Welcome to our 8th Annual General Meeting. The Association met monthly from September 2012 to May 2013 and again in September and October 2013. In general the attendance was good. The quorum was met at all meetings.

I will give a brief account of the main activities of our association over the past twelve months. Thank you to those who have contributed to this report.

**Website, Blog and Facebook:**
The website [www.doohamlet.com](http://www.doohamlet.com) is a general website for the Community of Doohamlet. It links to blogs and Facebook accounts of other groups in the area. www.doohamlet.com has been viewed 2,918 times by 2,468 people since January. This equates to about 290 visits per month. The blog is still used to post current information about the DDCDA’s activities – when linked with Facebook each post attracts about 30-50 views.
We have 347 friends on Facebook, which is used to get news out in the Community and to update people on our projects.

**Community Garden**
The new biodiversity garden has been developed alongside the river at Doohamlet Community Centre and was a great opportunity for people to get involved in a hands on project. The garden has enhanced the area to the side and rear of the Golden jubilee Hall and will no doubt provide a valuable recreational amenity.
The garden project was organised and spearheaded by Dara Mac Gabhainn of Monaghan Community Forum's Hands Together 2 Project. Over 70 people took part over 17 weeks. The project culminated in an official launch celebration, with ceremonial tree planting on the 30th September 2012, recognition of the achievement of the volunteers and a meal generously sponsored by the Finnegan family. Over 200 people attended. Officially named “Gairdin na gClog” (Garden of the Bells) due to it's location in the townland of Dernaglug (Doire na gClog, or Oak woodland of the Bells), the garden project was hugely successful in encouraging people who had not previously engaged in community projects to get involved.
The project was financed by the European Development fund through the Peace III programme and funded through the Monaghan Peace III Partnership, however the DDCDA also contributed €1,100 to the project at the time and continue to fund minor works and materials for ongoing works within the garden.
Since the project was completed, community members have taken part in other Hands Together 2 projects (2 people attended a stone carving workshop, 2 people attended an accredited stone wall repair workshop and approximately 15 people attended a traditional stone wall building workshop in Doohamlet village) and some volunteers have also joined the DDCDA committee and have joined the Doohamlet Hall Committee.
To mark the 1 year anniversary of the start of the project, a maintenance day was organised over the June Bank Holiday weekend. The circular stone wall capping was completed and the shelter was
rendered. In July 2013 a camera crew returned to the garden to record progress over the previous year. Additional planting has been added. A railing has been erected between the bridge and millrace culvert parapets. On the 28th September the final Peace Garden event was a tour of the 3 gardens and a celebratory meal in Doohamlet.

The DDCDA wishes to thank our funders and facilitators, those who contributed materials, tools and machinery, and most importantly our volunteers who have created such a beautiful space at our Community Centre for the whole community to enjoy.

**Local Business Directory**

The Local Business Directory was launched at the 2011 AGM. The aim is to support local business by creating a single website where they can advertise and attract local people to do business with them. A webpage service is offered, where small business with no online presence can have a webpage developed at very low cost.

Currently 5 local businesses have availed of the webpage service and the statistics show that significant volumes of people are viewing these webpages. A secondary aim of the directory is to generate a small but reliable annual income for the DDCDA. The webpage facility costs €20 per annum, with a once off €50 development fee.

In 2012/2013 there was little or no activity on the local business directory. We need to build on the local business directory to ensure its success. Additional businesses need to be encouraged to advertise on it.

**Hall Redevelopment Project**

Since the 2012 AGM, the Community Hall Committee held a very successful AGM and elected a rejuvenated and larger committee. The Hall Committee now has the resources to progress the hall redevelopment and the DDCDA is no longer directly involved, however we will be available to support the Hall Committee. We wish the Hall Committee well with the project.

**Tonyscallon Lake project**

There was no activity on the Lake project over the past year. The next phase of the development is to engage an engineer to prepare a planning application but to date that hasn’t progressed further. This is mainly due to commitments to other projects. The DDCDA are also mindful of undertaking too many projects at any one time. All information gathered to date will remain valid when this project progresses to the next stage.

