

Discover Groomsport

www.discovergroomsport.com

Strategic Plan

2023-2024



*Photo of Cockle Row cottages courtesy of Perry Moore, Groomsport's Generations
@<https://www.facebook.com/groups/303870739750690/>*

Discover Groomsport: History and Background

Discover Groomsport is a community organisation in the village of Groomsport, County Down, formed in October 2022. The Group achieved charitable status in January 2023.

Purposes

Its purposes are:

- (1) To celebrate and promote the advancement of the rich history and heritage of the village of Groomsport by organising exhibitions, lectures, guided tours, publications, other educational activities and events by associating with statutory authorities, voluntary and community organisations and the private sector.
- (2) To help preserve Cockle Row Cottages and some of the other important heritage buildings in Groomsport and to contribute to making the village an attractive and safe place for residents and visitors.
- (3) To work to ensure that future plans and developments for Groomsport are consistent with its heritage and uniqueness, encouraging residents to take an active interest in proposals for the future of the village and by helping them understand the roles and responsibilities of statutory and other agencies in respect of the village.
- (4) To strengthen the local community of Groomsport by increasing community participation and to promote social inclusion by encouraging and promoting open and accessible community activities.

All stated purposes lead to the current-day connection, enjoyment and participation of the village community and the long-term sustainability of the Groomsport community and its heritage. Groomsport has rich and varied historical roots including the Vikings, the Eagle Wing, Schomberg, Ulster-Scots traditions; our name Groomsport is from the Irish language Port an Ghiolla Ghruama, the port of the gloomy servant. The charity is inclusive and non-political and embraces all cultures and traditions that have shaped, and will continue to shape, our community for future generations.

People who live or work in the village of Groomsport, or have its best interests at heart, and are aged 18 or over, can apply to the trustees to become a member. Once accepted by the trustees, membership lasts for 3 years and may be renewed. Membership is free.

Governance

The charity is managed by a committee of trustees who are appointed at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the charity.

There are currently 11 elected trustees:

Elaine Nixon (Chair)

Peter Gibson (Secretary)

David Martin (Treasurer)

Ruth Fee (Vice Chair)

Liz Barron

Etta Halliday

David Irwin

Maureen Irwin

Geoff McKeown

Roy McWhinney

Audrey Thomas

Trustees are elected by the membership at the AGM each year where the trustees must present the annual report and accounts. Any member may stand for election as a trustee, and members must elect between 3 and 10 trustees to serve for the next year. During the year, the trustees may appoint up to 2 additional trustees. All trustees must retire at the next AGM but may stand for re-election. Discover Groomsport currently has 11 trustees in place.

The charity recognises the importance of good governance and trustees bring a diverse range of governance, strategic, administration, financial management, communications, education and event management skills to the charity. The charity encourages trustees and members to undertake training where relevant.

The charity adheres to best practice in the management of its accounts, requiring two out of three authorised signatories for the authorisation of payments. The annual accounts are independently examined.

The trustees are aware of their duty of care to members, beneficiaries and visitors and regularly review the group's policies and practices relating to health and safety, risk and equality. The trustees will seek professional advice when required.

Trustee meetings are held at least four times a year. Minutes are taken, approved and filed.

Themes and Objectives

In this first strategic plan, Discover Groomsport has two main underpinning strategic themes:

1. We will take a community focused approach to celebrating, protecting and advancing Groomsport.
2. We will consider sustainability (environmental, economic, and social) in all that we do.

In order to plan our strategy, a planning day was held on 14th January 2023, attended by all trustees. To focus limited resources to the areas of greatest impact, an analysis was carried out of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) facing the work of Discover Groomsport within the community. This SWOT analysis is set out in appendix 1.

There are three main objectives that Discover Groomsport will aim to achieve during the period 2023-2024 in order to establish and embed the charity within the community:

1. Conduct community consultations and a participatory planning session with key stakeholders, along with regular updates through a range of media, to ensure we are listening to our members and community and responding to their needs in line with our stated purposes.
2. Build the capacity of our members, volunteers and trustees to best support our work and build momentum around the purposes of Discover Groomsport.
3. Plan, review and refine all events and programmes to ensure they are effective, efficient, achievable within resources, and create long-lasting impact on the lives of the Groomsport community.

The summary table below sets out the key actions that will help achieve objectives 1 and 2, alongside timescales, key performance indicators (KPIs) and leads for each of the activities.

