



FORWARD
SOUTH
PARTNERSHIP
FSP Newsletter

Summer 2023



Word from our CEO, Briega Arthurs

These last few months continue to be more difficult than usual with the current funding crisis we face as a sector. You will see in the newsletter that much of my time has concentrated on meetings around this issue- including meetings through NICVA with the Secretary of State and Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service, where I have sought to bring the collective voice of local groups in South Belfast into a broader regional discussion.



I never fail though, to be impressed by the continued level of determined commitment from our community partners as we strive to do the best for the people we serve. There have been several days of actions by our sector- all attracting good media attention. During one of the interviews as part of the background research, I was asked what exactly do we do? This question has made me stop and think about just how much we do, how we articulate it, how much we are relied on by statutory partners to deliver vital services at the very heart of our communities and the value that is put on us.

I wonder what would happen if we did not have a strong community sector? The thought is unimaginable..... Delivering innovatively, being creative and resourceful especially during these crises is our strength. Let us continue to build on our strengths with kindness and compassion at its core as we weather this storm together, hopeful that the executive will form a government to alleviate these problems.

So, thank you to everyone for the service you provide amidst all the financial and job insecurities. Let's hope we get a speedy resolution.

Briega Arthurs

Staff changes in FSP

Hello to Marie

Welcome to our new Community Health worker, Marie McGarry. Marie has vast experience in working in the community and is looking forward to help build a healthier South Belfast. Marie will be delivering and building capacity through Health and wellbeing.



Good bye to Siri

A big thankyou to our Holyland Capacity officer Siri Meylahn. It's with a sad heart that we say goodbye to Siri, who has been our Holyland capacity worker for the last 2 years.

Emerging from covid with rules, regulations and a new level of anxiety, Siri, through her gentle and positive approach, was able to restart engagement and work to build trust and confidence with the residents, students and statutory partners- all working to make the Holyland and wider university area a better place to live and work in. I don't think many of us will forget the wonderful Festival of Light or the image of Siri dressed as Santa's helper!

In bidding farewell to Siri, we would like to thank her for all the positive contributions she has made to her work and our FSP team and wish her every success with her future plans. FSP will be issuing recruitment plans in the very near future to replace this crucial community post.

ROMA Hub News.....

A big 'THANK YOU' National Lottery Community Fund

FSP has received funding from the National Lottery Community Fund to continue the particularly important work in our ROMA Hub at our offices on University Street. Our hub includes a drop-

in advice centre for ROMA families and individuals, helping them in many ways with often complex issues.



Specifically, we run clinics on Wednesdays and Thursdays for families and individuals struggling to navigate the welfare system in conjunction with Advice NI and give advice for settlement within NI. There is also an outreach worker and support worker who run English Classes, ROMA women's group and other events for the community.

This is a city-wide service working for all the Roma, so FSP are happy to help where we can. Please share the message with colleagues and groups and get in touch with our staff by contacting Jacqueline Monahan on: jacqueline@forwardsouth.org Martina on: outreach@forwardsouth.org, Lavinia on: support@forwardsouth.org, Oleg on: romahelpline@forwardsouth.org.



FSP Strategy Day

As a strategic, networking organization which brings the community, public and private sector groups together to make South Belfast a great place to live and work, we were delighted to have the company of Belfast City Council staff Denise Smith and Brian Carr alongside Director of the People and Places review, Nichola Creagh from Department of Communities to help us shape our collective vision through the delivery



of a new strategic framework for the next 3 years. Everything FSP does and seeks to deliver is about and focused on people.

Dr Louise O'Meara, Programme Director of the William J Clinton Institute, kindly facilitated our Strategy Day in collaboration with QUB Public engagement. Thanks to them for their hard work.

The FSP Strategy workshop is the start of the process of helping us shape a collective vision for the next 3 years around the many groups and stakeholders in south Belfast. It is about building relationships and trust so

we can work collaboratively to get the best outcomes for our communities and help us deliver the priorities and issues which impact on people's lives. And whilst we have 4 community directors who speak up for you on so many issues and form the board of FSP, our ask is that you please join us on our journey by engaging with us and telling us honestly what you think you would like to see.

Keep updated with our plans and let us know what you think through our website www.forwardsouth.org

Strategy Document 2020-2023

https://forwardsouth.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/EUBtiaVXNM1HjWpJIVwl6lkBt4_cUbPMq9dSrnAxVf8omA



We will be refreshing this document for our vision and mission up to 2026. Look out on our social media for information when released.

