Kesh Development Association Charitable Trust Chair’s Annual Report

I am delighted to present this year’s Annual Report and to reflect upon my time in the Chair.

We live in challenging times. Increased bureaucracy and centralization often mean that organisations such as ours have to punch above its weight to survive. Last year we celebrated 50 years in existence making Kesh Development one of the oldest community associations on the island of Ireland North and South. In those fifty years much has been achieved to make Kesh and District a vibrant and enterprising village with good facilities and strong community relations. Of that I think we can be very proud.

The Community Centre remains just that. It’s a vital resource for everyone in our community. But times change and with that so do needs. Health and Safety legislation, disability access and differing user base means that it’s time for our community centre to undergo some transformation if it’s to be ‘fit for purpose’ in future. 30 years of underinvestment has meant that this facility is way behind other community facilities owned by Council particularly in Omagh. We have been promised a radical upgrade including provision of a new training room in place of the stage and some remodelling to include a lift. We have seen some improvement at how this was designed. Some consultation at design stage would surely have stopped the ugly buttressing that is causing concern with hall users. We look forward to working in cooperation between our users and Fermanagh Omagh Council as we plan the way ahead.

Without doubt one of the most exciting things to happen in the last twelve months has been the development of the new North Fermanagh Valley Park. We were delighted to join with Ederney Community Development Trust and the then Fermanagh District Council to be awarded £1million to develop facilities at the old Duke of Westminster School and in Ederney GAA grounds. This project has captured the imagination of the wider public and has been cited in the new community plan as a model of good practice. We too are excited to see the old school site redeveloped but more importantly we want to see the wider community involved in the process. We have had exceptional support to date and I am delighted to see Keys and Monaghan have been awarded the design contract. I take this opportunity to formally thank Fermanagh Omagh Council for their generous support. It’s fair to say that while the grant has been awarded the work is only beginning and we hope to be completed by spring 2018.
Also I want to thank Kesh Carnival Committee for their generous funding of Christmas Lights. This is a contentious subject and one that needs partnership working at every level. As of today 24 October we do not know what if any grant we are getting. We need to set up a partnership for the Christmas lights to include traders and community so we can develop a longer term plan that will benefit everyone. The Carnival remains an important part of the village’s summer programme and Robert Anderson and his team deserve much praise for making it the success it is.

Finally I want to thank Catherine and Neville for their hard work through the year. There is a lot of form filling, monitoring and organising that goes on behind the scenes that no one sees or knows about. We have strict guidelines to follow in terms of our charitable status and we take these responsibilities very seriously.

I wish Kesh Development Association continued success for the year ahead and although I am giving up my role as Chair I wish to put on record how much I have enjoyed my time in this position.