

BOLSTER COMMUNITY

Newsletter



Building Futures Project With Women's TEC

Building Futures: WOMEN'STEC, Bolster Community and Women In Business NI, have partnered to support women to secure employment opportunities in the Newry, Mourne, Down and Belfast regions. The Building Futures programme, funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, supports economically inactive women to gain skills, develop confidence and explore opportunities in their area, for life and work. This programme offers a wide range of courses in DIY and construction skills, numeracy and digital literacy, entrepreneurship and personal development, as well as mentoring and access to training vouchers. It will target 420 participants over its 2-year period and will engage and support economically inactive women, particularly within priority groups, including over 50's and those living in rural communities. WOMEN'STEC will provide a community engagement programme of training in DIY/Construction skills, resources and support for local women in the Newry, Mourne and Down area and Greater Belfast Area. Bolster Community will deliver a range of wellbeing, personal development, numeracy and literacy support programmes, and Women in Business NI will provide 'Entrepreneurship Discovery Days' and 'Business Basics' courses to support Building Futures: WOMEN'STEC, Bolster Community



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in Newry on Thursday 8th of June 2023, bringing together the three partners, employers from local organisations, employers from the construction industry and local community groups to learn about the programme and engage in a process of information gathering on skill and employment gaps in the local areas and the specific needs of local women. Councillor Valerie Harte, Chairperson of the NMD District Council closed the ceremony with a wonderful speech and later said, "I had the pleasure of attending the launch of Bolster Community's new programme, 'Building Futures', in partnership with WOMENSTEC and Women in Business alongside my friend and colleague, Liz Kimmins MLA. This new and exciting programme is designed to support and empower women in securing employment opportunities, which was evidenced by the diverse group of employers and businesses from various sectors in attendance. Best wishes to the Bolster Community, WOMEN'STEC, and Women in Business teams, as well as everyone involved in this worthwhile programme." Lynn Carvill, CEO of WOMEN'STEC said, "We are absolutely delighted to be launching

CEO of WOMEN'STEC said, "We are absolutely delighted to be launching the Building Futures programme in partnership with Bolster Community and Women in Business in the Newry, Mourne and Down and Belfast areas. We know from previous pilot programmes that women really want to build their skills and just how empowering DIY & trades skills can be for women. We are so looking forward to rolling this programme out across local towns and rural areas over the next two years." Jacinta Linden, CEO of Bolster Community, said, "Launching the Building Futures initiative in Newry was an absolute pleasure, feedback from employers, community reps, stakeholders and colleagues, confirmed that we are bringing an innovative and exciting project to women throughout Newry, Mourne and Down and Belfast and we are excited and enthused to bring it forward. The synergy with and between WOMEN'STEC, Women in Business and Bolster is potentially transformational and we look forward to better supporting women within our locality." Lorraine Acheson, Managing Director of Women in Business NI said, "Women in Business is delighted to be partnering with WOMEN'STEC and the Bolster Community to deliver the Building Futures Programme. Our mission as part of the WIB Group is to help create an inclusive economy, and this programme will do this by supporting women in their journeys back into the workforce and into entrepreneurship. NI currently has the highest rate of economically inactive women compared to the rest of the UK and this programme couldn't be more important. Contact us on 028 3083 5764 or info@bolstercommunity.org to find out more about the project.

Bolster Community **receives Bank of Ireland** **funding to support seniors** **with cost of living**

Bank of Ireland UK has announced the names of ten local groups that will benefit from its 'Cost of Living' Fund. Bolster Community has the honour of being one of the recipients! Thanks to this funding, administered by the Community Foundation for NI, later this year Bolster Community will commence their 'Seniors Well and Thriving Programme' across Newry, Mourne & Down. This project will provide weekly drop-in sessions for older people to access support, information and refreshments, providing a warm, safe space to talk. Support to help with increased costs of living will also be available. Jacinta Linden, CEO of Bolster Community commented; "Sincere thanks to Bank of Ireland funding which has made the Seniors Well and Thriving Programme across Newry, Mourne & Down possible. We are deeply concerned about how the rising cost of living is affecting older people and those on low and modest incomes. Many older people rely on State Pension as their main source of income and do not have the flexibility in their finances to cope with the price rises of everyday items. Many older people are feeling totally overwhelmed. We want to provide a safe, warm space where older people can get support and reassurance." George Higginson, Director of Northern Ireland, Mortgages & Partnerships, Bank of Ireland UK, commented: "The rising cost of living remains a significant challenge for many people today. This donation aims to help those most at risk. We are grateful to the Community Foundation Northern Ireland for their support in ensuring that it reaches communities across Northern Ireland that are most in need." Róisín Wood, CEO, The Community Foundation Northern Ireland said: "The ten groups that have been funded are working to address a wide range of pressing issues that have arisen as a result of the cost of living crisis. This funding will make a real difference to those that these groups work with, boosting the community and voluntary sector's ability to provide critical support throughout society at this time."



