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Monthly News

June 2020

Hello again,

Firstly, it is important to say that everyone here at the NI Community Relations Council hopes you are continuing to keep well and staying safe during the coronavirus pandemic.

During these difficult times we will continue to bring you inspiring stories about the groups we invest in and how their work benefits communities throughout Northern Ireland.

It's time to get ready for Good Relations Week 2020! We are developing an exciting new online platform. So maybe you were thinking of running an online event or sharing some material you have developed or produced online? An art exhibition? A video? Stories? We hope you will join in between 14-21 September 2020. More details below.

In this issue, you can read about the Rural Community Network's project to highlight groups and organisations who are helping local rural communities. We also have an article about North Belfast groups showing true leadership to help those most in need. There are also pieces about virtual sports with PeacePlayersNI, a social media campaign from

Londonderry Bands Forum, and a note about our latest Decade of Centenaries Roundtable and how you can join in the next meetings.

Keep safe everyone.

Covid-19 Update

The key priority of the NI Community Relations Council (NICRC) is the health and well-being of those we work with, our staff and their families. We also want to ensure that we continue to deliver our services as far as is possible in these unprecedented times. You will all be aware of the recent change to the government's guidance on Covid-19. Below we have set out the steps we are taking as a result of the new guidance:

- Currently our office is closed. Our staff are working remotely and can be contacted by email or through our current office number: 028 9022 7500.
- All events organised by CRC have moved to online platforms. We will update this position when the government's guidance permits people to gather in numbers again.
- Until the emergency arrangements are relaxed, we have limited ability to collect post from our office. Post will be collected on Wednesdays only. Consider contacting us by phone or email.

To stay up-to-date, keep checking our website and social media channels.

Good Relations Week

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2020



Get ready! Good Relations Week 2020 will take place between 14-21 September 2020.

This year we are embracing digital technology and curating a week of innovative, immersive, live, interactive and collaborative events – all online.

The theme is human connections, and the strapline is: "Celebrating our Past. Embracing our Future."

GRW20 will include a dynamic programme of content and events that showcases people and communities playing an active part in creating and sustaining good relations in Northern Ireland.

The approach will focus on two key strands:

- **Archive Content:** With your help, CRC will collect and curate content including art / photography / video / interviews / talks from over the year. This material can be on your website/social media (send us the links) or hosted on the Good Relations Week website and other appropriate platforms. For example: films on YouTube with new graphic trails. Or photo galleries on Facebook. Talks on Soundcloud etc. All linked to/from the GRW website.
- **New Content:** As always we will have an open call for events. These new events could include live lectures, talks, workshops, musical or dance performances, live and pre-recorded tours of historic properties, and interactive events.

This year we are working with the team at ASG to deliver GRW20. For information on the week and to discuss how you can take part by supplying archive content or generating new material please contact Russell Lever by email.

Email Russell at ASG

Grants & Funding



CR/CD Small Grants Scheme

Our Small Grants Scheme is now open for funding applications.

This funding is intended to help community/voluntary groups throughout Northern Ireland engage in Community Relations work.

[Read more](#)

Upcoming Events

In this section, you will find links to upcoming events focused on Peace Building and Good Relations from various local groups within the community:

- Free Webinar from ARK about the 2019 NI Life and Times Survey
- Faces of Time Comic Book Launch Event

Keep checking our website and social media feeds for more upcoming events.

Monthly News

We support and fund organisations that promote community relations work right across Northern Ireland.

Our funded groups affect positive change in people's everyday lives.

In this section, you'll find out how we connected with our groups at a Shared Learning Forum, as well as articles on virtual sports with PeacePlayers NI, a social media campaign from LBF, and work in local communities from RCN.

Plus many more great stories.

Shared Learning Forum Online Delivery



CRC recently hosted a Zoom seminar with 50 people from our Core funded and North Belfast Strategic Good Relations Programme groups to explore opportunities to connect and share ideas.