Opening Botanic up again in 2023.

Open Botanic will be happening again this year on Botanic Avenue September 24th. The full event poster will be advertised soon. Keep up to date with our plans through our website at www.forwardsouth.org or via our social media below:

Instagram: @forwardsouthpartnership

Twitter: @forwardsouthpb

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ForwardSouthPartnership/>



Community Festival

SAVE THE DATE!

Open Botanic

Where? Botanic Avenue

When? Sunday 24th September, 12pm – 3pm

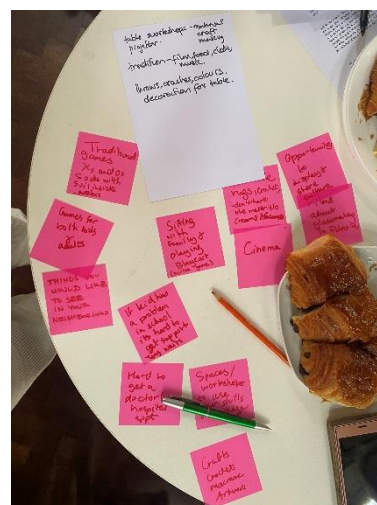
What's it all about? Botanic Avenue, one of Belfast's busiest streets, will be car-free for an afternoon for a family friendly community festival exploring the possibility of the road being pedestrianised in the future. There will be food, entertainment, community health & information stalls, arts & greening activities, cycling, community kiosks.

If you would like to know more, please contact our Urban Regeneration Officer Maggie - urbanregeneration@forwardsouth.org

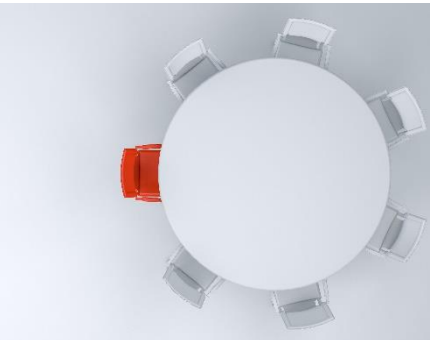


Community inclusion

Maggie McKeever, our Urban Regeneration Officer along with QUB architecture department have been delivering community kiosk workshops with 6 local community groups from the Holyland, Donegall Pass, Donegall Road, Sandy Row and Botanic area to come up with an idea for a stall that represents their community at Open Botanic on 24th September.



Welcome 'Lisburn Road Business Association'



Jenny Bond from Jenny Bond Interiors has recently been announced as Chair for this new and exciting Business Association.

The Association is hoping to receive a grant from 'Vibrant Business Destinations' with Belfast City Council and to work with council to produce a vision document that illustrates some options for animating the public space including planting and street art. The traders are currently in discussions to agree which option to pursue. They are engaging with local councillors and momentum is growing continually with the group.

Thanks to all the business people who are giving of their time to create this momentum and provide vital economic infrastructure for this important shopping destination.

Botanic Avenue Businesses

FSP were awarded the Belfast Business Cluster and Community grant to work with local businesses on Botanic and MMAS & OGU Architects on ideas to improve the outdoor space for both businesses, residents, and visitors on Botanic Avenue. We're looking at the potential to animate the street through greening and street furniture. We envision this gently shaping how Botanic Avenue feels and making it more of a friendly place to visit, live and work in. We will share the visuals of the plans as they develop.

Congratulations to Jahswill on your B.E.M.

Jahswill Emmanuel received the British Empire Medal. He has been recognised by King Charles for his services to the community through a charity he set up in 2016, MSCNI (Multi Ethnic Sports and Culture NI). As a former member of our Board, we congratulate you on this honour.



Community and Voluntary Sector Budget Cuts Updates

On the 3rd of May, FSP attended a meeting at NICVA with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Chris Heaton Harris to discuss the budget cuts on the community and voluntary sector and impact this will have on lives of its residents. A Community Day of Action was called for 25th May which FSP attended with sector colleagues.