**The Wall Project**

Following the success of the Garden Project, the Monaghan Peace III Partnership "Hands Together 2" project ran a traditional stone wall building workshop at Doohamlet Community Centre. A traditional stone wall was built along the front of the Community Centre, which joined in to a damaged bridge parapet over a millrace bridge - linking in to the bridge parapet improved safety for pedestrians walking over the bridge and also made more of a feature of the millrace bridge. Volunteers were recruited by advertising locally through the parish newsletter, Doohamlet news in the Northern Standard, on the blog and on facebook. Local people who were felt would have skills and resources that would contribute to the project were targeted directly. Through the Hands Together 2 project, participants from outside the community also attended.
Stone for the wall was sourced locally and was donated to the project by local people. The project involved working at height and health and safety was a key issue. The DDCDA liaised with a local contractor and organised scaffolding to ensure works could proceed safely.

Two stone plaques hand-carved by 2 members of the community and engraved with the name of the Community Garden "Gairdín na gClog" were built into the wall.

The project was originally to take 1 week and commenced in October 2012, however the project took far longer than planned and local volunteers continued to attend to complete the project long after the Hands Together 2 project was completed. Due to weather constraints, the project was not completed over the Winter months, however volunteers came back to see the wall completed in Summer 2013.

The project has resulted in a stunning focal point in the village, built with local stone and creating a feature of the heritage of the area by highlighting the millrace bridge. It also creates an attractive gateway to the Community Garden. The volunteers taking part learned traditional skills which they may be able to use into the future and further developed Community Spirit in the village.

The project was financed by the European Development fund through the Peace III programme and funded through the Monaghan Peace III Partnership.

The DDCDA wishes to thank our funders and facilitators, those who contributed materials, tools and machinery, and most importantly our volunteers who have created such a beautiful space at our Community Centre for the whole community to enjoy.

**Crossing the Border Project**

A detailed report on the activities of the Crossing the Border Project has been provided by our Project Worker Donna McIlroy and will be read out at the end of this report.

**Local Agenda 21**

In 2012 the DDCDA became aware that Monaghan County Council had funding available for environmental awareness projects to be run in the Community under Local Agenda 21. An application for funding was successful, and Monaghan County Council awarded the DDCDA €1,000 to undertake biodiversity training in 2013. The DDCDA's 2013 Local Agenda 21 project aims to raise awareness of biodiversity in our area and the link between biodiversity and water quality.

The project proposes rolled out an ecology workshop with the support of Inland Fisheries Ireland for 4th, 5th and 6th class students in the national school in late June 2013 – thanks to teacher Andrea O Connor and principal Margaret McQuillan for organising this event. A cost of just €90 was incurred for bus transport.

An ecology training day at was then held for older children and adults at Tanagh Outdoor Education Centre on the 5th July 2013. 26 people attended and the day included a walk through the woods and a canoe trip on the Dromore River to explore freshwater ecology. The cost of this day was €996.50.

The total cost of the project was €1,086.50, €86.50 of which was paid by the DDCDA.

**Finance**

Paula Coleman, the Associations’ Treasurer, will give a full account of the finances in her Treasurer’s report.

**Christmas Tree lighting ceremony**

The DDCDA organised the village Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony and Santa's visit on the 9th December 2012. This was the second year the DDCDA fully funded the event, and it would not have been possible without the support of so many people in our community. Thank you who helped by providing the tree, the venue for Santa and refreshments, the electricity, refreshments,
sandwiches, transport for Santa and stewards. As a community we are getting very good at running this event, and the local shop was transformed into Santa’s grotto complete with working fireplace. There was great feedback on this event and it is an excellent Community day organised by the Community and free to the Community. Congratulations to all involved.