Objective	How we are going to achieve this	When will we achieve this	Strategic Theme/Objective Monitoring and Review KPIs
1 – Build Capacity	Active outreach (in person, range of media) to existing stakeholders (including ANDBC) to build the profile of DG and build capacity Offer a range of	End year one Jan 24	Theme 1, 2 Objectives 1, 2, 3 Monitor at each trustee meeting and end of year report Review period for actions end June 23

	<p>activities to help build capacity in volunteers and trustees</p> <p>Active engagement of local business in developing joint initiatives and events</p> <p>Outreach to youth based and other organisations to build diversity of profile of members.</p> <p>Offer range of family-based events to encourage whole family participation and volunteering</p>		<p>KPI: engagement in events</p> <p>KPI: numbers of new and diverse members</p> <p>KPI: develop succession plan for trustees</p>
<p>2 - Consult</p>	<p>Finalise draft strategic plan for presentation to members</p> <p>Hold a community-based session to promote events and encourage volunteers</p> <p>Hold 1:1 meetings with local business to promote the purpose of Discover Groomsport</p> <p>Ensure outcomes of discussions are disseminated through a range of media outlets</p>	<p>3rd Feb for finalising strategic plan</p> <p>Community session to be held 22nd Feb</p> <p>1:1 meetings to be held before end March 23</p>	<p>Theme 1, 2</p> <p>Objectives 1, 2, 3</p> <p>Monitor at each trustee meeting and end of year report</p> <p>Review period for additional actions June 23 and 6-monthly</p> <p>KPI: number of members and volunteers actively engaged in meetings</p> <p>KPI: completion of meetings with local business with number of key planned partnerships</p>

The table overleaf sets out prioritised activities and events to be held during the year. These are the minimum activities to be achieved during 2023 and the list does not preclude additional activities taking place later in the year that will depend on funding and capacity to deliver.

We do not plan to hold an Eagle Wing festival during 2023 as this will take a longer lead in period and require significant grant funding. Moreover, we need to build capacity to deliver smaller scale events with trustees and volunteers during the first year of operation of the charity.

Table of Planned Activities 2023

Planned Activity Objective 3	How we are going to achieve this	When we are going to achieve this	Lead Person	Monitoring, Review and KPIs	Strategic Theme/Objectives
Ensure that the views of Groomspport residents are considered in the Review of the Groomspport Integrated Village Plan 2018-2023.	<p>Canvas views of residents</p> <p>Encourage them to attend Drop-in session on 2nd March</p> <p>Provide feedback via email etc of emerging Council proposals.</p> <p>Convene special meeting, if necessary.</p>	<p>Timing of the review will be decided by Council.</p> <p>Discover Groomspport will ensure that submissions and representations are made in line with Council's timings.</p>	All Trustees. Responses will be prepared by secretary (Peter Gibson).	<p>Meetings of Trustees will ensure that responses are submitted in line with Council timings.</p>	Theme 1, 2 Objectives 1, 2, 3
Coronation Big Picnic Lunch at Cockle Row – Saturday 6th May	<p>Hold event based in Groomspport on Coronation Day. Outdoor event/indoor alternative.</p> <p>Family events and games.</p> <p>Application for events and festivals fund</p>	06.05.23	Roy McWhinney & sub-group	<p>Monitor progress fortnightly</p> <p>Review grant timescales weekly</p> <p>Monitor availability of alternative space</p> <p>KPI: Number of attendees</p> <p>KPI: number of volunteers</p> <p>KPI: positive feedback from comments or survey</p>	Themes 1,2 Objective 2, 3
The Big Help Out for the King's Coronation 8th May 2023 - Groomspport Clean Up and contribution to In Bloom	Engagement of volunteers to clean up the community.	08.05.22	Roy McWhinney & sub-group	<p>Monitor progress fortnightly</p> <p>Review grant timescales weekly</p> <p>KPI: Number of attendees</p> <p>KPI: number of volunteers</p> <p>KPI: positive feedback</p>	Themes 1, 2 Objective 2, 3

				from comments or survey	
UU Partnership	Create a joint project with Ulster University to develop a digital repository for a heritage project (including oral history), and the development of educational heritage and other materials led by UU (and possibly digitisation of the proposed walking tour). Project will be accessible by diaspora and will have a strong footprint in the US given the links with the Eagle Wing. If supported, the project will be cost neutral.	31.08.23	Ruth Fee	Monitor progress in partnership with UU end May 23 Review early July 23 KPI: success in achieving support for partnership KPI: clear plan for deliverables during late 23/early 24	Themes 1, 2 Objective 2, 3
Walking Tours Summer 23	Develop and launch a short walking tour (with leaflet and other resources) of Groomsport from the entrance to Ballymacormick point to the beaches that will be informative and accessible.	Tours to be held during the summer period – dates to be confirmed. Potential to hold some family focused events in parallel with organised tours.	Peter Gibson	Monitor progress monthly Review timescales weekly KPI: Number of attendees KPI: number of volunteers KPI: positive feedback from comments or survey	Themes 1, 2 Objective 2, 3
Ulster Scots Course	Plan to offer an Ulster Scots Course for the local community in association with the Ulster Scots Community Network	To be confirmed	Elaine Nixon	Monitor progress monthly KPI: Number of attendees KPI: positive feedback from comments or survey	Themes 1, 2 Objective 2, 3
Halloween at Cockle Row 28.10.23	The word Hallowe'en comes from a Scottish term for All Hallows' Eve. It is also known as Haleve Nicht in Ulster-Scots. It is planned to hold an Ulster Scots themed family event at Cockle Row 28.10.23	28.10.22	Audrey Thomas, Etta Halliday & sub-group	Monitor progress monthly Review grant timescales fortnightly KPI: Number of attendees KPI: number of volunteers KPI: positive feedback from comments or survey	Themes 1, 2 Objective 2, 3