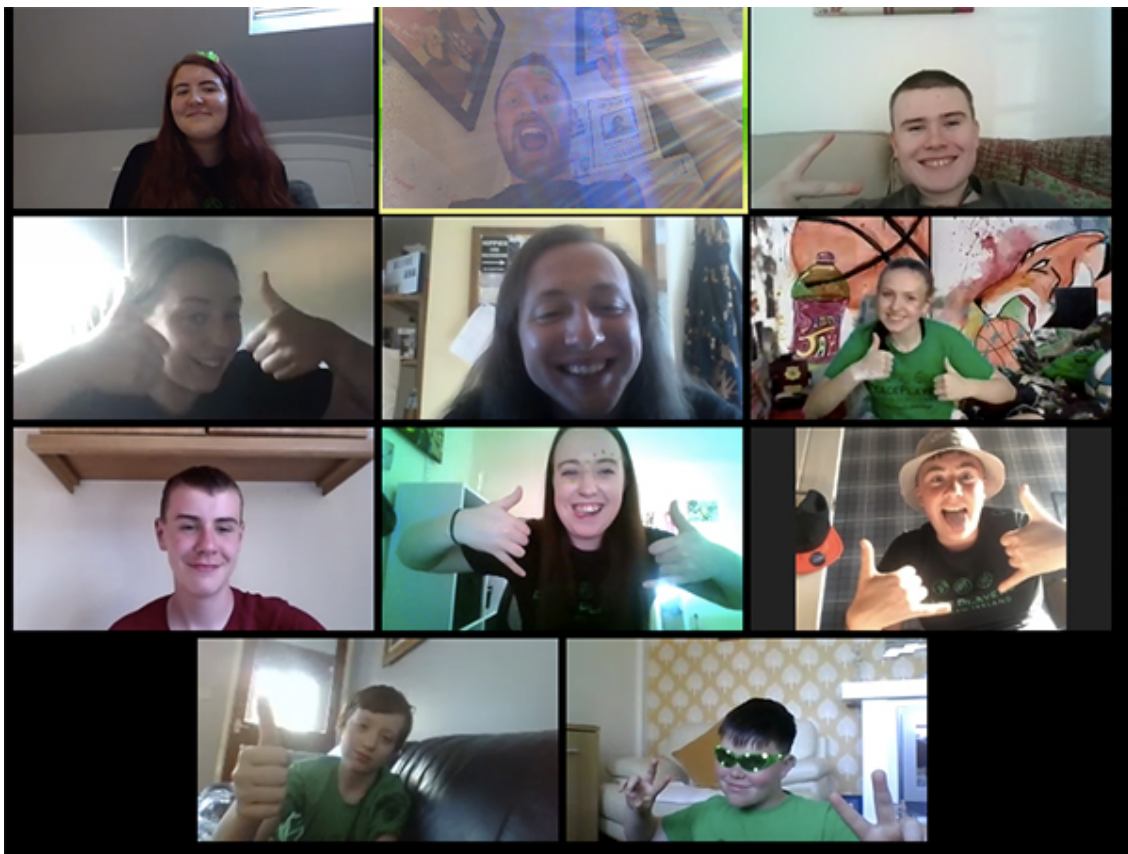
We also looked at new ways of working to address the challenges we

currently face during the Coronavirus pandemic, and how to promote Good Relations work online.

The Shared Learning Forum was an opportunity to hear from some of the groups and how they have managed to bring their Good Relations work online. The examples demonstrated how using online technology can be part of their work, building relationships and communicating with one another.

[Read more](#)

Virtual Tournament PeacePlayers NI



Get in! Young people from different religious backgrounds came together for a virtual tournament, hosted and developed by PeacePlayers NI who are core funded by CRC.

PeacePlayers NI uses basketball as a tool to connect children and young people from divided communities.

When social distancing guidance and self-isolation guidelines came into effect, PeacePlayers adapted their normal delivery method to include online interactions between young people.

Using a virtual setting maintained an importance visual connection between friends from different areas and backgrounds.

For 10 weeks, PeacePlayers has been conducting its virtual Cross-Community Leagues (CCL) to great success – averaging 85 young people per week.

[Read more](#)

In This Together Project Rural Community Network



The Rural Community Network (RCN), who are core funded by CRC, have been delivering a special digital project during the Covid-19 pandemic.

“In This Together Project – Rural Communities, Rural Connections” showcases how relationships have developed during the current pandemic, as well as exploring areas and communities where relations have potentially developed for the better.

This week we explore the extraordinary efforts of Richmount Rural Community Association.

This is a rural group of older people who had to stop all activity due to Covid-19, but have now adapted and truly put the wheels into motion. They have used equipment from past projects to make scrubs for social care settings and hospitals, as well delivering food parcels to the elderly and vulnerable.

[Read more](#)

Foodbank Programme North Belfast Groups



Nine organisations in North Belfast have jointly coordinated their responses to help the community with a Foodbank Programme.

These groups are funded by the North Belfast Strategic Good Relations Programme, which is delivered in partnership by the Executive Office (TEO) and the Northern Ireland Community Relations Council (NICRC).

Volunteers are working across traditional boundaries to meet the daily needs of communities.

The Programme has seen 50 volunteers deliver 10,000 Covid-19 directories, 550 help packs provided to hostels and sheltered accommodation, and even 200 people served daily at a North Belfast soup kitchen, as well as many other notable deeds.

