company Ltd, a Resurgam Trust Social Enterprise and the largest Taxi Company in Lisburn. In 2017 Resurgam Trust secured a 25-year rent free lease from the Housing Executive and now use the building as a Small Business and Social Enterprise incubation hub.

Development of Wasteland at Glenavy Gardens

Following the success of the building development at Rathvarna Heights, Lisburn Community Self-Build were keen to build more houses. A piece of waste land was identified at Glenavy Gardens in the Old Warren Estate with a value placed on it of £100,000.

While NIHE had, up until this point, been very supportive of the regeneration work undertaken by LPSP, the environment in which they operated had changed. It was now extremely difficult if not impossible for NIHE to gift land or property at zero cost, with the result that if Lisburn Community Self-Build was to continue their work, a new approach had to be adopted.

Following four years of intense negotiations with NIHE, solicitors, banks, architects, accountants, Lisburn City Council, political representatives and the local community, Lisburn Community Self-Build eventually moved onto site in 2011. With the community taking ownership of a building project, construction of the four planned houses went smoothly, and scores of volunteers queued up to offer their help.

Towards the end of the building project Lisburn Community Self-Build enlisted the help of the Old Warren Youth Initiative to provide security and ensure the houses remained safe until they were sold. For almost two months they operated a shift system and slept in the houses during the night. This proved to be an excellent spin-off to the building project as local youth have on many occasions been heard to say, "That's the houses that we built". Another great example of community ownership.

Built with a loan of £165,000 from the Ulster Community Investment Trust, the total cost of the project was £380,000. The four houses were then sold to Connswater Homes Housing Association and therefore retained within the community as social housing. As a testament to its success, the Lisburn Community Self-Build programme was to go on to win numerous awards over the years, the latest of which was the Queen's Award for Volunteering, in 2011. The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service is the highest award given to local volunteer groups across the UK to recognise outstanding work done in their own communities. This award created in 2002 to celebrate the anniversary of the Queen's coronation, is equivalent of an MBE for volunteer groups.

Hillhall Community Resource Centre

Another excellent example of innovation, collaboration and hard work in the journey of Lisburn PSP and Lisburn Community Self-Build was the construction of the Hillhall Community Resource Centre at 14 – 16 Hillhall Road.

In June 2007 NIHE demolished a number of old housing stock on the Hillhall Road to pave the way for a new housing development on the site. Prior to demolition, the Hillhall Regeneration Group had occupied two of the houses as their base for community work. Following negotiations with NIHE agreement was reached that when the new housing development was built land would be retained on the main Hillhall Road for a new community facility, to be built if and when the local community could secure the appropriate funding required.

The site lay vacant for a number of years, but the local community, led and supported by Lisburn PSP, eventually secured £185,000 towards the construction of a new Community Resource Centre. £125,000 was secured from Lisburn City Council and a donation of \$100,000 (£60,000) from the Ireland American Fund.

Lisburn Community Self-Build secured the tender to build the new community facility and, on the 20th September 2013, the Hillhall Community Resource Centre was opened by the Chair of Lisburn City Council Leisure Services, Alderman Paul Porter, and Matthew Milliken, Hillhall Youth Initiative.

Since 2013 the Hillhall Community Resource Centre has flourished and is now the hub for community activity in the Hillhall area.

The community-led housing model has seen the Resurgam Trust build up a small portfolio of both residential and commercial property whereby as of 2018 the Trust owns six residential houses

with construction under way to build five new apartments at Bridge Street, Lisburn. In addition, they own and manage three community centres, a youth centre, two credit Union offices, a pub and a number of small commercial units.

Laganside Print and Heritage Limited

Despite being busy establishing the Self-Build Company in the early 2000's, the Lisburn PSP also realised around this time that there was a growing need for a reasonably priced printing service located in the community. Planning began in 2000, with a successful application to NIVT for a grant of £23,500.

This funding allowed for the hiring of one employee and the purchase of a printing machine. A volunteer Board of Directors was put in place and the founding members were Jeanette Coyle, Secretary, Adrian Bird, John McStea, and Denis Paisley, Directors.

The business officially opened its doors in May 2001 at 124 Grand Street and initially provided a limited range of business services including production of business stationery, flyers, booklets, community news-sheets, and ballot tickets.

With the original funding coming to an end, however, in 2002, the Board of Directors realised that to be competitive and viable, the business needed to diversify and identify additional means of raising income. After a considerable amount of in-depth research, in 2003 the Company re-registered as Laganside Print and Heritage Limited and branched out into the traditional and world flags market and the sale of local historical and cultural souvenirs. For a period of two years the business was also recognised as an official outlet for Glasgow Rangers football team merchandise.

The development of Laganside Print and Heritage Limited was supported by local business man Ken Cleland, Managing Director of

Graham & Heslips, who provided training and valuable advice to the group on the running of a printing business.

Throughout the next five years the Company continued to thrive, and in 2008 it seized the opportunity to move to Smithfield Square in Lisburn city centre, where it was to remain for the next four years. During that time many training and educational opportunities in printing and office administration for youth were provided, new equipment for business start-up enterprises was purchased and significant donations of surplus profits were made to pre-school, youth, and community groups.

With the downturn in the western economy which was happening at that time the Board of Directors decided in the winter of 2011 to review the Company's structure and services and concluded that further diversification was required.

In January 2012 the company name was changed from Laganside Print and Heritage Limited to Laganside Business Services Limited and re-located to the recently built Laganview Enterprise Centre.

With the change in name came a broadened list of services provided which included the following: community printing services; administration; facilitation; bookkeeping; payroll services; policy development and implementation; secretarial services; community engagement services; business planning and business development; marketing and evaluation services; and VAT returns.

As of 2018, the company has one member of staff, an annual turnover of £67,409 and was able in that year to donate £20,000 of its surplus profit to the Resurgam Trust.

New Horizons Credit Union

While not established until 2001, the idea for establishing a club credit union in Lisburn began years before, following a 1998 visit to Edinburgh University undertaken by Adrian Bird, Colin Halliday, and Kenneth McComb. During this visit the Lisburn PSP representatives had the opportunity to visit several deprived communities in Edinburgh and observe first hand several projects set up to tackle issues caused by severe deprivation, high levels of drug dealing, drug abuse and anti-social activity in these communities.

One of these projects was a credit union established in a significantly deprived area to help tackle high levels of criminality associated with drug dealers and loan sharks.

After hearing of the difficulties of many ex-prisoners in their own community in obtaining credit from banks and falling prey to disreputable loan sharks, the LPSP decided to broach the idea of establishing a community-based credit union in the Lisburn area with their Management Committee.

Reception to the idea at the time was mixed, with some Committee members highly supportive and others more skeptical. To some it seemed an impossible task, and one which to their knowledge had never been done before in Northern Ireland. Despite the skepticism, however, a decision was made to take the risk and proceed with setting up a club credit union in Lisburn with the common bond: "Membership of the Credit Union will be open to Ex-Prisoners and family members who are members of Lisburn PSP."

The LPSP then approached the Ulster Federation of Credit Unions (UFCU) and in retrospect, felt extremely lucky to have met at this time two very brave people, Gladys and Richard Copeland, who were then key members of the UFCU Board and who believed in, and saw the merit of, what the LPSP was attempting to do.

While extremely supportive, the Copelands were nevertheless clear from the outset that this was going to be a difficult task as not only did the LPSP need the full support of the UFCU Board, they also needed to achieve registration with the Registrar of Credit Unions.

The LPSP's next step was to establish a savings group consisting of 21 members who in addition to investing savings undertook a programme of training on the functions and management of a credit union. The group also had to sit an exam before being accepted and registered as a club credit union.

The newly formed New Horizons Credit Union opened its doors at 126 Grand Street in October of 2001, with an initial membership of 14. As of 2012, this membership had grown considerably, to 360, with an additional 60 'junior savers.' Between 2001 (the time of opening) and 2012 they issued over 800 loans to a value of over £750,000.

In 2011 the Credit Union registered with the Financial Services Authority and changed their Common Bond from membership of Lisburn PSP to membership of the Resurgam Trust to reflect the new organisation of the time. In that same year they were also able to upgrade their premises and equipment, as well as equip their staff and volunteers with uniforms. They further professionalised their service by meeting new standards entered into under regulation by the Financial Services Authority and are now also regulated by the Bank of England Prudential Regulation Authority.

Advertising themselves as "not for profit, not for charity, but for service", and as "working for today, planning for tomorrow", the Credit Union's original vision was: "To connect individuals and groups and transform communities to create a sustainable community in which all are proud to live, learn, work, and play. We will create growth through support, capacity building and social economy initiatives to sustain regeneration in the Greater Lisburn area through

building connections and alliances to positively influence decisions that will affect the communities.”

The Credit Union’s aims were: 1) To promote thrift and encourage systematic savings; 2) To eliminate usury and increase the purchasing power of its members by enabling them to borrow money at low interest rates; 3) To train and educate its members in business methods and self-government and to help them to realise the value of cooperation and mutual support; 4) To promote democracy by operating through a Board of Directors, Credit Committee, and Supervisor Committee, elected by and from its members; 5) To create alternative personal financial services in the community and the place of work under the ownership and direction of its members.

On the 17th November 2016 the Credit Union expanded by amalgamating with the Dunmurry Credit Union, which for the year prior had in all but name only been supported and run by the New Horizons Credit Union itself. NHCU had been approached by the Ulster Federation of Credit Unions to support the Dunmurry Credit Union as they were experiencing governance and compliance difficulties.

Over the years the Credit Union continued to expand steadily and as of December 2017 they now have a membership of 1,222 individuals, 125 junior members, and 13 unincorporated association accounts. Net assets stand at £904,866, current members’ shares at £898,661, and current members’ loans at £482,026. Operating hours at the Lisburn branch are Thursdays from 10:30 to 15:00, and the Dunmurry branch, located at 57 Upper Dunmurry Lane, Fridays from 12:00 to 16:00.

Throughout the life of the Credit Union the UFCU Board has remained highly supportive, and the Chairman of New Horizons Credit Union, Colin Halliday, has served a term on their Board.

LISBURN PSP
Prisoners Support Project

Lisburn Prisoners Support Project...



Community group



Business link



Welfare rights



Lisburn Prisoners Support Project Staff

...adding value to the community

LISBURN PSP
Prisoners Support Project

Lisburn Prisoners Support Project...



Community self-build



Lisburn area ladies centre



Family support



Lisburnside Prison

...adding value to the community

LISBURN PSP
Prisoners Support Project



Lurgan Lisburn
Banbridge Drogheda
Ballynahinch Dundrum
Kilkeel

LISBURN PRISONERS SUPPORT
EXTENDED PROJECT AREA

LISBURN PSP
Prisoners Support Project



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graph TD; MC[Management Committee] --> CB[Community Business]; MC --> PCO[Project Co-ordinator]; MC --> PTA[Part-time Admin / Outreach]; PCO --> FSW[Family Support Worker]; PCO --> OW[Outreach Worker]; PCO --> PSM[Print Shop Manager]; PCO --> BLW[Business Link Worker]; PCO --> SJKW[Self Build Key Worker];
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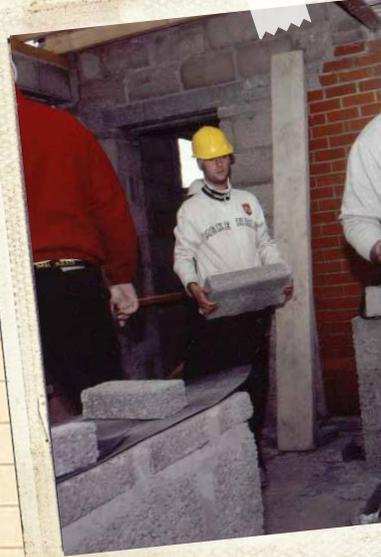
LISBURN PRISONERS
SUPPORT PROJECT - STRUCTURE

May 2000

The beginning of our transformation



Lisburn Community Self-Build Volunteers



Glenavy Gardens Trainees



*Minister McCausland at the
Glenavy Gardens Self-Build*



New Social Housing at Glenavy Gardens



Development at Glenary Gardens



Lisburn Community Self Build host Cross Community visit from Donegal

Our community transformation

YEARS 2003-2007

By this point in time, both the Old Warren Partnership and the Lisburn PSP had grown considerably, with membership in the LPSP for example now standing at over 500, and the Old Warren Partnership counting twenty organisations as member groups.

The LPSP at this time was continuing to go from strength to strength, as evidenced by the Annual Report of 2004 in which the significant amount of work undertaken by the LPSP in the eight years since its inception was noted. The organisation's major accomplishments documented in the Report included: the securing of its own premises; the establishment of four community businesses; the provision of assistance to over 130 ex-prisoners and family members to gain full time employment; the provision of service to over 60 families through the Family Support programme, the publication of numerous documents and reports, including their own book, *Through Our Eyes (2001)*, and the production of a video entitled *Shared Experiences*; the provision of numerous education and training programmes; mediation for community conflicts; the publication of monthly and bi-monthly news sheets; participation in many seminars, conferences and workshops; and research into various topics relevant to their work including Community Relations and Restorative Justice programmes.

By this time the staff complement of the LPSP had also expanded to include the Project Manager, a Victim Support Worker, a Youth Training Officer, a Community Self-Build Coordinator, a Community Self-Build Training Officer, and an Administrator.

In addition to the paid staff, the Project had by this point in time approximately fifty volunteers working in a variety of capacities. The LPSP's areas of remit continued to extend beyond the Greater Lisburn area to parts of County Down and north Armagh, and specifically the communities of Dromore, Ballynahinch, Banbridge, Newry, Kilkeel,

Lurgan, and Portadown, thereby covering the largest geographical area of any self-help prisoners' support group in Northern Ireland.

As stated in the next year's *Annual Report*, 2005 the LPSP had, over the eight years since its inception, "...worked tirelessly to ensure that our former prisoners and families receive the help and support they require to ensure that they are capable of integration back into the community. In our area we have had well over one hundred prisoners released and are proud to boast that to date none of our members have re-offended."

During these eight years, the LPSP had been extremely active in all aspects of community, social and economic development, including assisting other groups with the formation of various community organisations throughout the Lisburn and Greater Lisburn area. They responded, for example, to a request from the Lisburn Borough Council to establish a representative forum to link into the existing Lisburn Town Support Network, formed during the EU PEACE monies period as a partnership enabling individuals and groups to create positive change in their communities.

By this time the LPSP had developed into a large community support organisation and was leading the way in terms of community transformation, economically, socially, and politically, by building up community resources and by skillfully steering the community away from conflict to peace.

Laganview Enterprise Centre: "A sparkling gem in Lisburn City Council's crown!"

In 2004 the Old Warren Partnership decided to form a new company called the Laganview Enterprise Centre Limited. The Partnership had a number of reasons for wishing to form this company, a central one of which was for the purpose of managing a proposed new facility

which they hoped would become a new community centre within the Estate.

Although planning for the new Enterprise Centre officially got underway in 2004, the seeds of the new Centre were sown as far back as 1994 when a new committee was formed by the Old Warren Community Association to take advantage of the EU Peace programmes emerging at the time. In 1995, as a result of contacts within Lisburn Borough Council, the International Fund for Ireland came to visit a delegation in Old Warren to discuss the way forward for this community. The delegation included community representatives, Loyalist Prisoners Aid members, and ex-prisoners, including Samuel Hamilton, twenty-year Chairman of the Old Warren Community Association. At this initial meeting the group discussed the flats at Drumbeg Drive, Drumbeg House and Glebe House, and how this would be a prime site for a centre. A plan for such a centre was actually drawn up on the spot on a flip chart and pinned to the wall! This meeting and the hastily drawn flip-chart plan planted the seeds for what was to become a reality less than ten years later.

