

## Ballygally Community Centre

The once vibrant village of Ballygally on the famed Antrim Coast has been brought back to life in 2011, thanks to the new community centre and shop. This has been achieved thanks to very generous funding from three different sources and a lot of hard work on the part of the residents themselves. These sources were **Village SOS**, a scheme run by the **Big Lottery Fund** and BBC, aimed at inspiring rural revival across the United Kingdom, **Larne Borough Council** and **NER at DARD**.

The community centre and shop have brought the heart back to Ballygally as it had lost its only shop two years previously. The village now has a focal point, of particular benefit to the senior citizens who admitted that they had lost contact with each other. The centre enjoys spectacular views looking out over Ballygally Bay to Scotland and boasts a hall which can accommodate up to 150 people, a boardroom which can hold up to 24 and a fully fitted catering sized kitchen.

Since the centre opened at the end of 2011, it has been extremely busy with activities and clubs ranging from Art to Zumba! A bridge club that had died out in the area has been revived on a weekly basis and draws players from afar. Other activities include Keep Fit for all ages, monthly coffee mornings with speaker, Art classes for children and adults, bowling, yoga and boccia (bowling for those with restricted mobility.)

As well as regular weekly and monthly activities, the centre has also accommodated birthday parties for all ages from 1 to 80, stop offs for refreshments for cycling clubs, community parties to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee and the Olympic Games, meetings for various Government organisations, Gardeners' Question Time, cross community church groups and seasonal activities at Halloween and St Patrick's Day.

Since Ballygally Community Centre opened, the village has definitely come back to life and the community spirit is very much in evidence! We are all very grateful to our benefactors for making the dream of a community centre possible and ensuring that the heart of the village beats strongly again!

**The high footfall figures indicate the popularity and interest shown in all the events organised by Ballygally Community Development Association (BCDA). Here are some facts and figures to illustrate this. The following clubs are run on a weekly basis with average attendance figures in brackets: Adult Art (15), Children's Art (8), Watercolour classes (10), Bridge (22), Light exercise aimed at 70 and 80 year olds (11), Exercise aimed at 50 and 60 year olds (7), Bowls (18), Boccia which is a form of Bowls for those with mobility problems (12), daytime Yoga due to commence September 2013, evening Yoga (8) and twice weekly church meetings (up to 100).**

**There has also been training in Food Hygiene (12), First Aid (2 x12), Good Governance (12), Basic Computer Skills (3 x 12) and Floral Arrangements (18).**

**Other events include 12 week sports activities for primary school pupils (12), monthly themed coffee mornings (between 40 and 60), Halloween Children's party (60), St Patrick's Day event (100), Gardeners' Question Time (2 x 30), winter lunch with NACN speaker (80), afternoon tea in June 2012 to mark the**

**Queen's golden jubilee (120) and tea party for senior citizens to view passing of Olympic torch (20). We have also accommodated birthday parties (up to 40), christening parties (60), family get togethers (30), school reunions (50), Art exhibitions (50), Inner Wheel (120), Womens' Institute (50), Carnlough Community Association (12), catering for cycling clubs from Ben Madigan (150), Kings' Moss (200) and East Antrim (150), meetings organised by NACN (50) and various governmental bodies (numbers ranging from 20 to 60).**

**Hopefully this will convey a flavour of the demand and popularity of the excellent meeting and catering facilities offered by Ballygally Hall, thanks to our generous funders.**