Eirgrid
In Spring 2013 Eirgrid launched their Final Project Re-Evaluation Report for the proposed 400kV North-South Interconnector. The DDCDA made a submission to Eirgrid on this report and a rep attended a local information evening in Cremartin. Eirgrid has requested a meeting with the Committee later this November. The DDCDA continues to make any relevant information about meetings and events available to the Community through facebook and the blog.

Community Text Alert
A community information event was held in May 2013 with presentations from Muintir na Tire and An Garda Siochana.
DDCDA subsequently decided to establish a sub group led by Mr PJ Harte with assistance from Ms Paula Coleman and Ms Eileen Ruddin to consider the scope and possibility of establishing a Community Text Alert System.
The sub group met on a number of occasions during the summer and early autumn and are currently researching the various aspects involved including the following requirements:
- Clarifying the scope of the project
- procurement options for a text alert provider
- audit of existing signs and quantifying additional new signage
- enquiring with MCC regarding planning permission
- policy and procedures for governance and use of the system
- funding and insurance
- Data protection.
It is envisaged that by early 2014, the sub group will present a project initiation proposal for consideration at a meeting of DDCDA.

Women’s Group
The “Crossing the Border” Project Worker noticed a need in the area for a women’s group and very kindly agreed to facilitate a new group. In April 2013 the group met for the first time and Donna arranged materials and tools for the first activity - creative needlework. The group ran for 8 weeks before breaking for the Summer. There was good enthusiasm from the group and those involved created fabulous cushions and wall hangings. About 10-15 people attended over the 8 weeks.
An application was made to Monaghan VEC for €530 to run a cookery programme – a grant of €250 was allocated.
The group has not restarted since the Summer break. The Association will discuss how to proceed with this at upcoming monthly meetings.
**TUS Workers**
The DDCDA successfully employed 2 people under the TUS scheme; Donal McNally worked at the Community Hall in a caretaking and maintenance capacity. His valuable work is very evident, and the hall has been very well kept, with the external appearance in particular benefiting as a result of painting and maintenance of the garden. Many thanks to Eamonn Connolly for his involvement in co-ordinating Donal’s work.

Caroline Lambe was employed to provide administrative support to the DDCDA. She has been preparing an update to the 2007 Community Audit, which will be invaluable if the DDCDA or any other local groups apply for larger scale funding.

**Communications:**
Thank you to our PROs Brigid Ann Finnegan and Mary B. O Neill who have submitted notes to the local press and weekly parish bulletins as required. Thanks also to Donna McIlroy who has been promoting the Crossing the Border Project events. Facebook is kept current with text and photos.

**Volunteer of the Year**
In 2012 the DDCDA nominated PJ Harte as Volunteer of the Year in the Monaghan Community Achievement Awards. PJ was nominated not only for his commitment and hard work to the DDCDA, but also for his involvement in many other Community groups, including the Hall Committee, local GAA, his role as Chairperson of the County Monaghan Older Person’s Network and his participation in the Helping Hands scheme. PJ continues to study Community Development in his spare time and has qualifications in this field.

At an awards ceremony in Iontas in November 2012 which included a good attendance from the local community, the DDCDA was proud to learn that PJ was indeed awarded “Volunteer of the Year”. We were delighted that Monaghan Integrated Development recognised PJ’s contribution to Community Life.

In true PJ Harte style, when presented with the award, PJ accepted it on behalf of the community.

**Thanks:**
Thanks to the Executive Committee and to all our committee members who attend monthly meetings and are vital to making sure the work of the DDCDA is undertaken. Your attendance and support is truly appreciated.

Thanks to our workers, Donal McNally, Caroline Lambe and Donna McIlroy, who make the work of our voluntary Association run more smoothly.

I would like to extend a huge thank you to those who got actively involved in the wide range of projects ongoing over the past year, particularly those community members who can always be relied upon to organise and provide background support for all local events. Community Spirit is alive and well in Doohamlet.

To those who suffered bereavements during the year I would like to express sympathy on behalf of our Association. Finally to the new committee I wish you the very best of luck but I have no doubt that with the level of support that exists within the association you will be well supported.

Thank you

*Roisín Moore, 5th November 2013*