In 1998 the then newly formed Old Warren Partnership organised a community lobby to create a positive structure located within and owned by, the community. The Partnership also undertook to lobby the NIHE for improved housing in the area.

The primary community facility within Old Warren at this time was the West Lisburn Community Centre. Small in comparison with many other similar statutorily funded community centres, it had one main hall of just over 400 square feet, toilet facilities and a small kitchen. The facility suffered from poor design and poor ventilation, dangerous flooring, along with a general lack of space, poor storage facilities and an unattractive environment, all limiting the range of activities that could take place there.

The desire for a new community centre originated from an identified

need to address two major problems facing the community at the time: 1) The limited capacity and poor quality of existing community facilities, and, 2) the lack of suitable enterprise space for community businesses that had been established by the LPSP to date.

The population of Old Warren had by this time increased considerably. In part, this reflected the substantial good work of the Old Warren Partnership and its member groups, as well as of the support of a number of statutory bodies, and particularly, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. While the housing and physical environment within the Estate had by now improved considerably, the community facilities had failed to keep pace with these other developments.

Over the past number of years, due to the hard work of many individuals, the community infrastructure had steadily expanded, with at least the following 12 different groups actively providing services: Old Warren Community Association (1986); Lisburn Prisoners' Support Group, The Victims All project, Lisburn Welfare Rights Group (1993), Old Warren Arts and Culture Forum, Old Warren Community Action Group, Old Warren Little Scholars (O.W.L.S), Old Warren Women and Training, Old Warren Sports Forum, Old Warren Senior Citizens Club, Old Warren Youth Initiative (1995), and Lisburn Men's Education Network (2001).

Given this high level of community programming there was now an urgent need to address both the over-utilisation of existing facilities and their unsuitability due to problems such as poor construction, cramped quarters, and heating and ventilation problems.

After a period of considerable community development work, including the formation of the Lisburn PSP, social enterprises, and the Old Warren Partnership, and supported by emerging community activists, a fundraising strategy for the construction of a new centre

was developed. The plan included cocktail funding secured from the local authority, central government, European funding, NIHE, and community.

The new not-for-profit company, Laganview Enterprise Centre Ltd, was formed to drive forward the Centre initiative, promote the ethos of, and rationale for, the social economy sector across the City of Lisburn, and encourage businesses to occupy premises within the new facility once it was built. It was also envisaged that the new Company would work both to encourage businesses to invest in the Old Warren area, and to assist with the area's overall social and economic development.

To meet these objectives the vision was that the Company would act as a consultancy for entrepreneurs, start-up businesses, and existing businesses wishing to expand their range of services. It would also act as an information point by producing materials related to the social economy sector at the same time as maintaining and developing a social economy network.

Despite the pressing need for a new community centre, and despite initial support from several funding bodies, an economic appraisal conducted between 1999 and 2000 by Venture International was never approved by Lisburn Borough Council. This left the Partnership unable to progress with their plans at this time.

A new economic appraisal, however, commissioned by Lisburn Borough Council's Economic Development Department, and conducted in 2003 by Williamson Consulting with updated information, was eventually approved by Lisburn Borough Council, and planning for the new Enterprise Centre was then able to begin in earnest.

By 2003, the Old Warren Partnership included nearly twenty separate community groups addressing a very wide range of needs, in addition

of course to the four community businesses now operating in the area, all of which expressed an interest in relocating to the new centre.

The Lisburn Prisoners' Support Project was by this time also in need of new premises. With a membership of over 500 the Project was heavily engaged in a wide range of community, social, and economic projects, including two employment and training projects, an advice and resource centre and the management of three community businesses as described earlier. Their premises at 126 Grand Street (previously a dwelling) were much too small for the sheer volume of activity, making it impossible to run everything from this facility. Arrangements made to use other space elsewhere were less than satisfactory, and the group indicated a desire to also locate many of their activities in the new centre.

In July 2003 another new programme, the Pathways to Inclusion Project, had been established by the LPSP to advance the education of ex-prisoners and relieve hardship of ex-prisoners and their families. This Project provided social services, educational and recreational activities and also enabled approximately sixty participants to access accredited and non-accredited training in areas such as first aid, I.T., forklift training and bricklaying. (The latter to NVQ Level II).

Despite being in considerable demand, this new Project also found itself limited by the lack of appropriate premises. Attempts were made to offer the programme in other locations, for example the West Lisburn Community Centre, a property owned and operated by Lisburn Borough Council, but this arrangement was less than satisfactory for reasons including poor acoustics, heating and ventilation problems, and poor space options.

Taking into consideration the number of projects which at the time were all struggling with space limitations, the LPSP set the following objectives for the proposed new build: 1) To house and allow the growth of existing local businesses through provision of adequate

workshop/service business space; 2) To facilitate the ongoing provision of a range of services to local people in areas such as training, welfare advice and a Credit Union; 3) To sustain 10 jobs and create 6 new jobs.

The plans for the facility went through various stages and were drawn up only after extensive consultation with the community, Lisburn Borough Council and potential business tenants.

The final proposal submitted involved the development of a community/enterprise centre, combining commercial/workshop units, service/retail units, office space for both commercial and community use, and generic community space. The specific elements included: workshop and retail units, store rooms, offices, kitchen, meeting rooms, main hall and computer training suite, and accessible toilets.

While the economic appraisal did allude to some degree of risk associated with the project due to the fact that the proposed site was not one traditionally associated with businesses, it was quickly recognised that there were simply no other appropriate or acceptable sites available. This concern was also partially offset by the fact that the Williamson economic appraisal had confirmed that existing local businesses including the New Horizons Credit Union, Laganside Auto Maintenance and Repair Limited, Lisburn Community Self-Build, and Laganside Business Solutions, had all indicated a willingness to relocate to the new facility.

Once again, the theme of job creation was front and central in the planning of the Centre. The need to address employment had by this time become a common thread woven into every initiative, every project, every business, that the LPSP had undertaken, and would undertake in the future.

The reason for this was the fact that the Lisburn area was at the

time, (and remains to this day), traditionally perceived as an affluent area with lower than average unemployment figures. This however, disguised the fact that within the Old Warren area itself, unemployment levels during this period were much higher than that of the overall Lisburn area, with meaningful employment opportunities for local residents scarce.

Barriers such as low levels of educational attainment, together with low confidence and self-esteem levels, exacerbated the problem. And while the socio-economic status of the Old Warren community has risen considerably as of 2018 the theme of creating employment opportunities for local residents is one that remains paramount to all community development and social enterprise initiatives undertaken in the Old Warren area today.

It was envisaged at the time that the Enterprise Centre project would contribute substantially to tackling social and economic need in the area by way of job creation – twenty three full-time jobs during the construction phase and eleven full-time and one part-time positions with an additional seven full-time posts to follow within the next two years and skills acquisition and capacity building through the provision of educational courses.

In addition to job creation, it was also hoped that the new Centre would become a physical focal point for the community thereby promoting social cohesiveness and inclusion, and also through the promotion of cross-community relations with areas such as the Creggan, Twinbrook, and Poleglass.

And finally, the concept of the new Centre as a means to promote health and fitness for local residents was also in evidence from the outset. The LPSP had astutely recognised the growing business opportunities in the area represented by the sports and recreation sector, and consequently introduced an element in their plans which would see the Social Economy Business Manager both assist local

residents hoping to seek employment in this sector and investigate potential ideas for a health and fitness small business. (Some nine years later, of course, this commitment to health was borne out by the establishment of a Community Gym on the premises of the Enterprise Centre.)

Taking considerable risk at this point as no funding had yet been either committed or received, the LPSP appointed HBK Architects as the designers and developers of the Centre following the firm's successful work developing the Raggety Bap houses in Avonmore Park in 1999. The contract for HBK Architects was through the International Fund for Ireland who had knowledge of the work of HBK on similar types of projects.

As described by the architectural firm, the entire process from conception to completion was a "long and sometimes tortuous" journey navigating through funding applications and land transfer processes.¹¹

Building of the new facility began in 2006 and was expected to take two years.

The first employee, a Social Economy Manager, was hired in July 2007 to fulfill the functions of attracting businesses for the purpose of maximising employment opportunities for local residents and stimulating inward investment. The post holder would also support start-up businesses and entrepreneurs by assisting them with the transition from concept to reality. It was also envisaged that the Social Economy Manager would enhance existing relationships with other social economy agencies active at the time, including Glenwood Business Centre, Rathmor Centre and the Social Economy Agency all of which were located in Londonderry and instrumental in LPSP development. The idea was that by so doing, the Company

¹¹ Stephen Sally (HBK Architects), www.laganviewenterprise.com/testimonials.php

would be aware of models of good practice elsewhere, while itself becoming a role model within Lisburn City.

As was the case with all of the ventures developed and established by the LPSP up until this point, and indeed, would continue to be right up until present time, sustainability was an integral element to their planning process. The Centre was to provide a lasting legacy to the community, consisting of an effective working business development strategy, a pool of volunteer managers, a sustainable community resource, and rising levels of entrepreneurship in the area.

Completed in 2008, the Enterprise Centre was officially opened on the 25th of April 2008. Alderman Paul Porter along with children from Raggety Bap, Old Warren's pre-school facility, was on hand to participate in the official ceremony.

In total the community had been successful in securing £1,124,400 towards this project as follows:

£406,000 – International Fund for Ireland

£258,600 – Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (EU Peace II Programme via Economic Revitalisation)

£180,000 – Northern Ireland Housing Executive (land transfer) valued at £600,000 at time of completion.

£235,000 – Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Leisure Services Committee

£36,800 – Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Economic Development Committee

£8,000 – Promoters Resource

Operating as a not-for-profit facility, the aim was to promote the ethos of the Social Economy sector across the City of Lisburn, with a strong commitment to the social and economic development in the area.

The vision was of the Centre as a strong focal point for the community by providing appropriate, modern and affordable space to local groups and residents. In addition, the Centre was to provide retail space and office units, plus workshops which would attract, support, and develop businesses to invest in the Old Warren area. The result was the transformation of a derelict and unsightly block of two flats standing as a vivid reminder of the impact of the troubles on the area, into a two-storey, contemporary building boasting 3 commercial units, 3 workshop units, and 4 office suites.

As of 2018, the Centre houses an extensive range of services, programmes, activities and businesses, including: a community gym; a meeting room for 20; a community hall for 130-150; an IT suite; a quiet room; the Healthy Living Centre; and several commercial premises including Barkingham Place (a dog grooming business), and Day Today (a convenience store), and Lisburn Sure Start.

There is also a wealth of activities operating from within the Centre such as: Empowering Youth; University of the 3rd Age; Lisburn SAFE; Streets Ahead; Lisburn Gaming Club; We Slim Together; coffee mornings; fun runs; art exhibitions; SEHSCT employee fitness classes; physical activity programmes for all ages and genders and services, such as counselling, provided by external providers.

In 2016, with funding from the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) Social Investment Fund, a 250-square meter extension was added to enable space for the creation of a Healthy Living Centre.

Since its opening in April 2008 the Enterprise Centre has created employment for over forty posts, well above the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment's initial requirement of 19.5 posts.

In March 2018 Laganview Enterprise Centre was the recipient of the prestigious Best Social Enterprise Award as part of the Lisburn Castlereagh City Council Business Awards. This award recognises

outstanding work carried out by social enterprises in the Lisburn and Castlereagh area and marks the contributions they have made in changing the future of their communities for the better. The Centre also celebrated their tenth anniversary on the 25th April 2018.

The development of Laganview Enterprise Centre was extremely hard work but has proven to be one of the biggest achievements in the Old Warren Estate. It took over ten years of political lobbying before a sod was cut, numerous funding applications and a huge effort from the local community to raise almost £20,000 to make up the deficit which was required to ensure the building could proceed. I am proud to have played my role in helping to secure what has become a very valuable community resource which continues to provide benefits to the entire community.

Sam Hamilton – Former Chairman, Old Warren Community Association

The Welcome Project - ‘A Model of Tolerance and Integration’

Meanwhile, changes in the general makeup of the community at large were afoot. With the expansion of the European Union came a sudden increase in the number of new EU migrants moving in to work in the Greater Lisburn area. Many chose to live in the Old Warren estate and arrived with very little support.

This led to a new and unanticipated challenge to a community newly emerged from conflict and now experiencing many positive changes. Anxiety about the new immigrants and their religious status was beginning to surface, and LPSP, together with the Old Warren Partnership, decided they needed to confront this problem to avert potential future conflict. The question facing the community was a stark one: either risk the potential to fall back into conflict or assist the newcomers with settling into their community.

Not wishing to see the community go backwards in terms of peace building, the LPSP stepped in to manage what could have been a serious problem. To manage this process and address all of the potential issues, including racism, the LPSP presented a plan for a new initiative called The Welcome Project to all member groups.

From its inception in 2005, two key groups were involved in the establishment of the project: local community members and leaders, including ex-prisoners and Loyalist activists, and the EU migrants themselves.

Based in Dromara Park, and initially funded through an award from European Union Peace II the project was able to hire 2 project workers, one a local resident, Colin Halliday, (Lisburn PSP) and Olga Dominiak, a new migrant.

The original aims of the Welcome Project were to: 1) break barriers surrounding stereotypes and promote tolerance and integration; 2) help migrant workers and the BME community through learning, advice and support to become more integrated in the local community, seeing the community as one in which they are safe to live, and which asserts their basic rights; 3) promote mutual understanding of the diverse and rich cultural diversity within our city with a view to reducing potential friction and dispelling myths that various communities might believe of each other.

PEACE II funded the project for the years 2006-2009, followed by Office of the First Minister for the year 2009-2010 and The Executive Office Minority Ethnic Development Fund from 2010 to 2017. Between the years 2012 and 2015 the total funding received was £531,284 including funding from the South-Eastern Health and Social Care Trust, the Public Health Agency, the Arts Council, Big Lottery Awards for All, Lloyds TSB, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Department for Social Development Small Grants Awards and Lisburn City Council.

In April 2008 the project moved into the new Laganview Enterprise Centre premises and in March 2010 it became a stand-alone group under “The Welcome Project” with 10 committee members elected. In January 2011 it was to become a member of the newly formed Resurgam Trust with charitable status.

In 2015 the Welcome Project celebrated its tenth anniversary. Working in partnership with a wide range of organisations including Barnardo’s, Early Intervention Lisburn, Lisburn Sure Start, Lisburn Policing & Community Safety Partnership, The Atlas Centre, the Education Authority, LPSP, Resurgam Trust, Journey Church, and NIHE, the project was able to demonstrate its considerable success in achieving its original aims and objectives. For example, in just over eight years, between 2008 and 2016, the number of annual project beneficiaries increased from 304 to 701, with the average number of cases increasing from 69 to 104 per month. Over the course of a three-year period, nearly 5,000 people benefitted from the project’s educational programmes. These included such courses as Russian and English language classes, child safety, food hygiene, ICT training, and ‘Cook It’. A solid core of volunteers has also assisted in the delivery of much of the work of the project over the years.

Over the years the Welcome Project expanded considerably and today offers a range of advice on issues such as housing, finances, English language classes, a variety of courses and events designed to allow local people to get to know their new neighbours and to help newcomers to feel a part of their new community. The Project works in partnership with the Resurgam Youth Initiative to provide a bi-lingual youth development programme, which is supported by the Education Authority.

The project also tackles community safety, linking with PSNI and community representatives to mediate with the community as required. The Welcome Project has been credited for keeping the Old Warren estate area and across Lisburn largely free from racially motivated attacks seen elsewhere in Northern Ireland. Welfare rights

services are also provided by staff trained to NVQ Level III who link with a local Law Centre as necessary.

To date an extensive range of nationalities have been recipients of the Welcome Project activities: Polish, Lithuanian, Latvian, Slovakian, Czech Republic, Ukrainian, Russian and Hungarian.