If you would like to find out more information about the new social groups or any of our services for seniors please feel free to contact Joanne or Paula on 028 30083 5764 or email us to admin@bolstercommunity.org.

Local Family Raise £1,810 **to Support Bolster** **Community**

The Devlin Brother's Memorial Cup Knockout darts competition was recently held at Clady Social Club in aid of Bolster Community. A huge success with over 100 attendees raising £1,810 for our local charity. Bolster Community sends a heartfelt thank you to Edel and Sean Devlin, and their children Rosie and Eddie for their kind donation to their chosen organisation. We are so proud that we were your chosen organisation.

We at Bolster Community are a charity and social enterprise based in Newry and Kilkeel who provide practical support to families, individuals and the community who are facing everyday challenges. We also provide opportunities for individuals with autism and learning disabilities.

Edel told us, "We were keen that the proceeds would go to Bolster Community when we were planning the event as we have received amazing support over the past year for Rosie and Eddie. Bolster Community has helped us as parents and offers Eddie and Rosie new chances to interact with other autistic children. We had a fantastic turnout, with friends, family, and neighbours coming together for a worthy cause. I want to express my gratitude to everyone who participated in the planning and supported us with a successful event!" Disability Services Coordinator at Bolster, Jena Henning, commented, "We are truly humbled by the kindness of Edel and Sean. This gift will enable us to reach out to more children like Eddie and Rosie, whose families are affected by autism. It is amazing that Edel and Sean, a young family dealing with extraordinary difficulties, have invested the time and effort to plan this event. Thanks to donations like this, Bolster Community was able to support over 8,000 people last year - thank you!"

Since 2004, we've had the privilege of helping countless individuals reach their full potential. From early years right through to later years, we support and strengthen people facing life's tough challenges. This £1,810 donation will help us to provide more support services for people in the local area.



Newsletter funded by:



**Southern Health
and Social Care Trust**



Remember to phone first!

Before going to Craigavon / Daisy Hill Hospital Emergency Departments, or South Tyrone Hospital Minor Injuries Unit.

0300 123 3 111

Monday to Friday 9am - 9pm
(excludes bank holidays)

Get directed to the right care | Avoid busy waiting rooms | Stay safe | Save time

FOR EMERGENCIES THAT ARE LIFE THREATENING CALL 999





Bolster Community Empower Autistic Voices



We recently celebrated the success of our 'Empowering Autistic Voices' conference. Providing autistic individuals, a platform to have their voice heard and increase acceptance of autism. Nearly 200 attendees joined in the Canal Court Hotel for an informative, inspirational and uplifting autism conference. The conference promoted not just acceptance for the autistic community, but also highlighted the challenges they face. It was also our opportunity to launch our Autism Connect Pilot Report. Vital research highlighting the gaps in autism services for autistic adults and what may be needed in the future. This conference was co-designed with Bolster Community's very own Autism Connect group. Our Autism Connect group worked together to identify the issues they wanted attendees to learn about and the speakers they felt would best represent them. Other organisations, from

charities to businesses to fellow social enterprises attended to highlight a range of services available. An impressive speaker line-up included Finbar Hogan from Ireland's national autism charity, ASIAM, Tina Calder and Adam McBride from Excalibur Press and Emer Maguire, radio presenter and comedian. All provided their own valuable insight into understanding autism, breaking into employment, and overcoming social barriers specific to the autistic community. Each speaker shared some of their personal experiences of autism and how they cope with everyday challenges. Rebecca McKinney, Cool FM presenter hosted the event.

Jacinta Linden, CEO at Bolster Community Commented: "We are delighted with the turnout, showing a real demand for learning more about autism and the service available. We are happy to hear many of the speakers focused on their strengths and differences and started the conversation about overcoming obstacles to topics such as employment and living independently!"

"Thank you to local businesses Best Property Services, S&W Wholesale, Tony Clarke & Company, B4B Group and Canal Court Hotel, all who provided sponsorship for the conference."