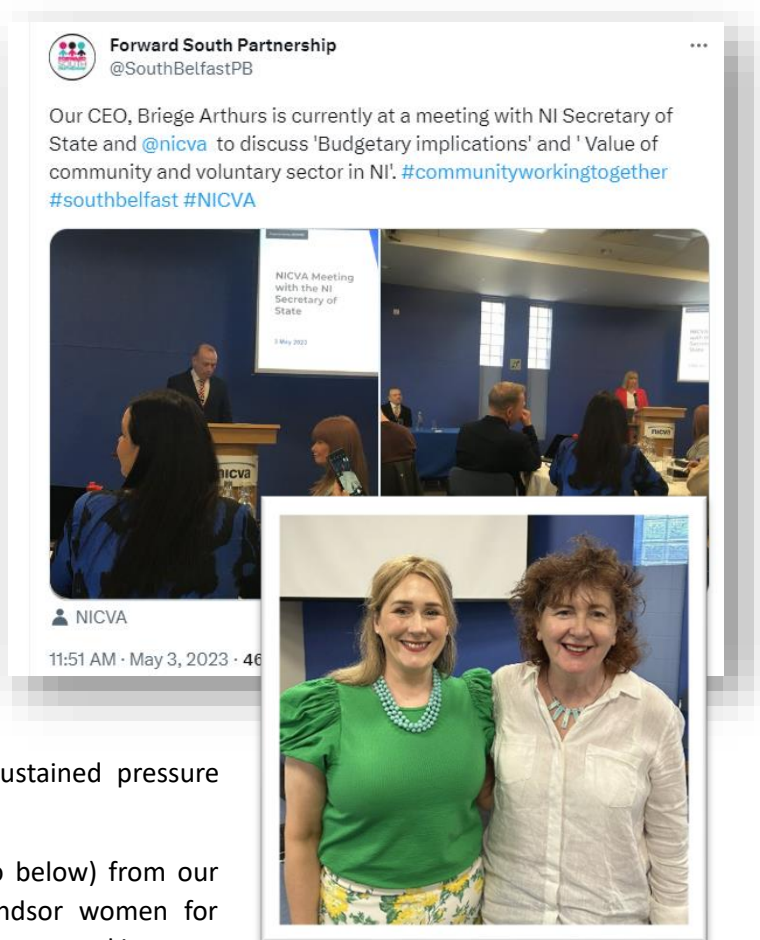
In June FSP also attended a meeting hosted by NICVA with Head of NI Civil Service Jayne Brady and Deputy permanent secretary Moira Doherty to keep sustained pressure around this vital issue.

Thank you to Eleanor Jordan (photo below) from our South Belfast Women's centre, Windsor women for speaking up



so articulately on the funding crisis in our community sector at this meeting.

In addition to the discussions, we've attended with NICVA and the Community Day of action, FSP has responded to grassroots organisations' voices coming up through our *SB Community Support Group and convened a meeting with Celine McStravick CEO of NICVA on Monday 3rd July in Windsor Women's Centre.* This will provide an opportunity for FSP to facilitate a collective discussion with our neighbourhood community partners and enable NICVA to learn firsthand the impact the lack of funding is having on our sector and services in South Belfast. **If you would like to attend this discussion, please email Maggie urbanregeneration@forwardsouth.org .**



Health update- working collaboratively to deliver health and well being

South Belfast Social Supermarket

Forward South Partnership facilitated a Social Supermarket Programme in communities across South Belfast supporting 913 individuals in total with 640 meals being delivered across 16 community meals and 273 individuals being supported through food vouchers.



South Belfast Cost of Living Response

Forward South Partnership supported several initiatives in the wider South Belfast Community by funding 246 Winter Self Care Packs to promote positive physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing. Supporting Belvoir Community Hub, Ballynafeigh Community Development Association, Sure Start and Northern Ireland Muslim Association to deliver 275 Cook It Food Parcels and Community Meals.

We have also supported the Ballynafeigh Cosy Hubs to provide refreshments, health, and wellbeing activities to support their warm space initiative.



FSP is about coordinating and signposting people/groups to help navigate and access services that will support them. Our Strategic Health Officer developed the South Belfast Cost of Living plan which details the wider South Belfast Support that is available to the community during the cost-of-living crisis. Please [click here](#) to access the digital copy, if anyone would like to request a hard copy please contact Emily directly on emily.brown@forwardsouth.org.

Keeping South Belfast Warm

Forward South Partnership secured funding to support individuals over the age of 55 during the cost-of-living crisis. So far in the project FSP has supported 42 individuals with food, gas, and electric vouchers. We have also facilitated 3 community meals with 50 individuals attending to receive a hot meal and receive supportive information from Consumer Council NI, British Red Cross, Advice NI and more.



If you know any individual over the age of 55 that would require support with a food voucher, please contact Emily on emily.brown@forwardsouth.org however there are limited number of vouchers.