Not surprisingly, the Project has received numerous awards for its innovative work with the migrant community, including the UNISON Equality Award (2008), the Police Service of Northern Ireland, Department of Justice, Office of the First Minister, and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive Achievement Awards (2010) Runner-up Good Relations Award, and the Lisburn Mayor's Award for Volunteering (2013) in the category of Culture and Diversity, as well as being short-listed for a number of others.

The overwhelming success of this project can be summed up in the words of Adrian Bird, quoted in an interview by the Guardian newspaper in June 2015:

Ten years ago, this estate was 100% Protestant. But if you go out on to our streets in the morning or the afternoon you will see loads of kids in Catholic School uniforms from St Aloysius's to St Patrick's Academy. These are children of Polish and other eastern European immigrants, mostly Catholics, who have settled on the Old Warren estate and love living here. A decade ago I would have said that this would have been unthinkable but now no one blinks an eye.¹²

And Henry McDonald, writing in *The Guardian* reported that "the scheme is winning praise across the political divide, with the Secretary of State Peter Hain calling it a model of tolerance and integration."¹³

¹² <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/jun/28/northern-ireland-anti-racist-project-shutdown-lisburn>.

¹³ <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2007/feb/18/politics.northernireland>

Once again, the principle of integration so central to the development and success of all the LPSP's previous projects was successfully applied to this project. Activities planned, for example, were, and continue to be, open not just to migrants, but to everyone in the community. The success of this approach can be seen in the thousands of people from across Lisburn who now, for example, attend the Welcome Project's popular annual International Children's Day event.

Lisburn Community Inns (2007)

A public bar has existed on the Hillhall Road for over 100 years. In the 1920s the pub was known as the County Down Arms Hotel. It was then owned by Hugh Rice and was a thatched pub. It was looted and burnt during the 1920s burning. During the years of the troubles, the County Down Arms operated successfully on this location. On Sunday the 8th October 2000, however, the landlord at the time, Robert McNeice, was murdered in a non-conflict related incident outside the premises.

'Rab McNiece was one of life's true gentlemen'

Kenny Coyle

The bar was then sub-let by Mr McNeice's widow, but this arrangement did not work, and in 2004 Mrs McNeice decided to put the premises on the open market to be sold. Once this decision was public knowledge, the LPSP were approached by a delegation from the Hillhall Estate who pleaded with them to save their local pub.

A meeting was arranged with Mrs McNeice and attended by Adrian Bird and Francie Ferris (a personal friend of Mrs McNeice) at which several options were discussed. As this was at the height of the building boom, the business was valued at around £500,000 and the intention was that it should be knocked down and the site redeveloped into residential housing.

Agreement was reached to purchase the County Down Arms from Mrs McNeice for the sum of £380,000. At the time LPSP advisors including their accountant were strongly advising against the purchase of any type of licensed premises, and particularly, the County Down Arms, but looking back it was clear they failed to understand the strength of the LPSP membership and their resolve to make things work.

Following the meeting Mrs McNeice gave the LPSP six months to develop a business plan and raise the finances required to purchase the pub at a reduced market value price.

While the planning process took not six, but nearly eighteen months to complete, in May of 2007 Lisburn Community Inns Ltd. was successfully established as a community-based social enterprise by the LPSP. At this time a verbal agreement was reached with Mrs McNeice that on completion of sale the premises would be retained and used as a community pub and not to be sold on by the community to a developer to reap a huge profit.

Ten years on, trading as the Highway Inn, the business is now a thriving social enterprise employing six members of staff. In 2016/17 it had an annual turnover of £458,860.00 and was able to donate £10,000.00 of its surplus profits to the Resurgam Trust.

Today the Inn now houses a bar and off sales, as well as a café and catering services. Yet it is much more than simply a community pub; it has also become a hub of community activity and is used regularly as a venue for health promotion, youth development, and educational programmes. For example, the Inn has hosted a Community Pharmacy health project for men on a range of health topics including mental health, chronic pain, and significant undiagnosed or unmanaged health conditions. Other programmes delivered in the pub include alcohol awareness sessions and 'Dry January,' which saw thirty men who came from the Men's Shed abstain for a full month while using the bar's function room to

engage in diversionary activities. There can also be no doubt that this pub is different from others pubs, just given the fact that Lisburn Cathedral holds regular church services on the premises.

The staff too, are exceptional; trained in first aid and communication skills they act as befrienders to many of their customers, particularly the older generation who frequent the bar. Going above and beyond the call of duty, they treat customers as family, regularly calling on anyone who is ill, as well as cooking them food, providing transport to the shops, and, during the summer months, organising day trips out.

Having become a popular community hub, the facility now also hosts over a dozen member groups who regularly use the facility for events such as fun days and sporting and cultural programming.

The Inn is proud to be one of only two community-owned pubs in Northern Ireland.



The Highway Inn 2018



*Summer Lunch Club 2017
held in the highway Inn*



Rab McNiece

CONFLICT TO PEACE Our Community Transformation



Welcome House, Bridge Street Opening



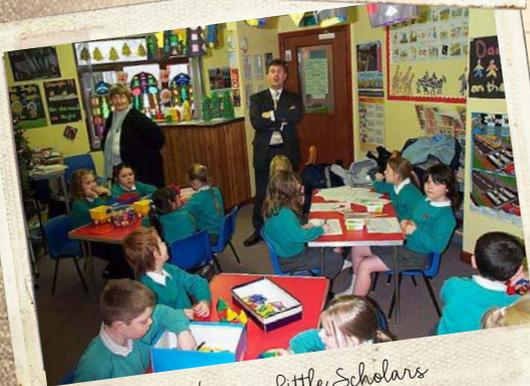
Bridge Street, PSP Founding members, Alison Bird and Eric Philips



Political Footballs visit to Lisburn City Youth Diversity



Freeman Ald Ivan Davis OBE



OWS - Old Warren Little Scholars



CONFLICT TO PEACE Our Community Transformation



Highland Dancers performing in Laganview Enterprise Centre

Lisburn Fusiliers and 1981 Bannerette



Laganview Open Day 2018



Laganview 10th Anniversary 2018



Former Minister for Health Edwin Poots, MLA DUP



Celebrating the 10th Anniversary

International
Childrens
day 2018



CONFLICT TO PEACE *Our Community Transformation*



Our community

YEAR 2008

Premier Taxi Company

The year 2008 saw yet another new social economy business come to fruition, in this case, a community-owned and operated taxi service.

As with all the social economies set up by the LPSP, the idea for the formation of this new business began several years prior, with a strategic planning session focusing on the need to create further sustainable employment opportunities for local residents.

Following the identification of the need by the community for a local professional taxi service, a business plan was developed, volunteers recruited, and start-up funding secured. In November 2004 the LPSP established a pilot taxi service, which operated as such until the official company registration in May 2008.

From its inception the Company was committed to providing honest and friendly drivers, fully licensed and insured. The establishment of the service was seen as a way to bring together legal drivers who aspired to working for a company that offered generous working conditions.

Working initially out of the social enterprise hub, (an incubation unit and base for young entrepreneurs and local small business start-ups based at 1A Rushmore Drive), the project began with five drivers, one car, and a pool of volunteer telephone/radio operators.

Now a Limited Company with a volunteer Board of Directors, two paid staff, and a core of volunteer operators, the Company is the largest and most professional taxi service in the city of Lisburn, with 40+ drivers with uniforms and a distinctive PTC logo, and the unique telephone number 9266 66 66.

As of 2018 the Company is located in Smithfield Square in the centre of Lisburn. Proud to have been the first fully licensed taxi company in Lisburn, it offers a competitive 24-hour service with a wide range of vehicles available.

Premier Taxi Company are a designated “Safe Zone” for Lisburn City, supported by the Lisburn and Castlereagh Policing and Community Safety Partnership and the PSNI. The Safe Zone is open 24 hours a day, houses a defibrillator and is designed to act as a safe haven for anyone who is feeling threatened, vulnerable or feeling unwell. Safe Zone staff are trained in the use of the defibrillator and in providing basic assistance and safety until the appropriate emergency service arrives.

In 2016/17 Premier Taxi Company had an annual turnover of £120,000 and was able to donate £3,000 of its surplus profits to the Resurgam Trust.

The Safer Neighbourhoods in Partnership Training Programme

In June 2008 42 people from Lisburn made up of 21 members of the Neighbourhood Community Policing Team and 21 key personnel from Lisburn PSP attended a three-day workshop in an effort to increase engagement and shared understanding between the police and the community at large.

Relations between the police and the loyalist community in Lisburn had not been good for years; in fact, from the time of the formation of the LPSP in 1996 up until around 2006, there had been very little contact, and what there was, was mainly negative. The overall atmosphere throughout these years, given the recent emergence from conflict, was one of mistrust, on both sides. Houses in the estate were still being regularly searched, and members of the community arrested and questioned for historical troubles-related offences. This despite the fact that during the day-time the

Community Police had access to the estate's Community Houses in order to engage with the community and build relations. In 2001 the situation was such that LPSP, having consulted with its membership, felt compelled to produce a video entitled 'Shared Experiences, House Searches.'

In 2002 the relationships between the police and the community were so bad that LPSP decided that the situation was untenable and made the decision to end engagement with the police.

It was not until 2008 that efforts to re-engage with the police on a more positive basis began. Initially these efforts took the form of private meetings between key members of Lisburn PSP, and Chief Superintendent Jonathan Kearney, facilitated by local businessman, Robin Guthrie of Cherton Enterprise Ltd.

One of the positive outcomes of the meetings was the planning and delivery of the three-day workshop designed to improve community relations with the police, and by doing so, reduce the role of paramilitaries in addressing community crime and conflict. Thought at the time to be a highly innovative initiative, both within the District itself, and across the Province, the workshop brought together the combined resources of a Neighbourhood Policing Team, 21 local community activists (all members of the LPSP) working in those neighbourhoods and the most senior managers concerned with strategic and operational planning and resources across the criminal and community justice sectors in the area.

The official purpose of the workshop, facilitated by Cecilia Whitehorn Consultancy Mentoring Works, was to: understand the joint issues of concern in neighbourhood safety that impact on community activists and police in the respective neighbourhoods; present a model of avoiding repeat crime to understand the context of why some neighbourhood safety issues go on happening; explore similarities and differences between police and community activists' roles and

responsibilities in increasing safety in the specific neighbourhood areas; understand the helping and hindering factors that impact on change and engagement between community and police; agree specific actions and arrangements that increase positive engagement and safer neighbourhoods in District.

While a structured programme had been created, it was clear throughout the three days of the event that the main benefits were to be found in the engagement and discussion among the participants.

From the first day participants worked together in specific geographical community groups, e.g. Old Warren, Hilden and Hillhall, The Maze and Ballymacash, to identify emerging and existing priorities and that were impacting upon neighbourhood safety, share information on current initiatives to address these priorities, and consider joint initiatives to help prevent or reduce the impact of crime upon individuals, groups and the communities in those areas.

While the discussion of these topics was important, the feedback contained in the evaluation forms illustrated that the real and lasting benefit of this event was the relationship building that had occurred between police and community.

Participants at the event remarked that the informality of the training, which allowed for, and encouraged, frank and open discussion of challenging issues, meant laying the foundation for an open and trusting relationship between the police and the community.

In addition to the trust building that occurred, participants also remarked that as a result of the meetings they would be able to utilise the contacts made to improve partnership working. The training also allowed both the police and community activists to gain a better understanding of their respective work, working processes, and the shared and different concerns that they had.

On the last day of the meetings, held six weeks after the first two, participants mapped the progress they had made in that time, and the extensive list below illustrates just how successful this initiative was: Ongoing meetings being held between the Police Service in Northern Ireland (PSNI) and community representatives; joint work in schools and community events; joint information / planning meetings; a youth residential; key prevention messages communicated; cultural awareness initiatives; identifying 'hotspots' for intervention; holistic view of requirements to work together; increased relationship between minority ethnic community representatives and police; formalised links and improved communication.

The impact of the three-day workshop cannot be underestimated. From the perspective of the LPSP at the time, it was the beginning of a journey building solid working relationships with the police. It also essentially saw an end to paramilitary punishment type assaults within Lisburn, and a huge increase in community confidence in the PSNI. Overall, this initiative represented the beginning of a significant 'cultural shift' for the community and the police, and laid the foundations for the positive, trusting and collaborative relationship that the community now enjoys with their local policing team. The outworking of this can be seen today where the Resurgam Trust now meets regularly with the police and many in the community are on a first-name basis with the PSNI team. There is absolutely no doubt that this three-day workshop laid the foundations for the creation of Lisburn Safe in 2011. A remarkable achievement.

Despite the apparent successes associated with another business start-up and the police training workshops, the year 2008 was to prove a very difficult year for the community in other important respects.

Contrary to outward appearances, 'behind the scenes,' all was not well. As so often happens in the ebb and flow of organisations,

internal organisational tensions had begun to emerge, and it was to be a full three years before this conflict, and the fall-out from it, were to be fully resolved.

The problem began with the increasing level of control exerted by two employees of the Old Warren Partnership at the time. Members of the Partnership became increasingly unhappy with the situation, with the result that many member groups chose to leave.

The Partnership then became increasingly closed and insular, with decisions taken which were unsupported by the general community. One such decision, for example, was the imposition of a new restriction on engaging with the PSNI, politicians, and other outside bodies, which up until that time, the Partnership had done so successfully.

As control of the Partnership became increasingly concentrated in the hands of these two employees, the relationship between employees and the Board grew steadily worse. The effect of this tension was the eventual dissolution of the Partnership altogether, but not before a Labour Tribunal in 2009 had dictated the removal of the employees in question.

Looking back from today's vantage point, community leaders now believe that in retrospect, the Labour Tribunal's ruling and subsequent dismissal of these employees triggered what was to become a time of significant growth and renewal for the LPSP. In the two years prior to the removal of the staff members many aspects of the community's transformation journey had stalled, but once the employees in question left the organisation, the community transformation journey the LPSP was engaged in was in effect 'rebooted.'

YEARS 2009-2011

Despite the growing internal upheaval which had begun in the previous year, the LPSP carried on with its usual provision of services, responding to community needs, and engaging in new initiatives as they arose. One of the most important of these new activities was the LPSP's involvement in the process of decommissioning of weapons which was being negotiated at the time.

From August through to September 2009 the Lisburn PSP played a critical role in hosting a number of community engagement events to encourage and gain community support for Loyalist paramilitary groups to decommission their weapons.

Initially, private one-to-one meetings between paramilitary leaders, former prisoners' community groups, and key representatives were held, leading eventually to open public meetings, the largest of which took place in Lisburn in August 2009. Attended by over 300 people from a broad section of the community including former combatants, former prisoners, community group representatives, and members of the public, and chaired by Adrian Bird, this meeting, while a difficult one in many senses, successfully ensured local support in Lisburn for Loyalist decommissioning of weapons.

As 2009 started, however, the community was still in tatters as a result of the organisational conflict of 2008. Community leaders began the year wondering how to initiate the process of recovery and what steps to take toward healing the rifts and damage which had been done.

Determined not to let this setback undermine all of the good work that they had undertaken to date, Lisburn PSP instead seized on this as an opportunity to renew their internal structure, capitalising on the strong relationships they had built up with groups and individuals within the community over the years.

Following the dismissal of the employees referred to above the initial reaction from Lisburn PSP Management Committee was that of ‘joy and jubilation’. The organisation had come through several very turbulent years and to have the cause of all this stress and tension removed, initially felt like a victory, but this was to be short lived as one member of the Management Committee stated during the first meeting following the decision of the employment tribunal.