Christmas Celebration and Light Switch On	To apply for funding for a Christmas light switch on and family event in association with local churches and	End of the first week in December	Elaine Nixon & sub-group	Monitor progress monthly Review grant timescales fortnightly KPI: Number of attendees KPI: number of volunteers KPI: positive feedback from comments or survey	Themes 1, 2 Objective 2, 3
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Funding

Trustees will work to apply for a number of sources of income from a range of sources including Ards and North Down Borough Council, the Ulster Scots Community Network, the Ulster Scots Agency and Keep Britain Tidy. The source of funding will depend on the nature of the activity.

Risks

Trustees have identified through the SWOT analysis in appendix 1 the risks or negative factors that may impact upon the work of Discover Groomsport. Where possible, we have mitigated the risks as far as practicable as these are set out in the table below.

Risk	Mitigation
Lack of engagement from the local community resulting in low levels of volunteering and support	Range of actions set out in the strategy in order to actively engage with community.
Lack of success with funding bids in a competitive and reduced pool of funding	Discover Groomsport will work to organise smaller scale events to continue to build momentum in a challenging economic environment. Some activities do not require funding e.g. big clean up; UU joint project.
Older demographic compared to rest of NI (Census, 2011) that could impact on sustainability of, and enthusiasm for, Discover Groomsport and perceived issue with inclusivity	Focus some events on families and involvement of younger people, and encourage visitors from a diverse range of backgrounds
Perceived and potentially negative views of “old” versus “new” Groomsport, or the location of the “real” Groomsport, that will impact on reputation and sustainability and will result in lost opportunities	Discover Groomsport is a new charity with specific purposes that is inclusive and welcomes all members who respect our community and have its best interests at heart. No references are made to the status of individuals or where they are located; the most important aspect of our work is to protect our heritage.
Poor weather with limited infrastructure	Provide indoor alternatives to most Discover Groomsport family-friendly events

Release Date

This document was released on 23rd March 2023.

Signed:.....(Chair)

Name:...Elaine Nixon

Discover Groomsport (DG) SWOT Analysis (January 2023)

		Usually Positive	Usually Negative
		Strengths	Weaknesses
Internal		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge, enthusiasm, skill and experience of trustees and over 100 members • Picturesque location with natural beauty on the Ulster Scots, Mourne, Ulster Way and St Patrick trails • Access to Groomsport from a large surrounding population • Access to local amenities and businesses • Active social media networks • Long and varied historical roots including the Vikings, the Eagle Wing and Schomberg; the Ulster-Scots traditions; the name Groomsport is from the Irish language <i>Port an Ghiolla Ghruama</i> • International connections with diaspora from the community • Uniformed and community/church-based organisations who can partner with DG for the benefits of their members (e.g. volunteering to work towards Duke of Edinburgh scheme) • Strong focus on sustainability (heritage, people, economy, environment) with all events considering our impact on sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older demographic compared to rest of NI (Census, 2011) impacting on sustainability of, and enthusiasm for, DG and perceived issue with inclusivity • Perceived views of “old” versus “new” Groomsport, or the location of the “real” Groomsport, that will impact on reputation and sustainability and will result in lost opportunities • Inability to adapt to change or innovations that may take different approaches to existing or former practices within the community • Negative perceptions towards the Council or other funding organisations • Limited transport networks to Groomsport • Parking can be limited (depending on size of event) • Weak wifi and mobile signals • Poor weather with limited infrastructure to flip outdoor events to an indoor/covered over alternative • Current financial position due to delays with processing (not submission) of charity and banking applications
			Opportunities
External		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to a range of funding opportunities including Ulster Scots Community Network and Ulster Scots Agency • A number of local development opportunities e.g. Greenway Project • Potential to benefit from being on the route of existing tourism pathways open to visitors to NI e.g. cruise ships • Experts from Ulster University civic engagement to develop projects including storytelling projects • Opportunity to work in partnership with existing and new businesses • Strong focus on inclusivity, with events designed to increase membership of DG • Maximising opportunities for a range of outdoor and indoor events in a post-pandemic environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cuts to funding and weak economy, with no functioning government (Jan 23), with a resulting perceived increase in crime impacting on tourism from outside NI • Need to find diverse income streams from range of funders to protect heritage of a small community in a competitive funding space • Another pandemic • Unseasonable weather impacting on events • Change to use of amenities within the community impacting on events • Lack of investment in infrastructure • Risk of longer-term increased flooding in harbour area to Cockle Row