Belfast City Council Move More Eat Well to Feel Better

Active Belfast Partnership lead in the development of the first test and learn pilot of Participatory Budgeting (PB) in Belfast. The theme of the first PB was Move More and Eat Well to Feel Better. South Belfast held a Voting Event in April in Holy Rosary Parish Centre with over 200 votes counted on the night! Five groups will receive funding to support their project delivery. We can't wait to see the delivery of local community projects!



Carers Week 2023

FSP in partnership with Belfast Health and Social Care Trust facilitated a South Belfast Carers Connect Café Event in Crescent Art Centre as part of Carers Week 2023. We had the pleasure of 17 carers joining us for some well-deserved relaxing massages, art, and crafts activity.



Men's Health Week 2023

To mark Men's Health Week, Forward South Partnership in collaboration with Ballynafeigh Community Development Association spent a morning with Ballynafeigh Men's Shed at Ormeau Bowling Green. We had Women's Resource Development Association, Age NI, Job, and Benefits in attendance to provide advice and support to the men attending followed by a lovely lunch in the sunshine!



South Belfast Dementia Friendly

South Belfast Dementia Friendly Carers Café is taking place on the last Tuesday of every month. Our next Café is taking place on Tuesday 27th June 10am at Ormeau Road Library. We are delighted to welcome the Alzheimer's Society Northern Ireland to our June Café. Please circulate widely with your networks. If you have any queries, please contact Emily on emily.brown@forwardsouth.org

Forward South Partnership in conjunction with Engage with Age facilitated a Dementia and Art Training session for artists, volunteers, and community leaders in the community to help equip people to facilitate art workshops that are dementia friendly. Due to the success and demand, we have secured a further Art and Dementia Workshop taking place in June!





GREAT REFUGEE WEEK PICNIC

Belfast City of Sanctuary



INVITES YOU TO...

THE GREAT REFUGEE WEEK PICNIC 2023

SATURDAY 24TH JUNE 2023

Theme: *Compassion*

**ULIDIA PLAYING FIELDS, ORMEAU ROAD
BELFAST, BT7 3GG**

1pm - 5pm

MUSIC | DANCE | FOOD. FAMILY FRIENDLY EVENT



Belfast
City Council





Forward South Partnership

Plans for the DfI land in the Holyland

Forward South Partnership and Queen's University are working together to improve the land along Stranmillis Embankment which is owned by the Department for Infrastructure (just beside Chinese Welfare Association).

Whilst working on a plan to take over the land as a community space in the long term, we are currently looking at enhancing the space in the short term through small planting projects.

Coming Up!

Fundraising Tea for Trussell in Botanic Gardens



**MONDAY, 26TH JUNE 2023
12 TO 3PM**

**WHERE? AT FORWARD SOUTH
PARTNERSHIP
23 UNIVERSITY STREET**

JOIN US FOR A CUPPA AND A PIECE OF CAKE (OR TWO). WE ARE RAISING MONEY FOR THE TRUSSELL TRUST.

TRUSSELL TRUST SUPPORT A NATIONWIDE NETWORK OF FOOD BANKS AND PROVIDE EMERGENCY FOOD AND SUPPORT TO PEOPLE IN NEED.

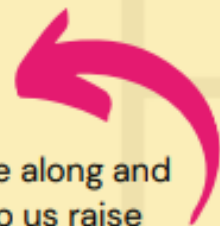
Everyone Welcome!



For questions, please contact Siri (siri@forwardsouth.org) or Martina (outreach@forwardsouth.org)



We are hoping to bring some wild flowers to the area and brighten it up in different ways in the near future. To make this happen we would like residents to get involved! If you have any ideas of what you would like to see in the area please get in touch! Keep your eyes peeled on our Holyland Facebook Page for updates on this project coming soon.



Come along and help us raise funds for the Trussell Foodbank, we would love to see you there!

You're invited

FREE

Taughmonagh Community Coffee Morning

Friday 23rd June 11am - 12noon

Taughmonagh Church, Finwood Park

Tea, coffee & snacks provided

Everyone welcome!

We hope to make this a regular
thing if it's successful



English Conversation Cafe



ENGLISH CONVERSATION CAFE

WOULD YOU LIKE TO PRACTICE ENGLISH?
JOIN US FOR ENGLISH CONVERSATION AND
FREE COFFEE! FOR THOSE WHO SPEAK
LITTLE ENGLISH AND LOTS! SEE YOU THERE!

WEDNESDAYS, 18:30-19:30

**ALEKSANDAR'S BAKERY @ COMMON GROUNDS
12-24 UNIVERSITY AVENUE BELFAST, BT7 1GY**