“Well done to everyone for playing your part in the removal of these two employees, this was the right decision and unfortunately had to be done for the health and wellbeing of everyone present in the room. But the fact of the matter is that both dismissed employees did play a positive role in the early development of our organisation; now that they are gone what do we do next? “

His question was greeted initially by silence as everyone had been so engrossed in the internal upheaval and conflict they had not really considered the future. Following intense discussions, it was agreed that the next step would be to engage in an extensive period of both internal (membership including ex-prisoners, local residents and community based groups), and external consultations (range of statutory bodies and other organisations) to determine the best way forward.

As a result of this lengthy two-year consultation period, the LPSP was to make a number of important decisions which would lay the foundation for what was to become a period of significant organisational as well as community growth and renewal.

The first of these was to dissolve the Old Warren Partnership, bring back to the table all those members who had left the Partnership, and establish in its place a new organisation. After looking at various models, particularly one called a development trust association based in Scotland, they made the decision to adopt a similar model to replace the Partnership.

Established in 2011, the new organisation was called ‘The Resurgam Community Development Trust.’ Its aim was “to transform communities by the creation of social, cultural, financial and physical sustainability by 2020 – proud to live, learn, play and work.” A Latin word, ‘Resurgam’ was chosen for its meaning ‘I shall rise again’.

The LPSP also sought agreement at this time that any of its existing assets and liabilities should be transferred over into the new Trust to be held for the benefit of the community as a whole. Leaders also used the creation of the new organisation as an opportunity to put structures in place that would not allow a small number of individuals to have total control of the organisation.

The second major decision the LPSP made at an Extraordinary General Meeting 10th August 2011 was to change both its name and revise its Constitution and key areas of work to better reflect the changing times within which it was now operating.

Having reviewed its original Constitution, the LPSP realised that it no longer accurately reflected their current range of work and activities. With a membership of by now well over 1000, and a wide range of programmes and services being offered to the whole of the community, the LPSP realised it had moved on considerably from its original purpose of providing re-integration support to ex-prisoners. Furthermore, it acknowledged that by this time approximately only four per cent of its total membership at this time were in fact ex-prisoners.

The move therefore to change its name from the Lisburn Prisoners’ Support Project to the Lisburn *People’s* Support Project, represented an important strategic decision to indicate to both the community and to external stakeholders that the organisation had moved on. While a difficult decision to make at the time, with some members feeling a loss of identity, the leaders of Resurgam Trust today would argue in hindsight that the change had a hugely positive impact on

the strategic direction of not just the organisation itself, but on the community as a whole.

They would also argue that the decisions made during this period of the community's history were in fact to open up many more opportunities and set the stage for a remarkable period of growth and renewal following what had been a turbulent and static few years for both the organisation and the larger community.

As is often the case with any major change, however, there was at least one 'unintended consequence' of the decision to change the name. In this case, it was for the community-owned New Horizons Credit Union. Established originally for the express purpose of serving ex-prisoners and their family members, the Credit Union was now forced to review their terms of reference and their bond. As a result, two changes had to be made. The first was to change the common bond from members of Lisburn PSP to membership of the Resurgam Trust. The second was that the Club Credit Union status was changed to that of a geographical membership which then facilitated the amalgamation with the Dunmurry Credit Union.

Lisburn SAFE (Safe and Friendly Environment)

Meanwhile another new initiative was initiated by the LPSP during this period called Lisburn Safe. By this point in time, a previously established local authority organisation, Safer Lisburn, was in the process of dissolving to make way for the new Police and Community Safety Partnerships, (PCSP). Lisburn PSP was approached by the PSNI to assist in the development of a new model for a safety project in support of the Northern Ireland Policing Plan 2012-2015. Alison Holdsworth, Development Worker for Safer Lisburn was seconded by LPSP for three months to develop the model for this new project.

Initiated by those long-standing residents within the communities of Lisburn who felt apprehensive about the publicised changes to

the PSNI at the time, Lisburn Safe was developed with the ethos of preventing and addressing crime and supporting those who were victims of crime. It was also intended as a mechanism for rebuilding community relationships with the PSNI.

Developed under the guidance of PSNI the model proposed by LPSP for Lisburn SAFE included the training of volunteers within Lisburn to assist in the delivery of this project, and in 2011 LPSP received what was to become an annual grant of £20,000 from Lisburn Policing and Community Safety Partnership to cover the salary of a Volunteer Coordinator post.

The Lisburn SAFE Project was implemented to address levels of anti-social behaviour, crime, environmental damage and deterioration of public order across the areas of Hillhall, Hilden, Old Warren and the Maze. The project also focused on designated hot-spot areas such as Knockmore, Tonagh and North Lisburn. In doing so this initiative aimed to promote feelings of safety and security, thereby reducing fear of crime and anti-social behaviour and improving the quality of life for residents. It also aimed to serve the wider benefits for the local economy, impacting on community relations and the health and well-being of residents by acting as a signposting service for other agencies.

The following principles were developed as a guide to the delivery of the project by Lisburn SAFE:

Providing a highly visible community safety volunteer presence in targeted hot-spot areas;

Responding to the community safety needs of residents in the project areas;

Liaising with residents, businesses and service providers to raise awareness and address issues of concern;

Challenging all forms of anti-social behaviour;

Confronting and thereby helping to change public attitudes to littering, graffiti and other environmental nuisances;

Addressing social inclusion and isolation of vulnerable individuals living in the project areas;

Promoting community solidarity and encouraging communities and neighbourhoods to identify and solve problems.

The established aim of the initiative was 'to create a community environment which is safe, free from criminality, anti-social behaviour and a connected community in which we can all respect each other's core values and be proud to live, work, socialise and play.'

It was envisaged that Lisburn SAFE would achieve long-term benefits for community safety and policing in Lisburn through linking with Lisburn PCSP and community safety stakeholders. In 2013-14 Lisburn SAFE developed a strategic plan in which stakeholder expectations for the local community were agreed following a detailed community consultation. The plan outlined actions to be taken towards the development of further relationship- building with the PSNI, as follows:

- Lisburn SAFE can be the vehicle that develops relationships between communities and the PSNI;
- Youth work and diversionary activities should be encouraged with the PSNI at every opportunity and level;
- All dealings with the PSNI should be open, transparent and accountable;

- The development of a marketing strategy should be encouraged which will highlight the positive outcomes of developing our relationships with the Police.
- Throughout the consultation process, the community also identified a number of both benefits and challenges presented by the new project. Potential benefits included:
- Policing presence – having a stronger police presence in the community and being visible at community events would make the most vulnerable within society feel safer e.g. Senior citizens;
- Information – allowing the PSNI to get to know what the community is about and what it does can build a better relationship with local people. This would result in more referrals to the services on offer by Lisburn SAFE and its sister organisations and building a reputation for Lisburn SAFE and others who deliver in the community;
- Reassurance – relationship building between the target communities and the PSNI helps politicians and statutory bodies with their engagement and promotion of community projects;
- Resources – helps the area to avail of resources, funding for various projects, including youth and community safety initiatives;
- Communication – better communication can result in other issues being resolved.
- Potential challenges identified in the 2013-2014 strategic plan included:

- It's different –local communities engaging with the PSNI was a new concept given the level of mistrust of, and dis-engagement with, the PSNI during the conflict. Changing mindsets was therefore one of the challenges and goals of the project;
- How community views relationship – the strategic plan identified the importance of taking time to develop trust and a relationship with the PSNI as not to do so had the potential to damage relationships and trust between community activists and local residents. It was identified that many within community, particularly ex-combatants and youth, were skeptical about the PSNI's motives for building relationships;
- Accountability – The strategy stated that the relationship with the PSNI was not always open and transparent with many not having faith in police to deliver effective policing in their areas and get convictions;
- Policing Structure/Procedures – The strategy stated that the PSNI have certain procedures to follow regarding cases which makes their process of investigation very slow and which can create problems for community activists trying to maintain calmness and stability in times of heightened tensions;
- Communication/Sharing information – the strategy identified issues around the importance of a two-way communication process with the PSNI that would build trust and avoid tokenistic perceptions by the community. Sharing of information between agencies was also seen as very important;
- Community expectations – the strategy identified the importance of leadership from both the community and the PSNI to the relationship building process;

- Community stability – the strategy identified the importance of relationship- building between the police and the youth and the fact that this can lead to community stability, reduced hostility and tensions and better personal relationships between the PSNI and young residents within the estates.

Specifically, the project was to provide a reassuring physical presence in the neighbourhood; tackle anti-social behaviour; act as trusted friends for the community; improve access to local authority services; provide information and sign-post to public services; and promote social inclusion and address isolation of the most vulnerable citizens within the area.

Officially launched in November 2012, the project today remains volunteer-led, with a full-time Volunteer Coordinator and approximately 100 trained community safety volunteers across areas of Old Warren, Hillhall, Hilden and the Maze donating approximately 300 hours per month.

THE YEARS 2012-2018

Resurgam 3D Youth Centre

The provision of youth services in the Estate over the years as discussed previously had up until this point been centred primarily in the West Lisburn Community Centre.

While it was initially thought that the newly built Laganview Enterprise Centre might be a more suitable venue for youth activities, it quickly became apparent that due to its focus on business development, the Centre was not an ideal space in which to host youth activities and programmes.

And while the community had, as described earlier, made it clear to the Lisburn Borough Council that the West Lisburn Community Centre, built as it was in 1971 at the same time as the construction of the Old Warren estate, was no longer fit for purpose, it soon became evident that it was nevertheless a great space for youth activities. However, in 2013 the building was deemed unsafe by Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council, formerly Lisburn Borough Council.

Coincidentally, at this same time, Adrian Bird was nominated as a community representative on the newly established Social Investment Fund Steering Group for the South Eastern zone. Adrian's presence on this Steering Group presented the opportunity to lobby for much needed community facilities throughout the zone. The new youth facility project was selected as one of the ten proposals included in the Social Investment Community Plan for the South Eastern zone.

The model proposed for the new youth centre was based on contemporary youth development centres and contained a range of spaces such as drop in facilities, group rooms, arts space and improved kitchen facilities. The proposed facility would also become

a safe environment where the community could centralize its youth activities and where young people could interact informally with peers and develop necessary life skills. A dedicated facility meant that more youth could be served, and a greater range of programming delivered.

Funded under the Northern Ireland Executive's Delivering Social Change framework, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council was appointed to oversee the construction of the buildings and project management.

Resurgam 3D Youth Centre was officially opened on 15th September 2017 by Alderman James Tinsley, Chairman of the Leisure and Community Development Committee. Also in attendance were Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council Deputy Mayor Hazel Legge, Mr Jim Rose, Director of Leisure and Community Services, and Dr Mark Brown, Executive Office.

As of 2018 an array of youth services is provided in the Centre funded through various arrangements with statutory bodies. For example, the Centre has Service Level Agreements targeting 600 young people with the Education Authority Northern Ireland (EANI) to deliver on the Authority's Priorities for Youth Strategy. This work is further supported by:

Early Intervention Lisburn, a Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Locality Planning Group tasked with improving outcomes for children and young people aged 0-18 years and includes targeting young people's educational improvement within schools;

Resurgam's Healthy Living Centre which works with Resurgam Youth Initiative to ensure there is a focus on young people's health and wellbeing supporting interventions, programmes, training and events.

Lisburn SAFE Steering Group, linking Community Safety partners to target young people at risk;

EANI Local Advisory Groups (Priorities for Youth) informing delivery of Centre based and outreach provision.

The Resurgam Youth initiative serves as a model for community-based youth provision. It oversees the delivery of programmes to improve opportunities for young people in community, including the following projects: Together Building United Communities (Cross Community and BME Youth); European Social Fund's Co-Ment (targeting young people not in education, employment or training); Big Lottery Fund's Empowering Young People (improving young people's employability, linked to Resurgam's Social Enterprises).

The journey of youth provision in the community has been characterised by many successes along the way, not least of which is the fact that many of the youth who participated in youth events years ago are now employees of the new Centre. Committed to local leadership, Resurgam Youth Initiative has successfully nurtured skills and created opportunities for youth to become young leaders, peer mentors, and ultimately, youth support workers and volunteers. To that end, Resurgam Youth has developed a YouthBank with two members trained as YouthBank Coordinators. An exciting development, this has the potential to improve young people's leadership, financial management and social enterprise skills through grant making for other young people and the hosting of 'Teen Markets'.

Youth work within Resurgam has been shown to have been highly effective throughout the years. A recent impact evaluation, for instance, revealed the following positive outcomes of this work: 1) strong community management structures; 2) skilled workers and volunteers within communities to deliver provision; 3) increased skills base and employment opportunities for young people; 4)

increased pride in the community; 5) improved community safety and cohesion; 6) improved health and wellbeing.

Early Intervention Lisburn

2012 also saw the establishment of a second major initiative within the Resurgam Trust. Named 'Early Intervention Lisburn,' the initiative stemmed from a period of consultation led by Resurgam with the Public Health Agency (PHA) and the South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust (SEHSCT) on the significant issues concerning the health, wellbeing, safety and security of the population in target areas in the City of Lisburn, including Old Warren, Hilden, Hillhall, Tonagh, Knockmore and Lagan Valley.

Of particular concern to Resurgam was the fact that as of 2011, 74% of young people in Lisburn were leaving post primary with fewer than 5+GCSE's (A-C). Given the limited ability of the area to attract funding to address this problem, due to both the perceived affluence of Lisburn, and the fact that it is not a designated neighbourhood renewal area, Resurgam decided to lobby the PHA and the SEHSCT for assistance.

In 2012, with funding provided by PHA, the Resurgam Trust commissioned Barnados's NI to conduct a comprehensive research study into the needs of children and young people living within disadvantaged communities in the Greater Lisburn area.

Entitled *the Best for Every Child (2012)*,¹⁴ the report involved extensive consultation with a wide range of community organisations, schools and professional agencies working in Lisburn in order to identify unmet needs and establish priorities. It also included research into the desired outcomes for children and young people; the evidence for adopting an early intervention approach;

¹⁴ Roger Courtney, "The Best for Every Child, A Report on the Potential to Transform Disadvantaged Communities in Lisburn Through Early Intervention," 2012.

the public policy context and the extent that it might support such an approach; and the evidence behind the potential impact of delivering particular proven programmes in the targeted areas.

The report highlighted significant challenges relating in particular to the low levels of educational achievement and the relatively poor health and wellbeing outcomes experienced by many disadvantaged children and youth living in the target areas.

The most striking message emanating from the report was that early intervention clearly works. To this end, the Resurgam Trust took the lead in the establishment of a new group called 'Early Intervention Lisburn' in September 2012. In 2013 this Partnership Board was to be formally recognised as a Locality Planning Group linked to the South Eastern Children and Young People's Outcomes Group.

A cross sectoral partnership between relevant statutory, voluntary, community and organisations with significant strategic and operational experience in early years work, the new group's aim was to address key issues pertaining to the health and wellbeing of disadvantaged children and youth residing in the area and guide the direction of strategic investment in Early Intervention in targeted areas. Quite simply, the Partnership wanted to improve outcomes for children and young people from 0-18 years and their families.

The Board's approach was to look at what already existed in Lisburn to support children, young people and families, identify gaps in service provision, and take the opportunity to challenge current providers as to how closely the services they were providing in the area were aligned to actual need.

For example, as a result of their efforts the Board successfully brought about positive changes in the provision of services to the community by, among others, SEHSCT and Barnardo's NI. In the first instance, what had formally been a small component part of

the provision of community development work by the SEHSCT was transferred directly to the community itself, in the form of a new, community-based healthy living initiative.

In the second example, Barnardo's NI went on to review potential new areas of delivery, primarily Old Warren where a new Surestart was being established. This enabled a wider catchment of provision across Lisburn by including Seymour Hill, Maze and Hilden, thereby preventing a concentration of services in a single area only.

And a final example: The Atlas Centre applied for and received funding that enabled them to provide an outreach crèche for all local providers who are delivering programmes for parents.

