

## Press Release

### Causeway Coast and Glens – Big Dish Out for Cushendall and Harpur's Hill/Cross Glebe, Coleraine

Causeway Coast and Glens is leading the way with a unique participatory budgeting pilot project, the Big Dish Out, giving communities more power over spending in their local neighbourhoods.

Two areas of the Borough are participating in this exciting approach with people in Cushendall in the Glens and Harpur's Hill/Cross Glebe in Coleraine generating project ideas to improve the wellbeing of local citizens. A Voting Night was recently held in each area with local people, from 10 years and up, voting to decide to which projects should get the money with a total of £3000 per area; a pot of money representing donations from all the partners involved in this project.

Over 100 people participated in both Voting Nights with sixteen projects in each area putting themselves forward for democratic selection. These projects ranged from reducing speed limit in an estate, sustaining red squirrel populations, equipment to de-ice rural roads, music & dancing, a Cheer Leaders Club, growing good mental & physical health, growing wellbeing through gardening, encouraging mutual understanding and respect within the gaelic tradition, a youth drop in, reducing isolation for young parents and the over 50s, improving men's wellbeing, story-telling, supporting families with autism learn how to sail, growing good inter-generational relationships & celebrating cultural traditions.

The winning projects will be busy over the summer putting them into action with Celebration Events in October to report back to local people on what they did.

Lynne Ballentine from Cross Glebe Community Association says "We have really enjoyed being part of the big dish out. It created a real buzz in our community with lots of ideas coming forward. I believe that this pilot programme indicates that local people care about how public money is spent and that participatory budgeting can achieve very positive results."

Martin Magee from Ruari Óg GAC says “There was a great turn out at Cushendall’s Voting Night from all ages with great collaboration happening between people and groups on the night sharing ideas and resources. I was lucky enough to be present at both the Harphurs Hill and Cushendall voting evenings and witnessed the buzz, excitement and the ‘feel good’ factor that the event created. I have to say that both of the communities really appreciated the initiative and the hard work and support the Waste No Time team and the Causeway Coast and Glens Council gave for this activity. We would be really interested in exploring how we could grow the idea of participatory budgeting in the Cushendall area and can’t wait for the next initiative.”

Karin Eyben, from the Waste No Time Partnership, overseeing the project, says ‘We were so pleased by the fantastic range of ideas from young and old to improve the wellbeing of local people and the turn out on the Voting Nights. This is a first small step in exploring whether this approach is of value to local citizens and statutory agencies and whether it might be taken up on a larger scale in this Council area. As one bidder commented, ‘we’re not calling this politics, but this is real democracy in action.’



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## NOTES FOR EDITORS

This innovative approach to local community funding originated in Brazil in the 1980s and is known globally as Participatory Budgeting. It focuses on community engagement and supporting those that may normally be excluded from traditional and more bureaucratic means of accessing financial support, whilst enabling local people to decide on issues that matter to them. Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council is the first Council in Northern Ireland to try out Participatory Budgeting in a local neighbourhood setting.

The Waste no Time Team is a partnership project supported by the Building Change Trust and delivered locally by Beyond Skin, Building Communities Resource Centre, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, Charo Lanao-Madden, Compass Advocacy Network, Corrymeela, Jez Hall from Participatory Budgeting Partners, Rural Community Network & Triangle Housing Association - a range of organisations and individuals committing time and resources to test out the value of creative citizen engagement. They have been using different and exciting approaches that generate curiosity and energy to encourage citizen participation and to inform the ambition of Community Planning in Causeway Coast and Glens.

#dontbinyourvoice

Full details of the events and pilot project are available at [www.wastenotime.net](http://www.wastenotime.net) or Facebook Waste No Time. #dontbinyourvoice.

Contact Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Community Planning Team – [communityplanning@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk](mailto:communityplanning@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk) or tel 028 276 60209.

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