

Groomsport Village Newsletter



Published by Groomsport Village Association Website: www.groomsport.info Email: info@groomsport.info May 2015



Groomsport is entered into both the 'Ulster in Bloom' and 'Best Kept Large Village' 2015 competitions. Judging will be between April and August.

The Groomsport Village Association (GVA) would like to invite the residents of Groomsport to an informal gathering on Saturday morning 23rd May at 10.30 in The Walter Nelson Hall, Main Street, Groomsport to gain your support and to share ideas on how we can win these competitions.

Each year the judges travel to every town, village and housing area entered into the competition and assess the following areas;

- Cleanliness of the streets including the absence of litter, fly posting, graffiti, vandalism and dog fouling;
- The condition of buildings in the area including any derelict premises;
- Is there advertising present? If yes, where it is situated and how is it maintained?
- Presentation of the natural environment and any open spaces in the area;
- The overall appearance of approach roads and public facilities, such as, public restrooms, litter bins, seating areas and car parks;
- Is there strong evidence of community and business participation, if so, how have local residents and employees demonstrated their civic pride?



Last year judges' comments included: 'many gardens along Main Street looked pretty, being colourful and well kept'; 'the village was neat and tidy throughout' and 'a pleasant village with much to commend it to locals and visitors alike.' A copy of the last year's marking sheets will be on display at Chamber's Spar, Main Street.

GVA would like to thank everyone for their efforts and believes that with the additional resurfacing of the village footpaths, Main Street/Bangor Road, the harbour car park and additional works to Cockle Row paddling pool / picnic areas and with that great natural back drop of Belfast Lough we are well placed to excel ourselves this year.

Good news is that it is not all about 'floral arrangements, planters and hanging baskets but also addressing litter, dog fouling; improving wildlife and the encouragement of the community and business participation.

It was in 1997 when Groomsport won 'Best Kept Large Housing Area'.

Together let's make Groomsport a winner again in 2015! Look forward to seeing you on Sat. 23rd May at 10.30am.



Big Spring Clean Saturday 23rd May

Take part in the **Groomsport Big Spring Clean** on 23rd May, from 11:00am to 12:30pm and help rid our local area of unsightly litter.

We hope villagers will be inspired to get involved in the local clean up. The campaign highlights litter problems and discourages littering.

Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful have provided GVA with a pack containing all the equipment we need, including litter pickers, branded back packs, travel mugs and a hints and tips booklet on how to run a successful clean up.

Your participation will also help with the 'Village in Bloom' competition as residents of all ages can be seen to have an active interest in the upkeep of the village in a voluntary capacity .

To volunteer, please contact the committee Secretary: Miriam Gibson Email: info@groomsport.info

North Down Coastal Path

During February/March 2015, The National Trust carried out significant path improvements at Ballymacormick Point and Orlock. At Orlock, over 0.5 km of path (inc. drainage) was repaired, 35 steps replaced, a small footbridge repaired, and a number of the benches replaced..

At Ballymacormick Point, NT have repaired over 1 km of path (inc. drainage) and replaced a number of benches.



Recent ANDBC maintenance work completed so far includes:

Clearing of encroaching vegetation from the path adjacent to the Parish Church's coastal boundary and installation of wooden steps onto the beach at Cove Bay.

Requests have been made by Groomsport Village Association for the installation of additional bins.

While it is encouraging to see that some of the issues raised by the GVA concerning the Coastal Path between Ballymacormick Point and Orlock have been addressed, there is still significant work to be done. We would hope that this would be completed in the near future so that this very valuable amenity can be accessed and enjoyed by residents and visitors alike.

National Trust have also introduced grazing at McCutcheon's Field for the first time in many years to improve the plant life within the grassland. The dexter cattle are a traditional breed of cattle in Ireland and are great for conservation grazing.

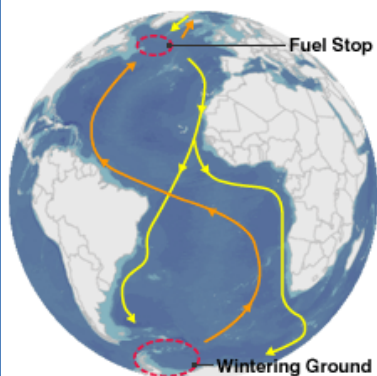
The Cackle Island Seabird Centre reopens in April and visitors to Cackle Row Cottages can appreciate their very own Springwatch. This is a joint project between National Trust (who own Cackle Island), British Trust for Ornithology, and Ards & North Down Borough Council.

Two cameras have been set up on Cackle Island – on a tripod about 1m tall – where they can focus upon the nesting terns and gulls. They are linked via wifi to two flat screen TVs in a viewing room in Cackle Row Cottages, which form the Cackle Island Seabird Centre, just over 300m away. A third camera views the island from the mainland.

Fireworks, Music and Birds

The Groomsport Village Association is pleased to report that the Fireworks and Music are to be back to the harbour in 2015. Not in early July as previous years, but on the 22nd August.