The second approach taken by the Partnership Board was to link and work closely with the local primary and post primary schools to see what could be done to address the critical problem of the low levels of educational attainment in the area. Working within the areas of Old Warren, Hillhall, Hilden, Knockmore and Tonagh, as of 2018 the boundaries have now expanded beyond these areas to include Seymour Hill, Pond Park, Ballymacash, and Harmony Hill. Working initially with five primary and five post primary schools, in 2018 that number has grown to 14 playgroup/nurseries, daycares, 14 primary and five post primary schools.

The Partnership's relationship with one school in particular, Largymore Primary School, is a good example of how the Partnership works and the excellent results they achieved through collaboration with education providers to improve outcomes for children. This school sits on the periphery of the Hillhall Estate and is the closest Primary School for parents in this area, with 90% of children aged 4-11 years old attending the school.

In September 2012 Largymore Primary School acquired a new Principal, Gillian Dunlop. Prior to this date there had been minimal

connection between the local community and the school, and while it functioned well, like a large number of other schools in Northern Ireland it functioned in isolation from the community in which it was situated.

Ms Dunlop immediately embraced the initiative and as an early prominent member of the Partnership Board, she had, and continues to provide, significant strategic and operational guidance on implementation of early intervention approaches.

As a result of her presence on the Partnership, and with access to additional funding, a number of significant evidence-based programmes were able to be introduced into Largymore Primary.

Embracing the Partnership's principle of collaboration with the local community the school also reached out to connect with the local Hillhall Community Association. It is through this connection that local mums who were youth leaders from their local youth service delivered a parenting programme in partnership with school staff and also encouraged the engagement and participation of other local mums who could benefit from the programme. A Community Youth Service Manager now delivers the Education Authority's 'New Beginnings' programme in the school to year seven pupils supporting them with the transition to post primary.

Both the school and the community organisation recognise that communication is key, and both are equally committed to working closely together to support each other's delivery plans.

Early Intervention Lisburn is yet another example of Resurgam Trust's commitment to the principles of transparency, collaboration, strong leadership, and a focus on improved outcomes for the whole community. Partnership working, bringing together as it does, representatives from across the community, voluntary and statutory sectors who all operate under different paradigms can be

challenging. Yet Early Intervention Lisburn has successfully negotiated these challenges by agreeing at the outset a set of investment principles which assists the Board's decision-making processes. Members clearly recognise they are part of a bigger picture and the need to take a broader community view and collaborative approach on how to improve outcomes. Agreed principles include: democratic agreement, a collaborative approach, transparency, evidence-based programmes, sustainability, and the importance of rigorous monitoring and evaluation.

The Partnership Board, like all of Resurgam Trust's initiatives, strives to achieve 'joined-up' thinking, planning and delivery. The Board recognises that it is not always about money, but rather about coming together to jointly design, plan and deliver programmes in order to maximise outcomes for children, youth and families in the area. Resurgam Trust, although initially the main driver of Early Intervention Lisburn, has developed sufficiently over the past six years to the point where they can confidently step aside when the situation demands and allow others, such as the voluntary sector to assume leadership as and when required. The benefits of this flexible approach can be seen in the continued and widespread involvement of the voluntary sector where once the community would have been closed to such involvement.

Resurgam Health Development

In addition to poor educational outcomes the *Best for Every Child* study also identified stark health inequalities experienced by the local community. The report revealed, for example, that when compared to the Northern Ireland average, both dental registration levels for young children and life expectancy rates were generally lower than the Northern Ireland average, and maternal smoking levels and the percentage of births to unmarried mothers higher. The study also highlighted parental concerns related to smoking and drinking, exercise, mental health, obesity and healthy eating.

While health professionals engaging with Resurgam Trust over the years, supported by health statistics, had frequently highlighted significant health issues experienced by local residents, it was the *Best for Every Child* report which initiated a new, concerted focus on improving the health of the community at large. In addition to the need to respond to the pressing health inequalities identified in the report, leaders in Resurgam also recognised that, equally important, was the way in which these health inequalities should be tackled. In this same year a volunteer conducted interviews and surveys with staff and other volunteers to determine what was working and what was not with respect to the current approach to tackling health problems in the area. These interviews revealed that some people felt discouraged by the statutory approach to health provision given its complexity and relative inflexibility. It was felt that in general many in the community were not necessarily ready to engage in traditional health programmes delivered in a structured manner. Consequently, Resurgam set about developing a model for health development which would specifically reflect the values and ways of working common to all of their other projects and initiatives undertaken over the years.

As a first step in developing this model, and aware as they were of their lack of specialist knowledge on health matters, Resurgam successfully negotiated with the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust and the Public Health Agency to replace a statutory health development worker post located in the community with a new post, a Healthy Living Manager, hired and managed solely by Resurgam Trust.

This community-based Healthy Living Manager was then ideally placed to implement a community-led model to tackling ill health, improving health literacy, and building capacity, at a pace and in a manner more responsive to the needs of the community.

The approach introduced was premised first and foremost on the

social determinants of health model i.e., every aspect of life has a direct effect on health, either positive or negative, and it is only by addressing all of these determinants, social, physical, emotional, and environmental, that maximum health can be achieved.

The second element of this new approach entailed a recognition that in actuality, each and every one of the many community initiatives and projects over the previous twenty years or so, (starting as far back as the early ex-prisoners' groups, through the development of social enterprises in the middle years, to the present day's ambitious array of Resurgam Trust services and initiatives) have positively impacted on the health of both individuals and the community at large.

The third element of the approach adopted was the belief that health programming must originate from the community itself; local residents identifying their health needs and shaping programming accordingly. To this end, one of the first actions of the new Resurgam Healthy Living Manager was to engage in both formal and informal community consultations and needs assessments to identify the health needs as perceived by residents themselves. This process was essential to making connections and supporting relationship-building that went alongside the more formal processes. Building trust, getting to know the communities, members and member groups was a critical component in understanding need. While it was clear that most of the needs identified coincided with those previously identified by health specialists, it was also clear that the traditional methods of addressing these issues, i.e. specific programmes delivered over a specific timeframe, was not the right fit for the community at this point in time. Adopting a more person centred, flexible and less programme driven approach, taking things more slowly, agreeing outcomes, and taking into account the life circumstances of community members, meant that residents were more willing to engage with suggested health projects.

Examples of some of the work undertaken by Resurgam Trust since the adoption of this new approach include the 'Building Community Pharmacy Partnership (BCPP). With funding of £10,000, Resurgam co-produced a program with groups of women and men, using innovative settings such as, in one case, the Highway Inn, to reach people that otherwise might not have engaged. The projects, although facilitated by the Healthy Living Manager and a pharmacist, were led by the group members themselves, with participants identifying health topics of relevance to them. While funding was always intended to be fixed and the projects finite, the Resurgam structure has enabled members to continue to meet, providing peer support on health matters important to them while also connecting with the wider Resurgam network on activities such as social events, educational or training opportunities or for help accessing services. The Lisnagarvey friendship and support men's health group project, for example, has gone on to serve as the foundation for the recent establishment of a Men's Shed initiative.

Given the prominence of mental health concerns in the community, a second project designed to equip Resurgam Trust staff and volunteers to better respond to mental health problems as they arose was delivered. A £5,000 grant from the CLEAR Project enabled Resurgam Trust staff and volunteers to become trained in a recognised mental health programmes including Safe Talk, Asist, and Mental Health First Aid.

Further training on becoming a 'Health Champion' was also provided to a core group of Resurgam volunteers. These volunteers now have increased capacity to serve as champions for positive change in the community, responding opportunistically to health concerns and providing advice and information as required.

Given the extensive focus on health which was now occurring within Resurgam, and in keeping with Resurgam's long-held commitment to working collaboratively and strategically, it seemed appropriate

at this point to consider membership in the ‘Healthy Living Centre Alliance,’ a Northern Ireland wide body. Membership in this Alliance would allow Resurgam to enhance their connections with others working on health in a similar way to themselves, and also provide the opportunity for maximisation of resources—physical, strategic, expertise, health intelligence, and financial.

Resurgam joined the Alliance in January 2016. Benefits of membership have included to date the opportunity for strategic influence, input into regional health planning processes, the securement of additional resources for local delivery, and additional training for Resurgam staff and volunteers.

2016 also saw the Resurgam’s Healthy Living Manager join the local Integrated Care Partnership as the Lisburn Community Representative. As a body which enables greater collaboration across the health and social care and other sectors, this appointment allows Resurgam to participate in strategic planning for health care across the Lisburn/Down area. Resurgam’s membership in this body also means that the voice of the community is well-represented when health care planning decisions are made.

A final example of how Resurgam is working strategically to address the health concerns of its community is the Community Food Initiative, a three-year project developed to address healthy eating and food poverty. With funding of £6,400 from SafeFood, a steering group was established to oversee the project and to enable collaborative working between the statutory and voluntary/ community sectors on the issues of food poverty and healthy eating. Partnerships were formed with FareShare NI providing food at reduced cost to the community, with Food Banks to support community food distribution, and with a local supermarket distributing surplus food to the community.

Other projects grew from this initiative, including the formation of a summer lunch club for youth in 2016 and run again in 2017.

The Healthy Living Centre

2017 saw the completion of an extension to the Laganview Enterprise Centre to allow for the consolidation of the increasing array of health programmes and initiatives being developed.

The new space accommodates a host of health-related services including the availability of free advice on health conditions, practical ways to improve health, stop smoking advice and assistance, information on local support groups and organisations, programmes to improve health, training, signposting and referral to a wide range of services. Carbon Monoxide monitoring, Body Mass Index checks, and alcohol MOT's are also provided. Staff and volunteers are also trained in a range of programmes provided in response to needs identified by the community, including walking programmes, Chi Me, Cook It, healthy eating, sexual health and contraceptive advice, mental health programmes, (ASIST and Mental Health First Aid), pain management and cancer champions.

Events such as the Annual Resurgam Fun Run, tailored Health Fairs and integrating health within seasonal events ensures further ongoing opportunities to promote health and wellbeing, identify health needs, support early detection and encourage optimal management of long-term conditions.

Perhaps what is most important with respect to the Healthy Living Centre development is that Resurgam Trust has effectively embedded health in all that it does. Once again, leadership, educated risk-taking, flexibility, and a commitment to working collaboratively and strategically, are all in evidence here. Health is not considered in isolation from the broader work of Resurgam, and indeed, it has

become an integral component of all programmes, initiatives and services planned and delivered by the Trust.

Laganview Community Gym

In October 2013 Health Minister Edwin Poots MLA and Olympian Dame Mary Peters, LG, CH, DBE jointly opened the Laganview Community Gym.

Jointly funded by the Public Health Agency (PHA) and the Resurgam Community Development Trust, the gym offers people in the area an opportunity to try a wide range of activities such as cycling, rowing and weight training.

As with most if not all of Resurgam Trust's new initiatives, the establishment of the gym was not an isolated initiative. Instead it was linked to and seen as an integral component of both Early Intervention Lisburn, and of the planned future development of a Healthy Living Centre initiative. In the case of the former, the gym was seen as an essential element of the Trust's response to the many health inequalities identified in the 2012 *Best for Every Child* report, which revealed that a person living in the Old Warren area was more likely to die seven years earlier than the average person in Northern Ireland as a whole.

At the launch Chief Executive of the PHA Dr Eddie Rooney said:

“The Public Health Agency is delighted to support this community gym in the heart of Old Warren. This is exactly the kind of local action that the PHA is keen to support, in order to promote healthier living. Together with the Resurgam Trust, over the past year we have developed a major work programme to address needs in this area. This new initiative represents a milestone in collaborative working to improve the health and wellbeing of the whole community.”

The gym is open Monday to Friday 7.30am to 9.30pm and 9.30am to 2.30pm on a Saturday.

Operated as a social economy business, it provides local residents with accessible and affordable access to a gym. Staff training and links with a wide range of programmes and initiatives continue to ensure the gym is accessible to even the most reluctant gym goer. A current programme working with the Safe and Well project (run within Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council) is offering free gym membership to the over 60's along with support from trained befrienders from Resurgam staff and volunteers.

Staffed by one fully qualified employee and supported by ten qualified volunteers and three personal training instructors, as of 2018 current membership of the gym stands at 63 with an average of 30 users per day. It is open to everyone above 14 years of age, with both monthly subscriptions as well as daily drop-in fees.





Staff Team Builder 2017



Gym Opening
with Dame Mary
Peters, CH, DBE



Development of Workplace Health



Community Food Initiative committee members



Our families

Our community transformation

CONFLICT TO PEACE *Our Community Transformation*



CSAW Ladies at the Laganview Gym



Can't Cook won't Cook



Community Food Initiative event at Laganview Enterprise Centre

Lisburn mum Amanda Portis with son Correy and daughters Ava and Freya



2013



Healthy Living Centre



Alcohol Awareness Training at the Highway 2016



Harmony Art Group



Highway Men 2016



Tough Mudder 2018
Volunteer Fundraising

CONFLICT TO PEACE *Our Community Transformation*



Laganview Gym



MacMillan Coffee Morning 2017



Dig Deep Community Garden



Marie Curie Opening - Resurgam HLC 2017

Health in the community

YEAR 2018 AND BEYOND

Resurgam Trust Today

Twenty-two years ago, this community embarked on what was to become a remarkable journey, from a troubled and derelict estate to a community which today can proudly boast a thriving, engaged, peaceful and cohesive community. The Resurgam Trust has become a recognised leader within Northern Ireland in terms of peacebuilding, regeneration and social enterprise. It is also widely acknowledged that their work in these areas has had a profound impact on their community as a whole, and on people as individuals. Their narrative is one replete with both individual and collective stories of success and inspiration. So much so that in August 2017 the Resurgam Trust was asked by the Department for Communities to serve as a mentor for other disadvantaged communities wishing to improve conditions and outcomes for their residents.

Much of the credit for this success belongs to the original founders and leaders of the Lisburn People's Support Project, who have guided, nurtured, and risked in order to effect positive growth and transformation within their community.

From humble beginnings, the Resurgam Trust is today flourishing, with a membership in 2018 of 1,000 individuals, 32 member groups, and 500 volunteers. In addition, the Trust has created employment for 124 individuals, hosts on average 60 visits annually, and undertakes 30 good practice visits.

Its physical resources are considerable: the Laganview Enterprise Centre, the New Horizons Credit Union, Hillhall Community Resource Centre, the 3D Youth Centre, and Lisburn Community Inns.

The Trust owns 11 residential properties offering affordable accommodation to those most in need. As of 2018, the Trust owns

6 social enterprises, with a combined turnover of £1.4 million. This network of community based social enterprises has created sustainable employment for 81 employees.

On 1st March 2019 the Trust launched their **2019-2023 Strategic Action Plan**. This plan will serve as a guide for the Resurgam Trust and sets out its priorities for the next five years.

The document re-affirms the Trust's mission statement, 'To connect individuals and groups and to transform communities to create a sustainable environment within which all are proud to live, learn, play and work,' and their vision, 'To create social, cultural, financial and physical sustainability for the Resurgam Trust and the communities we serve.'