[Read more](#)

#FitToMarch

Londonderry Bands Forum

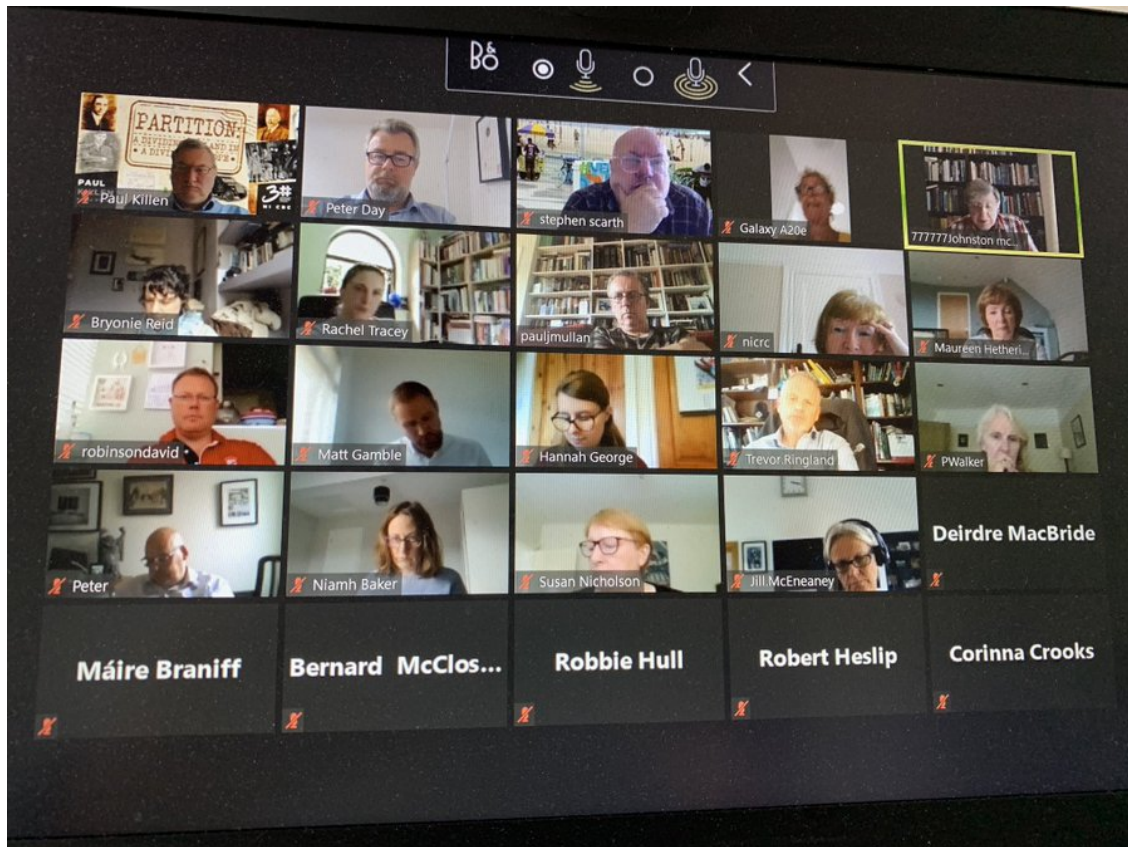


Core funded by CRC, The Londonderry Bands Forum (LBF) have tailored their approach to deliver Good Relations work during the Covid-19 pandemic. They have skilfully shifted to utilising online platforms, such as Zoom, and bringing forward innovative new initiatives using Social Media.

They have developed several projects such as their #FitToMarch campaign on social media. The goal was to encourage band members to sign up for an exercise-at-home programme. Steps submitted each week would be collated and published.

The original goal was to reach a target of 1 million steps collectively. However, uptake was so great that the goal was changed to 50 million. Participants were from 33 bands across Northern Ireland and Scotland.

Decade of Centenaries Roundtable Meeting



Along with our partners in The National Lottery Heritage Fund, we were delighted to host the second Decade of Centenaries Roundtable meeting in 2020 on 4 June continuing our focus on Partition. The Roundtable seminar series is a tangible output of our Conference *"PARTITION: A Divided Ireland in a Divided Europe"* back in November.

As you can see from the picture we were able to bring people together online. We had a record number of participants from a range of sectors. Of course this isn't surprising as the key note speaker, Dr. Johnston McMaster, was with us explaining actions and issues around The Paris Peace Conference (1919-1920).

This event follows on from our first and earlier event this year when Dr Eamon Phoenix presented on the events that lead up to the Partition of Ireland. Next meetings are scheduled for September and

November 2020.

If you would like to attend and want to register your interest, please click on the blue button below.

[Register your interest](#)

Submissions

Have you got an amazing story or case study that would make a great fit for our next monthly newsletter?

Send your submission as a
word document
with a
photograph.

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info@nicrc.org.uk

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