Why the change of date? It is because during July we are privileged to have hundreds of Arctic Terns breeding on



Cockle Island before they fly to Antarctica for the winter.

The birds are strongly migratory seeing two summers each year as they migrate along a convoluted route from their northern breeding grounds to the Antarctic coast.

The Arctic Tern's extraordinary pole-to-pole migration has been detailed by an international



team of scientists who fitted the birds with tracking devices to see precisely which routes the animals took on their 70,000km (43,000 miles) round trip.

Groomsport's Fishing Heritage

Groomsport Harbour had, until the late 1980s a large and busy commercial fishing fleet.

The main species fished for in Belfast Lough were: King Scallops, Lobsters, Whelks, and a variety of fish such as Cod, Turbot, Brill, Skate, and Plaice. The chief fish caught back then was Turbot using tangle nets, which made up to £400 per 50kg box against Skate which made between £15 and £30 per box. On a good day 6 boxes of turbot were caught and skate about 15 boxes.



The boats were named: Cygnus Star, Bramblewick, Dawn Star, Mark, Mercedes, Nereid, Laura, Wee Mac, Concord, Natalie D, Mosdale, Kindly Light, Shamrock, and many more.

Today there is just one boat fishing part time from the harbour, and two full time boats owned by Groomsport fishermen fishing from Bangor Harbour: Marionna, and Spindrift.

Today the main species fished for are: Brown and Velvet crabs, Lobster, and Shrimps which are sold to Groomsport company 'Seafresh' which sends the valuable catch to markets in Spain.

Groomsport Village Association is taking part in The Big Lunch in the village on Sunday 7th June: from 1.30 to 4.00 pm. We are encouraging you to bring a picnic lunch to the picnic table area where we all can enjoy Aldo the Magician at Cockle Row Cottages, as well as our own games, sports events, arts and crafts, animal workshops - something for all the family.

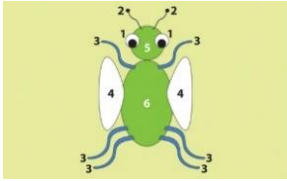
We have an alternative inside venue if the weather is not kind to us.

As this is a community event, please let us know if you can add to our day – facepainting, demonstrations, music, arts/crafts etc etc – we would love you to get involved in any way. We are also hoping we have some crafty residents out there who could make some bunting, arrange floral displays, really anything that could help to make our day more special. Go on – get involved!

Big Lunches are an Eden Project initiative (2009) for people within the UK to sit down together and get to know all the good people who live near them. The message is simple: conversations inspire action, and it feels good to be part of a community.

Please call me, Sharon on 07818036228, if you are willing to be part of the day. See you there!





Games Night.....

to Celebrate EU Day of Solidarity between Generations

We hosted a games night in The Parish Halls (kindly lent) on Wednesday 29th April as part of European Day of Solidarity between Generations.

Around 40 locals participated in card games, beetle drive and bingo.

The youngest resident was 5 years old and we advanced in ages to the more mature 80 years plus. Competition was fierce as spot prizes were available for all winners! We had the opportunity halfway through the evening to have a cuppa and bun and to catch up on village life. Look out for our photo in The Spectator.

This event is an important annual celebration to encourage inclusion within the community in an environment that allows people of all ages to come together. We were funded by Linking Generations N Ireland, based in Newtownards, for this event, in association with The Beth Johnson Foundation. Hopefully, we will celebrate again next year - and you can join us.



Wine Tasting Night at Neill Wines

Over 30 Groomsport residents enjoyed an informative and relaxed wine tasting fund raiser evening in Neill Wines on Saturday 7th February 2015.

We sampled 7 various red and white wines. Robert explained the features and qualities of each one, as well as entertaining us with tales of his personal experiences about the vineyards and growers he has visited. We all feasted on a wonderful cheeseboard platter from Cottage Kitchen Café as village neighbours got to know each other a little better over a glass of wine.

The GVA would like to extend a really big thanks to Robert and his team at Neill Wines for such a fantastic event - we look forward to a return visit.

Dog Control Orders

The Summer is approaching, and from 1st June to 31st August 2015, Dog Control Orders will be in place on both Groomsport and Ballyholme beaches. There are notices along the seafronts at both locations detailing the areas covered and giving information about the Orders.

Dogs in these areas must be kept on leads between the hours of 11am and 8pm during these months. This is to allow families and children of all ages to enjoy the beaches and coastal areas without fear of uncontrolled dogs as well as controlling dog fouling. Ignoring these orders could be costly as the Enforcement Officers are empowered to issue a fixed penalty fine of £75 if they see a dog off its lead between these hours or fouling at any time.



The fine can be as much as £1000 if it goes to court. Now that these Orders are well in place, it seems they will be more strongly enforced this year. See our website www.groomsport.info for more details.

Please be responsible dog owners and observe the Dog Control Orders and help keep the beaches, seafront and pavements of Groomsport clean and free of dog fouling.

Groomsport Pictures and stories please, for future Newsletters. Send them to the editor: Brian: info@groomsport.info