The Strategic Plan outlines 5 key outcomes which the Trust will focus on in the coming years, each of which is linked to a strategic theme as follows:

Outcome 1: Powerful and Effective Communities:

Leading change in partnership with local communities to improve the lives and opportunities of local people

Outcome 2: Stable and Safe Communities:

Maintaining and improving community safety

Outcome 3: Sustainable Environment:

Driving local improvements to ensure local places are regenerated as local people want

Outcome 4: Prosperous Local Economy:

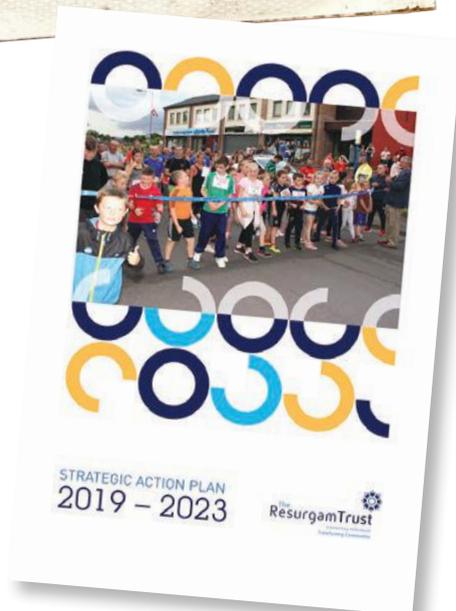
Maintaining and developing social enterprises that will create the conditions for learning and skill development that supports personal development, education and employment for local people

Outcome 5: Thriving People:

Enabling individuals, families and communities to maximise their potential and have control over their lives.



Launch of the Strategic Action Plan in March 2019



Connecting individuals, transforming communities, so ends the Chairperson's Foreword to the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan. It is encouraging, indeed inspiring, to note that the Resurgam Trust has been doing just that for the past 21 years, and there is every indication that it will continue to do so on into the 2020s and beyond.

This book is the story of what went before, a documentation of the journey begun by a small group of committed and brave individuals wishing right from the start to connect people and transform their community.

There is every indication that this community's remarkable journey from conflict to peace is far from over, and that the next five years promise to be as innovative, forward-thinking, and energetic as the past 22 years have been.

External
partner
stories



THE RESURGAM TRUST - WHAT OTHERS THINK!

Robbie Butler MLA UUP

The Resurgam Trust constructed this firm foundation on two key principles of the Good Friday Agreement which the Ulster Unionist Party was instrumental in constructing and delivering - better health and equality of citizenship. No matter a person's background; no matter what community they come from, the Trust has demonstrated it is open to rebuild or remodel where required. For some, this has been about making the successful journey of transformation from prison to peace. As a former prison officer myself, I have seen at first hand the depression and disillusionment which many former prisoners face.

The challenge of tackling the issue of mental health is something which Resurgam has taken head-on. While there are a great many praise-worthy sections to Resurgam, the health hub is perhaps one of the most important; it is impossible to have a healthy community if we don't have healthy people both physically and mentally. As the saying emphasises - your health is your wealth.

There is a clear focus, too, on the development of young members especially from socially and economically deprived areas, one of our society's most undervalued and almost forgotten sectors. But Resurgam does not simply build people; it values entire communities and one of its most significant achievements has been in helping to transform the Old Warren housing estate; a place which had negative connotations during the Troubles, but which now has a very positive image and is one of the most desirable areas in Lisburn.

Resurgam is the embodiment of the phrase, "Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome" – Booker T Washington

Sam Wright Rector of Lisburn Cathedral and Dean of Connor

I came to Lisburn Cathedral as Rector in 1999, at that time the church had opened a house for outreach and ministry in Hillhall. Weekly Sunday worship and week day groups of various kinds, and for all ages, met in the house. Those who served through “The Lighthouse” as it is now known dedicated themselves to the task of supporting and encouraging Hillhall residents and shining out the light of Christ in the area. It was a challenging time as there was a mistrust of the church and church workers. Having been inspired by a Parish Weekend, to renew our efforts to reach out beyond the church and into the community, we worked in partnership with Lisburn Borough Council, Lisburn City Centre Management, Canal Trust and Resurgam Trust to carry out practical tasks like litter picking, creating community gardens and painting public areas in need of sprucing up. The advice and guidance we received from Francie Ferris (Resurgam Trust Youth Worker) was invaluable for the Hillhall part of the “Big Church Serve” as it became known. We gave due concern to his advice and changed some of our plans which paid dividends that enabled us to follow a sustained course of outreach and community engagement. This has continued each year and has gone from strength to strength in the “Big Church Serve” and in other events that we have shared together.

A further initiative was to introduce, alongside our usual Harvest Services, a Community Harvest Celebration. The first speaker at this annual event was the former Archbishop of Armagh, Lord Eames who contributed so much to peace building in Northern Ireland. The children and youth, Ladies choir members, flute band members and Resurgam Trust leadership team have made moving and significant contributions to this annual Community Harvest Celebration.

The Lisburn Cathedral Commissioned Minister for Hillhall, Billy Moore, works closely with Resurgam Trust serving on their council of reference. Through dedicated work and hard earned mutual

trust we have been able to support each other in our work in Hillhall and in the wider Lisburn area. Staff from Lisburn Cathedral are in regular contact with Resurgam Trust staff and we have made meeting rooms available to each other, attended meetings together and discussed our longer term plans. Our aim is to “work for the peace and prosperity of the City”, Jeremiah 29:7, and to shine out the light of Christ in Hillhall and the city of Lisburn. In many areas of our work, we have found that Resurgam Trust have shared our aim of offering a better way forward for the people of this city. We believe that we have been stronger working together and it is a great encouragement to us to see the wide ranging work that Adie Bird and the Resurgam Trust carry out to improve the well being, prospects and aspirations of so many people in Lisburn.

Paul Givan MLA DUP

At the heart of everything the Resurgam Trust does is the desire to make a real difference in the lives of individuals and communities. From those earliest days and throughout the journey obstacles and barriers have been met with both resilience and tenacity because of that overriding desire to improve and empower individuals and communities. There is no doubt this journey would not have been possible without the vision, determination and professionalism of the leadership team in the Resurgam Trust. The impact made over the past 20 years can be clearly seen in the physical improvements to the local environment, new community infrastructure and services that has made a hugely positive difference in the lives of countless individuals, families and the whole community.

Cecilia Whitehorn Managing Director of CM Works

As someone external to the Resurgam Trust, while at the same time, connected over the years, via the provision of professional support to them during their development phase there is one phrase that, for

me, summarises the Trust and its community roots, and that is, ‘no quick fixes.’

I have a clear memory of my first interaction with representatives from LPSP and OWCA in 2001 while carrying out a Social Audit with them on behalf of what was then the Northern Ireland Co-operative Development Agency [NICDA]. The group had just completed a training and development programme in social enterprise facilitated by NICDA.

In response to the questions “how many social enterprises have you developed? and how many people have now been employed in those enterprises?” the robust answer was given “none, but at least we know what they are now and what we could do in the future”.

The seventeen year journey from a baseline of none to the current number of social enterprises they now operate, suggests that their achievement was down to more than strategic and operational planning. A willingness not to rush into a response to opportunities that didn’t meet community needs is the working principle Resurgam has sustained. This was the case whether the community was a physical one, such as Old Warren or Hilden, or a community of interest such as ex-combatants or children and young people.

Crucially, Resurgam has been a dynamic process of identification of needs through face to face engagement and dialogue followed by returning to people with an ongoing consultation and an informed decision-making process that indicates “this is what we heard; this is what we are now thinking of doing and what are we agreeing together to do next”.

Resurgam also uses this same process in their engagement with external stakeholders. Co-design has its traditions and working practice in authentic community development consultation and collaborative, equitable working. In Resurgam, I have had the

opportunity to see the process of dealing with the challenges that authentic co-design requires, including decisions not to pursue quick fixes, even if its the right idea but not necessarily the right time. Identifying and understanding levels of capacity, capability and confidence for engagement and collaborative working aligned with operational requirements of timing and resources requires the courage to stand by 'no quick fixes' while still being open to innovation and risk taking.

The Resurgam Trust's success to date demonstrates how well they continue to commit to their original principle adapted over the years: "knowing the needs and opportunities that there are now, helps us decide what to do in the future".

Mary Montague Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters (L.H.D.).

There are times in your job when something happens that makes you feel this is worthwhile. Meeting the Prisoners Support Project in Lisburn was one of those times. They had a real appetite for change and for making improvements in their lives and the well-being of the community around them. Meeting and building relationships with the group was wonderful and a learning process for me as a Catholic from Andersonstown.

One of the striking differences was how the ex-prisoners and their families were perceived by the wider unionist and republican communities. In the republican community, ex-prisoners and their families were respected and supported. Indeed, many were regarded in high esteem as part of a struggle for Irish freedom. When I listened to the mothers and children in the Lisburn PSP group I heard the opposite. Some of the children were bullied at school, some of the adults were ostracised by parts of the community and families were left unsupported.

We looked at a project to give the children and young people a voice. At the start, they talked about their awful experiences, when their homes were raided, when they were searched or harassed going in and out visiting their dad in prison. Another theme was the effect of the long separations and the difficulties adjusting when their dad was released and returned to the family home. One young girl was asked in school: 'what is it like to live with a terrorist?' School friends stopped talking to or associating with some young people.

Some teenagers hid the truth about their father and created another story to cover the fact that he had been in prison; some wanted to stop going to school or attending youth clubs. If it was found out about a young person's father when the release was high profile, some youngsters were publicly humiliated by others.

It is an important lesson from our past that we recognise the trauma faced by the children of unionist ex-prisoners. Lisburn PSP acknowledged this: they listened to the children, allowing them to design their own programme and complete a creative photography project. In this way the children and young people regained control and reclaimed their community area by taking photographs of their favourite local places.

We know today that traumatised youth need to experience success, build relationships and feel less isolated from others, especially their peers. The Lisburn PSP were ahead of their time in their intervention. Let us learn from them that what works is essential for the future healthy development of the young adult.



Resurgam Boot Boys



Warren Young Men 2012-2013 at Laganwen



Resurgam Youth Bank 2018



TBUC designed by Nathan Milligan



Halloween Party 2018



Youth Work Team 2018



Fun Run 2017 with the then Mayor, Councillor Tim Morrow

Our community

Personal
stories



My role in Lisburn Prisoners' Support Project was Family Support Worker. I was a volunteer and loved it... my voluntary work with Lisburn PSP was worthwhile, enjoyable and very satisfying... Everything we did we included our community. It could never be just about the former prisoners and their families... So if there was a course for women, yes it would have included the wives or partners of former prisoners but it was also open to other women from our community. It was the same approach for the children and youth programmes and our social nights. I am proud to see what we have accomplished in the journey we have travelled. Yes, there have been many ups and downs but I honestly believe that coming through the difficult times has helped to make me the person who I am today.

Alison Bird

Francie introduced me to the Old Warren Women's Group as I knew nobody and through that built up a brilliant relationship with them and made friends.

I did lots of courses like a diploma in peace and reconciliation. It gave me a sense that – it brought me back to life and gave me a sense to live and move on from my past... Then I got involved with Lisburn PSP so I started volunteering in the Low Road with the staff there... I was sent on the community development Level 1 course which I passed so I feel where my place is working within the community. Being involved gets me out, stops me sitting in the house depressed and by getting out and meeting people, mixing within the community and helping them is good for me.

Andrea Wiltshaw

I first got involved with Lisburn PSP when my ex-husband was sentenced to life in prison in 1989. Initially I was offered support by the group to help cope with the trauma of losing my husband and being left to raise my young daughter by myself. The staff at the PSP were great and offered practical

help and support in many ways. Within several weeks, I was introduced to a family support group which was made up of other women who had found themselves in similar circumstances to myself. This support group was great as I was able to share my worries and fears with people that really cared. When I look back now, I do not know how I would have coped without the support of this group.

After about six months receiving support from Lisburn PSP I then became a volunteer with the family support programme. I loved this work and it felt good helping others. It also helped build up my confidence which had taken a huge knock when my husband went to jail. After about a year as a volunteer I had the opportunity to apply for a job with Lisburn PSP as their fulltime family support worker. I got the job and started work with them on the 9th of January 2000. During the last 18 years I have held many positions with Lisburn PSP and was a founding member of New Horizons Credit Union. I am currently employed by Resurgam Trust and am extremely proud to have played my part in the development of both Lisburn PSP and the Resurgam Trust.

Sharon Gibson

We came to Lisburn in 2003 and I didn't really know anyone so kept myself to myself... so it was a lonely time for me... On the Eleventh Night I went down to watch the fire... It was then I got talking to some local people and was through them I became involved in my local Community Association... Francie told me of all the courses that were available for women so it was then I thought, sure, why not give it a go and see how it goes... so that was the start of my journey on women's groups... I have lost count now how many courses I have done but each one was different and when I passed it really helped my confidence. That's how it all started and now fourteen years later I haven't looked back... I love meeting women from different backgrounds, religions and communities. I have met some lovely friends during this and look forward to meeting many more... I am thankful now that we moved to Lisburn and a huge thank-you to everyone in Lisburn PSP

and Resurgam Trust for giving me the chance to achieve all that I have. I've come a long way and so have my family.

Trish McCormick

I was a typical teenager in society's eyes, hanging about the estate, with nothing to do, nowhere to go type of attitude. Me and my peers were engaged by the local youth worker in Old Warren who gave us an opportunity to better ourselves and gave us a sense of direction. We formed the Old Warren Youth Initiative who gave a voice to the young people of the estate. We worked in partnership alongside the Old Warren Community Association. It was through this process that I developed an interest in community action and making a difference to the area I lived in.

A lot of time has passed (23 years) since that initial contact with the youth worker in Old Warren and I have been able to develop as an individual thanks to the opportunities afforded to me by the Resurgam Trust. I began volunteering with the local youth groups, which in turn led to me gaining my youth work qualifications (O.C.N Level 1,2,3), and more recently a degree in Community Youth Work from the University of Ulster, Jordanstown.

Thanks to the Resurgam Trust I'm now in a position to provide the next generation of young people with the opportunities that were offered to me all those years ago and provide them with the knowledge and skills to make informed choices and shape a positive future for themselves and the area in which they live.

Tommy Kynes

I am now 62 years old and have lived in Lisburn for all my adult life. I was a hard grafter and was always in employment but unfortunately at the age of 51 I found myself made redundant. Initially this had no real impact on me as I believed that it would be easy to find new employment, but I was in for a huge shock. I had worked hard all my life as a semi-skilled labourer but had no skills which were relevant in today's workplace. In the initial six months

following my redundancy I applied for over 50 jobs and did not get even one interview. I believe that there were several reasons for this which included, lack of knowledge and skills relevant in today's modern workplace and the fact that most employers seen me as too old.

For the first time in my life I was forced to sign on for unemployment benefit and when my savings ran out I hit rock bottom and become isolated and depressed. I felt I had nowhere to turn, so simply stayed in my house.

Everything changed when a leaflet came through my door from the Resurgam Trust inviting me to attend a community engagement event at the Laganview Enterprise Centre. I knew nobody at the event so was very nervous attending but was quickly put at ease and made to feel very welcome.

During this event I registered as a volunteer with the Resurgam Trust and following my induction I was presented with an array of opportunities. I become a volunteer with Laganview Community Gym and Lisburn Safe and participated on numerous community education programmes. I learnt new computer-based skills and got my Security Industries Authority License. This improved my confidence and I started to apply for more jobs. On my third application I got fulltime employment as a security guard and I have remained in employment ever since.

I honestly believe that without the assistance from the Resurgam Trust I would have ended up very seriously ill. I remain a volunteer with the Resurgam Trust and during their 2017 Annual General Meeting I had the opportunity to speak to over 100 attendees and tell them my personal story.

Jackie Haire

My involvement with Lisburn PSP started over 20 years ago as the peace processes were taking place; resulting in prisoners being released back into their communities. I wondered if the communities at large would welcome

or reject them? Could they find help with employment, housing and finance, etc.

I was invited to a conference being held in the Beechlawn Hotel, Dunmurry, to discuss these issues and hopefully help evolve a plan to address these concerns. I was greatly impressed with the attitude of the participants there who demonstrated much enthusiasm and desire to help improve the situation of ex-prisoners, their families and the wider communities post conflict.

