



KNOCKNAGIN COMMUNITY HALL

DESERTMARTIN

Co. Derry/Londonderry

PROJECT AT A GLANCE:

Theme	Social
Type	Hall refurbishment; Maximizing community assets; Enhanced service provision
Location	Mid Ulster District
Population	Small rural village, population of less than 1,000 (2011 census)

Established in 2019, Rural Action is a not-for-profit social purpose company borne out of a desire to make a positive contribution to the everyday lives of rural communities.

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Project Summary

Knocknagin Hall Committee is a community organisation which operates from Knocknagin Hall just outside the village of Desertmartin in Co. Derry/Londonderry.

The Committee identified a lack of basic Rural Services in their local area and saw funding from the Northern Ireland Rural

Development Programme as an opportunity to address this.

Funding was sought from the programme to improve their local parochial hall and this now acts as a local learning and community hub for the Desertmartin and surrounding area.



Background

Knocknagin Hall has been at the centre of the Desertmartin community for the last 65 years, hosting parish events, a youth club, sports clubs and stimulating the development of other groups in the area such as the Credit Union.

However, having been built in the 1950s the Hall Committee

realised that the facility was beginning to struggle to meet the needs of current day users. As such a project was embarked upon to restructure the internal layout and to improve accessibility that would create a multi-purpose venue fit for modern day usage.



The local community raised £38,000 towards renovation costs

Activities and Work Undertaken

Knocknagin Hall Committee was awarded £111,587 grant assistance with an additional £38,000 raised by the local community and this allowed them to carry out a major renovations programme to their hall in 2017.

The works programme allowed for the provision of additional meeting rooms on both the ground floor and first floor, disabled toilets, lift access and a new roof structure for their building.

Benefits

During the development of the project, the group carried out an extensive consultation exercise to identify gaps in services within the local community and used the feedback they received to plan a wide range of service delivery activities.

Improvements to the internal layout have facilitated the delivery of these service activities focusing on community outreach, mental health and well-being and community training.

Lessons

When asked, Gerard Walls, Director of Knocknagin Community Hall Committee confirmed that maximising the use of existing facilities in rural areas, like theirs, was really important for rural communities.

The programme that supported their renovation works required them to look very closely at where the gaps in service provision lay. This also gave them a focus not only for identifying new

services to meet current needs but also to identify what physical works they required and to consider options that would future proof their building for the years ahead.

With the works now complete, Gerard added that they were delighted with the improvements made to their hall, as were the various local groups who use it. Working up the application and seeing the project through to completion was a lot of hard

The need to maximise the use of existing facilities in rural areas is really important

work but they received lots of help and guidance along the way from staff in council and other organisations for which they were extremely grateful.

For More Information



Gerard or Olive Walls



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Desertmartin Parochial Hall