Speaking at the event Dr Ivor Crothers, Clinical Director of Psychology Services within SHSCT, commented, "Today is an opportunity to let your voices be heard and let us listen with compassion and interest in what you have to say!"

He added that the pivotal support provided by programme's like Autism Connect are welcomed, however there is still so much more to be learned and done in regards to the diagnosis journey.

To read more about the project and what has been happening in Autism Connect go to:

<https://bolstercommunity.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/autism-connect-report-apr-23-online.pdf>

If you would like to find out more about Bolster Community's services or get involved with Autism connect, get in touch on 028 3083 5764 or visit us bolstercommunity.org



Volunteer Appreciation

Bolster Community would like to take this opportunity to thank our volunteers for everything you do. You are the bread and butter of our organisation. From our prized candle-makers to our Home2Hospital volunteer drivers, we value each and every one of you.

Our latest volunteer recruit is within our Star Bites 57 café. Located on Marcus Street, Newry, it's a place where signposting, advice and guidance are all provided - alongside a cuppa and lots of laughter!

Shuin is a welcome addition to our STAR BITES team. A local Newry woman whose bubbly, fun personality never fails to evoke laughter, she rolls her sleeves up and is eager to help with every task. The staff and service users alike enjoy her company. A ray of sunshine, she always makes the room feel brighter. Thank you for all of your hard work Shuin and a sincere, hearty welcome to the team.

If you or anyone you know is interested in finding out more about STAR BITES 57 please check out our socials or contact Joanne on 02830835764 or joannec@bolstercommunity.org



The years are going by faster than ever and our team has stepped up once again to achieve huge outputs in programme and service delivery, creating significant impact and keeping our values and integrity at the fore. It gives us great pleasure to introduce to all of our followers the Bolster Community Annual Impact Report 2022/23. Check out THIS YEAR IN NUMBERS and the full report online at: <https://bolstercommunity.org/.../bolster-community-impact-or-connect-on-our-socials-for-in-real-time-updates!> We have more exciting things in the works so stay tuned.



What's happening this Summer?

BOLSTER COMMUNITY

AFTER THE BELL

For families with children of mixed ability

Providing supported summer day trips for parents and children to enable them to enjoy the outdoors and for children with a disability to participate in fun outdoor activities with their siblings.

Date: 18/07/2023,
03/08/2023 & 15/08/2023

Time: Various depending on location

Location: Various

STAR BITES 57

For tenants of the NIHE

Join us for a bite, cuppa and a chat. Catch up on the craic, browse the paper. Our team will be there to help with any form-filling, appointment booking or signposting to local services that you may need.

Every Monday and Thursday

Time: 10am - 1pm

Location: Marcus St, Newry

TOTS & TEA

For parents or carers of pre-school age children with additional needs

Tots and Tea is a group of friendly mums and children who are all on the first steps of their journey through disability.

Time: 10.00am

Location: Newry & Markethill

Find out more:
bolstercommunity.org

INTERESTED IN REGISTERING FOR AN UPCOMING PROGRAMME?

Contact: Justina MacDonald on
028 3083 5764 or
trainingsupport@bolstercommunity.org



A GUIDE TO HELP YOU ON YOUR JOURNEY THROUGH DISABILITY/ADDITIONAL NEEDS

For Parents by Parents

We were delighted to attend the launch of CYPSP's new resource 'Learning through disability'. A fantastic resource co-designed by parents for parents, its development has been parent-led from the onset and addresses the whole life journey for parents of children with disability and additional needs. Bolster Community is proud to have contributed to this fantastic resource along with our fantastic parents.



SCAN ME



ACORN

SCENTS OF ACHIEVEMENT

Empowering Minds: Bolster Community and Storybox NI Unite to Support Mental Health Charities

The latest venture between our social enterprise, Acorn Shop and Storybox NI introduces a 'Candle with Cause' called Lough Neagh Dawn, handcrafted in Newry by young adults with additional needs. It features a fresh blend of white musk and amber, accented with floral notes of lavender, jasmine, and amber. However, this candle represents more than just a product. Bolster Community empowers their candle makers, fostering a sense of connection, value, and purpose within a supportive group environment. A portion of each candle sale will be donated to PIPS and Crisis Café, two vital mental health charities based here in N. Ireland (Acorn/Bolster Community donating to Crisis Café in Newry and Storybox donating to PIPS Suicide Prevention Ireland in Belfast).