I volunteered with others to form a credit union in order for those with a common bond to avoid having to use high interest money lenders. The New Horizons Credit Union was formed. I held several posts and played an active role in the development of the credit union until I retired several years ago. With the help of staff and volunteers, Sharon Gibson took on with great success the day to day running of the credit union. Her work allowed others more freedom to explore other projects. The credit union continues to expand and go from strength to strength.

We all now live in an uncertain and changing world, so it is with great comfort for our local community to have available the Resurgam Trust, open to all who require help and support while also providing opportunities for employment, training and social cohesion.

Bobby Loyal

I left Lisnagarvey High School in 1990 at the age of 15 with no qualifications. I didn't like school and couldn't wait to leave and start work.

Although I always worked, in low paid and menial jobs such as selling lemonade and working on production lines in factories, I had no ambition in life and couldn't wait until the weekend to go out drinking with my friends and playing in the local flute band. I was very sectarian in my views which got me into a lot of trouble with the police for fighting every weekend.

In the mid to late Nineties a friend of mine told me about a new organisation that had started called the Lisburn Prisoners' Support Project offering various educational courses and programmes within the local community. I enrolled in the EU PEACE I Community Leadership Programme they were running for young men. This programme gave us an insight and developed skills in all forms of community development, from committee skills, assessing the needs of the local community, to how to lobby for resources and investment.

This programme developed in me an interest in my community and the issues it faced as well as building my confidence and self-esteem which gave me an interest in education for the first time ever. After completing the programme, I helped form a young men's group in Hillhall in 1998, facilitated by the Lisburn PSP. The group was made up of young men like me who had little or no qualifications, from areas of deprivation, and at risk of being involved in crime and anti-social behaviour. We started to meet upstairs in the County Down Arms (The Highway Inn) and the Lisburn PSP brought in different organisations and youth workers to work with us on various community development programmes and educational courses. These programmes opened us up to different people, ideas and opportunities we all felt were never in our grasp. I remember Dr Ken Harland from Youth Action (now University of Ulster) presenting us with our Community Leadership certificates, the first certificate many had ever received.

After the community association in Hillhall dissolved, the young men's group formed Hillhall Regeneration Group in 1999 and became the main organisation in Hillhall for community development and community regeneration in the area. This year (2018) it will be going 20 years and has its own community resource centre – funded by Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council and Ireland Funds – which serves as a hub for community projects and services, seven days a week.

I went back to college night classes and got essential skills qualifications in Maths and English and then enrolled in the Education Authority Local Youth Work Qualification. From 1998 I volunteered in the community

at nights, starting the first youth club in the estate. And in 2003 I was offered an EU PEACE II two-year community development post in Hillhall, aimed at improving the weak community infrastructure. This gave me the opportunity, with the support of the Lisburn PSP, to get into university to complete the Diploma in Community Youth Work and eventually a BSc degree, a professional qualification!

During my time as a youth worker I made links with all kinds of organisations including Corrymeela and Warrington Peace Centre and built relationships with those from the 'other side' including West Belfast and Cork community workers. Resurgam Youth Initiative includes good relations and peace building work as one of our high priorities and we have before completed several TBUC programmes with various other organisations since we formed.

Fifteen years later I am the manager of Resurgam Youth Initiative which works with over 500 young people every week in all the Resurgam Trust areas.

Joining the Lisburn PSP programme back in the late nineties changed my life and view of the world by providing me with opportunities I would never have had and introduced me to people and organisations I would never have met, giving me the confidence and self-belief to make the most of the opportunities they provided.

Francis Ferris

Having lived through some of the conflict when the opportunity arose it was easy for me to engage and embrace the opportunity of peace building, although I never really knew what this would entail at the start of the journey. When we established Lisburn PSP and set out on the journey of reintegration of former politically motivated prisoners, there was a wealth of support structures in place that assisted us in setting a vision for our

communities in Lisburn. Our simple aim was to make our community a better place to live.

Within this context Lisburn PSP began a journey of conflict transformation which spread through community development, peacebuilding, youth work, social enterprise and overall the regeneration within our estates. The conflict had decimated our communities and left a legacy of poor services due to various factors including fear, intimidation, black propaganda and dirty tricks.

Regionally Lisburn PSP were included in most pieces of work or had the opportunity to get involved in various support structures, mostly financed and resourced through the Special EU Peace Programme. The peacebuilding element was quite straight forward for me and something I embraced through a number of key points in time, specially input from other countries coming out of conflict (experiences shared through EU Peacebuilding forums).

There were opportunities for the development of social enterprise and there were key people involved in this, detailed in this book. This complimented the peacebuilding through providing opportunities for sustainability, training for long term unemployed including young people at risk, and the creation of employment in disadvantaged communities who weren't getting investment from any external businesses.

In terms of regeneration, community development and equality, the most learning and awareness came from those agencies who represented socialist, working class values. They are all mentioned in this book and they were great supports for Lisburn PSP. They helped translate our vision, ideas, experiences and also gave us tools to develop our own strategies.

There was a focus on young people and during the journey I trained as a youth worker, again engaging as part of the EU Peace Programme then into mainstream qualifications through university. This was again endorsed as we tested our methods of engaging young people in peacebuilding, developing

leadership skills in young people and creating young community activists to build a foundation.

In my opinion there are key elements to this journey that include: developing relationships with powerbrokers which was not easy and required good leadership; the ability to bring a community that was immersed in conflict and by default lawlessness, to engage with statutory and political agents to better those communities; development and investment of local leaders through education and mentoring; the ability to protest and lobby in a productive way that gains benefits; the ability to build and maintain relationships with a spectrum of political representatives and become aware of civic responsibility; awareness of community assets; visionary and leadership.

I am proud to have played my part in this journey of community transformation and peace building and the development of both Lisburn PSP and the Resurgam Trust. I feel that the contribution made by both organisations has left a great legacy for the next generation.

Denis Paisley

Appendices



AFTER CONFLICT: ONE URBAN COMMUNITY'S JOURNEY TO PEACE*

Context:

Previously a quiet, hard-working small city (population 71,465 in 2011) Lisburn, County Antrim like other communities in Northern Ireland, suffered for almost three decades after 1969 the ravages of what are known euphemistically as “the Troubles”: the violent campaign waged by the Irish Republican Army in pursuit of a united Ireland and the counter-campaign by several loyalist (pro-United Kingdom) paramilitary groups such as the Ulster Defence Association and Ulster Volunteer Force.

The campaigns deeply divided Protestants and Catholics, particularly in working-class areas, and resulted in involuntary population movements that radically reinforced the sectarian urban segregation that was already a feature of working-class life in Northern Ireland.

The negative impact on towns and neighbourhoods was severe, including risk of death and injury, physical damage to homes and business premises, communal distrust, anti-social behaviour, family breakdowns and separations, and the unravelling of the social fabric. Daily life in working-class neighbourhoods was restrictive amidst a wider social dysfunction.

Such dysfunction, social and familial, survived the Good Friday Agreement (1998) that saw a formal end to hostilities. Paramilitary activity and anti-social violence continued inside neighbourhoods.

To this volatile mix was added the early release of paramilitary

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prisoners, still regarded with suspicion both by the authorities and, in the case of prisoners returning to Lisburn, by elements of pro-United Kingdom political parties who had opposed early release. The challenge to the ex-prisoners' successful rehabilitation was immense.

Old Warren Estate in Lisburn, the subject of this case study, had seen violence as early as the aftermath of the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985, to which its Protestant and Loyalist inhabitants were fiercely opposed. Even after the peace, this estate was said to be the second least popular estate in Northern Ireland by prospective residents.

This case study recounts how one community tackled the problems of prisoner re-entry into post-conflict residential life in a large working-class estate in a small city and by doing so transformed the solutions to those problems over decades into a healthy social, economic and environmental renewal of an entire neighbourhood.

The initial *Loyalist Prisoners' Aid Committee* of 1973 in Lisburn - with its concern for the ability of prisoners' families to access transport to visit their imprisoned relatives - then became the *Lisburn Prisoners' Support Project* aiding prisoners' re-integration into their community. These efforts expanded over time into a still-thriving community organisation called *Resurgam Trust* overseeing a variety of successful programmes, initiatives and enterprises.

This case study is of an urban community's journey from conflict to peace, from local failure to success.

Rationale:

The story of Old Warren and Resurgam Trust is a case study in how a particular community ravaged by major conflict and inter-communal strife that leave severely damaging social residues can, through strong and innovative leadership and residents' self-help energy

and cooperation, strengthen peace and achieve local economic and environmental renewal and community cohesion and sense of well-being.

It is suggested that the experience recounted in this case study could be of help to other communities in the midst of, or in the aftermath of, acute or chronic communal and neighbourhood dysfunction.

This case study, it should be noted, documents neither a particular programme or initiative, nor a particular point in time. Rather, it is a summary of a 22-year journey and of the roles of leadership and the willingness to make and take opportunities, yielding unforeseen positive results.

The length of the journey itself might be of interest to other socially and economically deprived communities wishing to undertake their own long-term renewal and transformation journeys. This is a case-study in perseverance and hard work over time.

The many lessons learned along the way, and the identification of a number of principles established and followed without deviation from the outset, may be of use to other organisations embarking on a similar journey after conflict or disaster.

Description:

This community's regeneration journey began 22 years ago with a group called the *Lisburn Prisoner's Support Project*. Recognising the potential of the impending Good Friday Agreement and the concomitant release of European Peace monies, community activists realised they could use these funds to build an organisation to support the re-integration of political prisoners back into their community.

From that a small, single-purpose group, community leaders went on over the next 22 years to improve the political, social, economic, and physical environment. Early initiatives such as support groups for the wives of ex-prisoners developed into support groups for all women in the community. Building of apartments and houses for ex-prisoners became housing accessible for anyone in the community. And creation of social enterprises ensured jobs for local residents.

In 2008 the leaders recognised the need to change the name of the original group from the *Lisburn Prisoners' Support Project* to the *Lisburn People's Support Project* to better reflect the ever-expanding work of the group.

Beyond providing services to ex-prisoners and their families alone, community leaders widened their scope to address the needs of all local residents. For instance, initiatives aimed at targeting youth at risk of being recruited into paramilitaries were developed in the mid-1990s, focusing on community leadership IT skills, and personal development. This initiative expanded until in 2017 the community opened a dedicated facility to house youth activities called *Resurgam 3D Youth Centre*.

Realising the poor educational and health outcomes for youth in the community, leaders saw the need for an early intervention initiative, which led to the establishment of *Early Intervention Lisburn*, a cross-sectoral partnership of statutory, voluntary, community and political organisations with significant strategic and operational experience in early years work. This group aims to improve outcomes for the children and young people, and their families.

Other significant initiatives which were to grow from the seeds of the original prisoner support project:

Through the formation of the Self-Build Company, numerous community-built and community-owned apartments and houses enabled the acquisition of building-trade skills by volunteer workers.

- Other social enterprise companies were developed to address community needs and create opportunities for local employment and job training. These have included an auto maintenance and repair service, a taxi company, a printing service, a credit union, and a facility management company (*Laganview Enterprise Centre Ltd*), and the acquisition and operation of a community-based pub. All but one of these businesses remain in operation today.
- The *Lisburn Men's Education Network* was established to address the needs of marginalised young men in the community.
- The *Welcome House* was an initiative to ensure integration of newly arrived migrants settling in the area while there was a 'safer neighbourhoods' initiative with which the local police force cooperated.
- In 2011, a new organisation called *The Resurgam Community Development Trust* was set up. The aim was 'to transform communities by the creation of social, cultural, financial, and physical sustainability - proud to live, learn, play and work.' The Latin word, 'Resurgam' was chosen for its meaning 'I shall rise again.' All assets of the community were transferred to the new Trust, which now manages these for the benefit of all.

These achievements in the transformation of the Community would not have come about without certain decisions, attitudes and applied principles. From the outset, community leaders made key decisions guiding the development and implementation of their support to ex-prisoners. These decisions went on to serve as the basis for much of the success the community enjoys today. Community leaders, not

always entirely consciously perhaps, employed many of the principles underlying effective community development work, as listed below:

- Recognition of the need to build a solid *organisational infrastructure*, characterised by strong internal leadership and management, to create and use a dedicated core of volunteers.
- Recognition of *the need to take risks* - both financial and political, and to capitalise on opportunities as they arose. For example, community leaders in the early days took significant financial risks in the building of community-owned housing projects. They were also courageous in recognising the benefits of working with, and learning from, the nationalist community and with the local police - work which at the time was difficult and unpopular.
- Adoption as guiding principles the *concepts of inclusion and integration*. At the outset, for example, leaders took the decision that all of their community should be the intended beneficiaries. Programmes and services provided were not just for ex-prisoners, thereby avoiding potential community discontent and division. This was a unique approach at the time but a critical one.
- Recognition of the need to look beyond the immediate walls of their community and forge links with the wider community to *create inter-sectoral partnerships*, both internal and external. These included partnerships with neighbouring community organisations, external organisations such as relevant statutory bodies and politicians, and the wider community and voluntary sectors. Such an approach brought numerous advantages for the organisation, including, among other things, the broadening of their own knowledge and skills, as well as obtaining the ongoing support of critical organisations and government.

- Recognition of the need to ensure *full and meaningful involvement of the community in all aspects of the organisation*, including, for example, decisions regarding needs, service plans, fundraising, volunteer development, and future planning. Initially this meant the full involvement of ex-prisoners and their families, but as the mandate of the organisation grew, this approach was extended to the whole of the community.
- Awareness of the importance of *volunteer development* – ensuring all staff and volunteers were well trained and had access to continuing education.
- Adoption of the principles of *adaptability and flexibility*. Leaders were not afraid to learn from others or to adapt models to suit their own community. When the mission of the *Lisburn Prisoners' Support Project* became too limited, they were not afraid to expand their mandate and change the name to reflect this.
- *Goal setting* and regular *review of organisational performance* and progress. In the early days these were accomplished via conferences and planning sessions focusing on intended beneficiaries particularly, but as the organisation grew, it added formal progress and outcome reports demonstrating community impact and outcome achievement.
- Awareness of the need to address *long-term sustainability*, as evidenced by the financial and political risks taken in the early days in the establishment of community-owned houses and businesses.
- The gradual recognition of the need to *build community* resources and capacity as evidenced by the ever-increasing number of programmes and services developed over the years.

Achievements:

The Northern Ireland Government has recognised the possible applicability of this case-study to other communities. In response to initiatives from Fermanagh Trust (County Fermanagh) and Resurgam Trust (County Antrim), the Department for Communities has created the Community Academy (NI). The aim of the Academy is to help build kinder, stronger, more resilient communities. It will do so through extending networking support, mentoring, seminars, community education and research to other local organisations in communities in need of ways to reverse deprivation.

The achievements that impressed the Department for Communities and pointed positively into the future include:

- Enabling in many cases the transition of individuals released from living in prison to living back in the community.
- Reinforcing the early attempts by individuals, families and the community at normalising peace on a daily basis after decades of civil strife.
- Introducing community participants to a self-help philosophy and programme and helping them to escape the dependency culture of a dysfunctional community.
- Successfully having the community participate in local business enterprises.
- Fostering a sense of well-being in individuals as a result of their becoming members of a re-invigorated community.

- Introducing community members (necessarily of one religion and political persuasion) to citizens of communities from the 'other side' (of a different religion and political persuasion).
- Renewing the physical environment through the building of new houses and other buildings.
- Kick-starting the local economy with new businesses, newly employed people, and a healthy turn-over.
- Achieving a measure of political and civic stability by getting rid of paramilitary control and activity.
- Increasing civil participation through volunteerism.
- Enhancing the vocational aspirations and achievements of local residents.
- Improving the community infrastructure.
- Bettering relationships with the police and other statutory bodies.
- Initiating strong inter-sectoral partnerships.
- Adoption of a social-determinants-of-health approach to all new activities and programmes.
- Having influence with politicians and statutory agencies at local and regional level.

Conclusion:

The process of undertaking community development to optimise health and well-being can be a long, continuous and frequently arduous venture. It is our belief that this case-study demonstrates how one community group, through tenacity, a fierce desire to improve their community, courageous leadership, and the willingness to commit to the 'long-haul', has brought substantive change to what once was a socially moribund, physically derelict and economically deprived community. Apart from *long-haul commitment*, this study demonstrates the importance of *timing* in community development, and the value of reacting quickly to opportunities, both political and financial, as they arise. The leaders of the community met many challenges along the way, but never let these hinder their work. They worked steadfastly to recover from their mistakes, learn from others, while tailoring the information to suit their own community, and perhaps most importantly, continuously build community support through inclusion, democratic decision-making, and widespread consultation.

It is not surprising, considering where this community was 22 years ago, and where it is today, that the Northern Ireland government has invited the Resurgam Trust to share their experience with other social housing communities. Whilst many of the opportunities this community enjoyed occurred at a specific juncture of NI's political history, nevertheless, the principles and ways of working adopted by the initial prisoners support project, and now still employed by the large and flourishing Resurgam Trust, have stood the test of time and can be extrapolated to other groups and other situations.

This case-study also demonstrates that peace-building initiatives can and do have a significant impact on maximising community health and well-being, sometimes, as this community's journey so clearly

evidences, in ways never imagined or conceived of by the original project instigators. By reviewing the critical decisions, principles, and approaches employed along this 22-year journey, other communities can hopefully draw important conclusions about how to tackle such issues as political tensions, paramilitary activity, below-par vocational and educational achievement, poor physical and social infrastructure, poor health outcomes, and low civic participation.

While this community's journey is far from over, with challenges being faced even now, it is nevertheless clear that they have established a solid infrastructure which will underpin continuing efforts to renew and transform their community as a whole, and the health and well-being of individual residents specifically.

International
perspective



INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Duke University in Durham North Carolina offers a number of study visit programmes to its students known as 'Duke Engage'. Between 2010 and 2015 one of these programmes was a visit to Northern Ireland from mid-May to mid-July each year.

The students each had a volunteer placement with a community organisation working on peace and reconciliation. In the information for applicants Duke University said, "The groups with which we work are fostering human rights culture, working to lessen sectarian division, implementing stronger human rights reporting and protections, and working at the grassroots level to address how the violent past can be acknowledged and used as a way to construct a more peaceful future." The students also went on site visits and attended specially arranged lectures to increase their learning about the conflict and about active peace building. Each year from 2010 to 2014 two of these students were hosted by Lisburn PSP/Resurgam Trust. During their placement they carried out many tasks and learnt the realities of peace building at a community level.

In 2013 Michael Zhang and Arpita Varghese spent eight weeks as placements with the Resurgam Trust. During this time, they integrated fully with the Resurgam Trust staff, participated in meetings and assisted with the day to day activities of the Trust.

Below both Michael and Arpita have written accounts of their time spent with the Resurgam Trust.

Michael's account

This text is less a documentation of my work here, or a journal of my experience in Belfast at large, but general impressions I have formed in personal interactions. In all, I argue that Resurgam's greatest virtue is its genuine attachment to community, and that future developments of Resurgam should continue to focus on the immediate Lisburn community rather than attempting to branch out to the world. I imagine Resurgam

as a tree that is nourished by the soil in which its seed germinated; a living thing that is at once fed by the community and provides structure for the community; a tree whose seeds now might not flourish in other environments. Resurgam was created from the local environment and is best suited for the local environment.

A focused approach to community regeneration

The strength of Resurgam seems to be in its connection to the community as it is, without giving concession to the overall structure of reconciliation in Northern Ireland, which seems to be based on the creation of a monolithic Northern Irish culture and the doing away with of Nationalist and, in particular, Loyalist culture. More directly, it seems that the larger peace process movement looks unfavourably upon such displays of tradition as Loyalist parades and songs, in an attempt to create a trans-community culture artificially. Formerly I had thought that this would be the first step to creating lasting peace as well, although I have not heard of any reasonable ways of accomplishing this artificial formation of culture. The logic seems to be that the foundation of economic and social regeneration should be based on the economic and social solidarity of Catholic and Protestant neighbourhoods. On paper this is a moral and politically correct solution, highly appealing to academics and the idea of social justice. There is something poetic about the Northern Irish coming together in the restoration of their country.

But of course the reality of the situation is that the divide in communities presents an enormous barrier against horizontal unification of Northern Ireland at the start of the regeneration process. It seems to me that much of the antagonism of each community is based upon economic deprivation. From my experience here, all those previously involved in the conflict have remarked that the violence was largely localized to working class communities, while the middle and upper class of Northern Ireland had both the resources and the sense to remain largely aloof. Framed thus, it seems that involvement and victimization by the conflict was largely a matter of economic class. And to this day the old sentiments remain a burden of solely the working class.

My experiences in Belfast and Lisburn have convinced me that community regeneration will not come from a unification of Catholic and Protestant communities, but rather that a unification of these communities will come from community regeneration, from a better educated younger generation that doesn't glorify violence and supposed martyrdom, from a community less dependent on prescription medication and alcohol, from community members who can find joy outside of sectarian antagonism.

And thus I have found that Resurgam's model of community regeneration, which (it seems to me) emphasizes the social and economic betterment of community over, say, the creation of a broadly encompassing Northern Irish culture or cross-community culture, will ultimately be more successful and have a greater impact on the community. Of course peace initiatives are an important part of the organization, but at least the operations at the Laganview Enterprise Centre seem focused on community regeneration of communities without the burden of special regard to the trans-community level.

The particular and the local

The great advantage that Resurgam has is its particular understanding of the Lisburn community. This understanding comes from a lifetime of living in the very communities which Resurgam serves, interacting on a neighbourly level with the people Resurgam tries to help, and being involved and concerned with the regeneration of the community since before the height of violence during the Troubles. Resurgam's advantage comes from the understanding of particular communities in Lisburn, knowing that these communities are not generic, but are unique in their particular set of circumstances and composition of individuals. The regeneration of these communities for Resurgam comes down to the particularities of each individual in these communities.

At Resurgam there is an attention to and an understanding of the characteristics of Lisburn Protestant-majority communities that realizes the enormous difficulty of diminishing sectarian attitudes and the entrenchment of certain sectarian traditions in the local culture. Parades, for example,

are probably discouraged at the prevailing cross-community attitude of most non-profit organizations working in Northern Ireland, without understanding a role they have in the community regeneration of particular neighbourhoods and particular individuals. Case in point, from what I understand Elliott Gibson has benefitted enormously from his participation in his Blackskull band. More broadly, in attending several parades I've found that the boys and girls who participate in bands develop the discipline necessary to march in line, to master an instrument, etc. And because of that tradition presents itself as an ally of community regeneration rather than an inhibitor of cross-community progress.

The only kind that works

More and more I am convinced that the only community regeneration that works is one that is conducted by members of the community themselves, by people who grew up in and continue to live in the communities they try to benefit.

In universities right now there is a widespread disillusionment with the work of most trans-national NGOs that attempt to go into foreign communities for a set period of time in order to do some good for the community. "Do-gooders" in Haiti, for example, are often an example of well-intentioned westerners who end up doing much more harm than good. Non-profit food services who give out food nearly for free devastate local farmers who obviously cannot compete with free food. Government contracts for buildings are given to charity workers who build for free, leaving the local labourers unemployed.

The organic emergence of Resurgam

The structure of the Resurgam Trust was initially rather difficult to grasp. It seemed that the structure was unnecessarily complicated and intertwining, without a sort of established and absolute corporate hierarchy on all levels; from my understanding, Lisburn PSP was begun as an ex-prisoners group, which had aspirations to do community regeneration work of all sorts. After a fragmentation in 2006 and a consultation period, the group formed a trust to encapsulate all of community regeneration work. Now, Resurgam works

with community partners from all different jurisdictions and target areas to create a holistic community regeneration effort. Six key figures who work in the Laganview Enterprise Centre coordinate the Trust and have varying responsibilities and different levels of authority in different arenas.

All this initially seemed unnecessarily complicated; instead of having the same corporate hierarchy for each aspect of the Trust, different aspects had different power structures and different people were chairpersons. But as I worked on the Resurgam history project, it became clear where this peculiar structure came from: a suspicion of absolute authority and the individual takeover of a community enterprise.

Impressions on Resurgam's work

I was not expecting financial matters to occupy so much of the Trust's energies and resources. It seems that two tasks occupy at least half of the day-to-day activities and objectives of full-time workers: applying for funding and allocation of funding, in the form of salaries, expenses, and asset transfer. A significant portion of the remaining resources and time is spent in meetings.

What this suggests to me is that Resurgam has transitioned fully into a position of coordination and leadership amongst Lisburn area NGOs. While this should be considered an achievement for the leadership at Resurgam, it presents a worry that I've heard expressed at steering committee meetings of losing touch with community.

There exists a social environment consisting of funders, academics, financiers, and statutory agencies who often come from upper-middle class backgrounds and try to help working class communities without really understanding them first. This highly academic environment uses a jargon-heavy vocabulary that attempts to generalise and systemise sociological "issues" facing working class communities.

I believe, instead, that the communities in Lisburn are unique, as are the communities in working class neighbourhoods around the world, and that only those people familiar with the particular characteristics and

individuals in those communities can have a positive impact in “doing good”. I would warn against Resurgam’s mindset might becoming too influenced by its new environment of funders seeking neat, academically-attractive campaigns and forgetting the aspects of Old Warren, Hillhall, and Maze neighbourhoods that make them unique.

Arpita Elizabeth Varghese’s account

“You’ll love it!” said Leslie and Chris the first time Michael and I met with them at Duke to talk about our placement for the summer. We heard about many people, community organizations, and political groups and of course, about the weather.

“Sharon liked the picture I posted of all us and she commented saying that she was excited to meet you two”, said Robin on our first day here in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

Needless to say, by the time I eventually got to meet Sharon and Deano at Fasset International, I already had high expectations for my time with Lisburn PSP. The only thing that I was perhaps a little less excited about was our long commute to Lisburn – which we later figured out would take about 1.5 hours one way. On our drive to Lisburn with Sharon and Deano on the first day, we learned that Lisburn PSP was now Resurgam Trust. And that Resurgam Trust was not just Resurgam – it was Premier Taxis, Self-Build, SAFE, Lisburn Credit Union and much more. Did I really understand how it all fit in? No, but I did gather that a lot was going on at Resurgam Trust.

Visiting the Highway Inn, one of the new construction sites for Self Build, and other potential sites for Self Build with Sharon definitely helped us understand the social economy business side of Resurgam. I noticed that this was in stark contrast to the situation that most other non-profit and/or community organisations were at the moment because they were all in fear of losing funding. I was thoroughly impressed by the fact that Resurgam had had the vision early on to try and become self-sustainable while providing space for economic development within its communities. I learned more about this aspect of Resurgam through one of first meetings I got to attend

at Resurgam to discuss the proposition of compiling and perhaps creating a model that Resurgam had followed so that it could be put in use by other organisations. I thought that this was a great idea considering that one could definitely see the benefits of following such a model however, I felt a little uneasy with the idea of patenting such a model and trying to export it to other countries where the issues are different, the culture (such as the idea of volunteering) is different and even government policies and financial situations are very varied.

But that first meeting that I attended at Resurgam was one of the times I've learned the most – about Resurgam, the organisation and its formation, about Adie, about Denis, and the vision for Resurgam. Michael and I got to attend many more meetings since then. Prior to coming here, I would not have thought that I could learn so much from merely attending meetings such as the above or even just Board or Staff meetings. Attending these meetings in the first few weeks were definitely helpful because it helped me get a grasp of the many things that was going on at Resurgam. If anyone wants to get a small taste of the many, many things that Resurgam is involved in, just spend a day in the Office Room with Adie, Sharon and Andrea and the many people that drop by. Remember, I said, a small taste. What I've come to realise is that to work for the building of a community, you would have to approach this goal in multiple directions to see a holistic difference and this is what Resurgam does – its work ranges from cross community work and improving the employability skills of the youth to working with issues related to integration via the Welcome Project. These things can't just be organised into neatly labelled boxes, it's a messy affair, but an exciting one. It's a place where everything is related – politics, the community, personal lives, business, the EU, culture, the legacy of the past.

In addition to attending various meetings at Resurgam, I also benefitted greatly from the meetings that I was able to attend along with Deano. It helped me understand how important it is for different organisations to work in collaboration with each other. In all of these events, I got the chance to meet people representing different organisations, political groups, and so on. One such event that I was able to attend was the

Truth Recovery event which was held in relation to the Prison to Peace Project. It was really interesting to listen to Prof. Brandon Hamber and the “academic” perspective that he brought to the discussion. However, what I enjoyed most was the workshop that was held following his talk where the perspective of the ex-prisoners/ex-combatants/representatives from ex-prisoner support programs were able to voice the many concerns regarding the problems with such an truth recovery program. This discussion, in addition to the many conversations that I was to have later made me think a lot about labels such as “victims” and “perpetrators” and the problems associated with such labels. Talking to Francie, while I was working with him on the survey for the Welcome Project, I thought about the similarities between The Troubles and the situation in Kashmir (India-Pakistan conflict) and about the positive impact that the various community organizations and the will of the people here in Northern Ireland have been able to bring about because of their firm determination for a better tomorrow. I realize that the case here in Northern Ireland and back in India are very different in certain sense but the work that is going on here has definitely made me much more optimistic regarding the ability of a community to bring about change.

Another tour I’m really glad I got to attend is the ‘United Irish Men’ tour – it was the single most helpful tour for me which was able to portray how complex the history behind The Troubles is and that it is not merely a conflict between two religious groups. In fact, in my final reflection that I submitted for Duke Engage, I mentioned that this is a tour that I’d recommend for the entire group. At the United Irish Men tour, Michael and I also got the opportunity to meet Tommy, who was a member of the IRA. Tommy invited us to a meeting where we got to meet many former combatants from various sides of the conflict – all who had come to work together to improve their communities.

The trip to Hillsborough Castle and the nearby Fort was exciting too! It was great to hang out with everyone outside the office and to learn about a part of the history of the place. I’m glad that Resurgam was able to organise a trip for all of us to Stormont where we were able to learn about

how the Parliament is structured and get a small introduction to how the Government here works. I think this was particularly useful because the Government in the US is organised in a different way and it was really helpful to understand the role of MLAs, MPs and so on.

I'm also glad that I got to participate in the 'Women in Politics' course because I learned quite a bit in that course, and more importantly got to learn about what other women thought about politics, the issues in their communities and what they thought should be done in order for a better community. In fact, listening to them, realising how relevant Resurgam's connection with different politicians has been, and seeing how engaged most people here, particularly at Resurgam, are with politics, I think I'm beginning to appreciate how integral politics is and how it is not easy to isolate one's personal life from politics. Thinking about my own future, I have begun to consider politics as a career to pursue.

I also owe a lot to everyone at Resurgam to making me feel at home here in Northern Ireland, starting from the Family Fun Day and Cultural Night where all the Duke Students got the chance to enjoy Resurgam's hospitality. In addition to this, every small gesture by everyone at Resurgam went a long way in making me feel comfortable and welcome here at Resurgam. This includes Sharon asking us how our day went each day, Adie taking us around for a drive to see the bonfire and the neighbourhood that he lives in, Deano taking me along to numerous events, Denis taking us for a drive around Lisburn and introducing us to the different areas, and so much more! I had come to Northern Ireland with really high expectations and now, nearing the end of my time here, I can say that I've learned and enjoyed my time here so much more than I had expected. Thank you Resurgam for giving Michael and me the opportunity to be with you this summer.