Storybox, an online business situated in East Belfast's renowned Portview Trade Centre, passionately champions local businesses and social enterprises. Through thoughtfully curated boxes filled with sustainable, high-quality products, they connect customers with over 25 partnering businesses, making a substantial impact on communities.

Expressing her excitement, Jacinta Linden, CEO at Bolster Community, stated, "We are honoured to collaborate with Storybox NI to create a unique product that gives back twofold! Our candle-making adults with mixed abilities are involved in its creation, and a portion of the sales will be donated to Crisis Café, a Newry-based mental health charity. Mental health is a pressing issue for society, and our staff, while working with local families and individuals, we have witnessed an increasing number of cases."

In addition to raising funds, the creation of this candle aims to encourage open conversations about mental health and well-being, working to eliminate stigma.

To showcase the candle's essence, local artist Amira McDonagh was commissioned to handpaint the tin with a breath-taking design. Spanning the landscapes of Northern Ireland, the artwork features prominent landmarks like Culcagh, the Mourne Mountains, the Black Arch, and the iconic Lough Neagh. The inclusion of a sunrise symbolises hope for a new day and, with this candle initiative, spreads light and hope, bit by bit, to those who need it most.

To learn more about this exciting initiative and receive notification of when the candle becomes available for purchase, sign up to our newsletter [here](#). For any further enquiries, please reach out to Joanne at acorn@bolstercommunity.org.



Newry City Runners Marathon



Pictured is Eva Kitchen, Newry City Runners, Allison Slater and our newest candle-maker Naomi.

A huge thanks to all at Newry City Runners. We were delighted to be chosen as a beneficiary at their recent half marathon and 10k. Newry City runners welcomed a team of Bolster Buddies to support them and help fill over 1,500 goodie bags for the event.

To show appreciation and support some of the team at Bolster Community manned the water stand at Narrow Water Castle to help replenish all of the runners to ensure they made it to the finish line.

It was a truly wonderful day that our Bolster Buddies thoroughly enjoyed. Thank you again for choosing Bolster Community. You are apart of getting people "through and ahead."



Chairperson Eamonn Connolly pictured with Jenna Henning and Bolster Buddies Naomi and Michaela.

ACORN

SCENTS OF ACHIEVEMENT

Discover Acorn's Enhanced Online Presence: Unveiling Our New Website

We are thrilled to announce the exciting launch of Acorn's brand new website! As a small candle business operating as a social enterprise in Newry, Northern Ireland, Acorn has always been dedicated to making a positive impact in our community. With the aim of providing employment opportunities and support for young adults with learning disabilities and autism, Acorn has crafted beautiful candles while raising funds for the parent charity, Bolster Community. Now, with our revamped online presence, we are ready to take our mission to new heights and connect with candle enthusiasts and supporters worldwide.

Meaningful Candles

The heart and soul of Acorn's new website lies in its ability to convey the passion and purpose behind every candle we create. Through a thoughtful and user-friendly platform, visitors can explore our wide range of handmade candles, each crafted by the gifted community of young adults with additional needs. The website showcases the dedication and talent of our candle makers, highlighting their journey towards reaching their full potential.

An Array of Fragrances

Acorn's website invites visitors to explore our diverse range of fragrances, carefully designed to create a cosy atmosphere. Whether you prefer a soothing and calming scent or an exotic aroma that transports you to far-off lands, our Acorn candles offer an array of captivating options. With each fragrance, you are not only embracing a delightful sensory experience but also supporting a community striving for achievement and empowerment.

Corporate Gifting with a Purpose

Are you searching for meaningful corporate gifts that make a difference? Look no further than Acorn's range of purposeful gift hampers and sets. By choosing Acorn as your partner in corporate gifting, you not only show appreciation to your colleagues or clients but also contribute to a greater cause.

Connect and Support

Acorn's new website aims to foster a sense of connection and engagement with our valued customers and supporters. We invite you to subscribe to our newsletter and join our online community, where you'll be the first to know about new collections, exclusive offers, and inspiring stories. By supporting Acorn, you are not only enriching your own life with beautiful candles but also making a positive impact on the lives of our candle makers and the wider community supported by Bolster Community.

The launch of Acorn's brand new website marks an exciting milestone in our journey to create a more inclusive and compassionate world. With a user-friendly website, captivating stories, and a wide range of purposeful products, our website aims to ignite an online experience that connects, inspires, and empowers. We invite you to explore our new online home, support our mission, and be part of the Acorn community as we continue to brighten lives, one candle at a time.

