

Weddings & Christenings at Star of the Sea



DONNACHA O'KANE – parents Ursula and Micheál



ARTHUR WILMONT – parents Ailish and Graham



JACK KENNEDY – parents Michelle and Garth



GRACE O'NEILL – parents Leona and Kevin



CIARAN BROLLY – parents Lucy and Conor



Khadiga Hassouna & Hugh Mulvenna 04/05/19



Alanna Bond & Odd Tore Nesheim-Hauge 27/04/19



Michelle Grant & Christos Cailleux 01/06/19



Laura Martin & Brendan Doherty 11/05/19



Ronan Brolly (parishioner) & Amy Brown in Star of the Sea, North Berwick, Scotland 16/03/19



Danielle Quinn & Richard Boyd 29/06/19

Cover Photo by: Aaron Doherty

The Magazine of Portstewart Parish, St Mary's Star of the Sea.
Stella Maris
 Issue 58 Autumn 2019
 Blessings to all.



Inside this issue
 Believe, Achieve and Succeed!
 The Sound of Silence
 God's Gardeners
 Fr Raymond's Silver Jubilee

The Faith and Life Convention is an annual event held in the Diocese since 2014. It is a wonderful gathering of people from all parts of the Diocese, and beyond, who come together to explore how life and faith coincide. In a world that is increasingly secular we find that people appreciate even more now the opportunity to come together to discuss God, faith, the Church and the modern world.



Organised by Bishop Treanor and the Living Church the Convention has always had an impressive line-up of both local and international speakers. This year is no exception.

After beginning the day with coffee, chat, prayer and song Bishop Treanor will welcome Michel Camdessus to give the Keynote Address. Michel is the former Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and a member of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. In this capacity he has been an advisor to Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI and now Pope Francis on Catholic Social Teaching and he was instrumental in the Vatican's Campaign for Debt Relief in Developing Countries in the Jubilee Year of 2000.

Later in the day there will be a panel discussion, time for lunch and then, what for many is the highlight of the day; our workshops. The workshops are a chance for people to engage with and explore issues that effect everyday life through the lens of faith. There will be workshops that are prayerful, others that focus on Mission, the family, the digital world. In short there is something for everyone.

To book you can go online www.faithandlifeconvention.org or contact our Parish Office. If enough parishioners want to go we could order a bus so see if the date suits: Saturday 28th September, Knock, East Belfast.

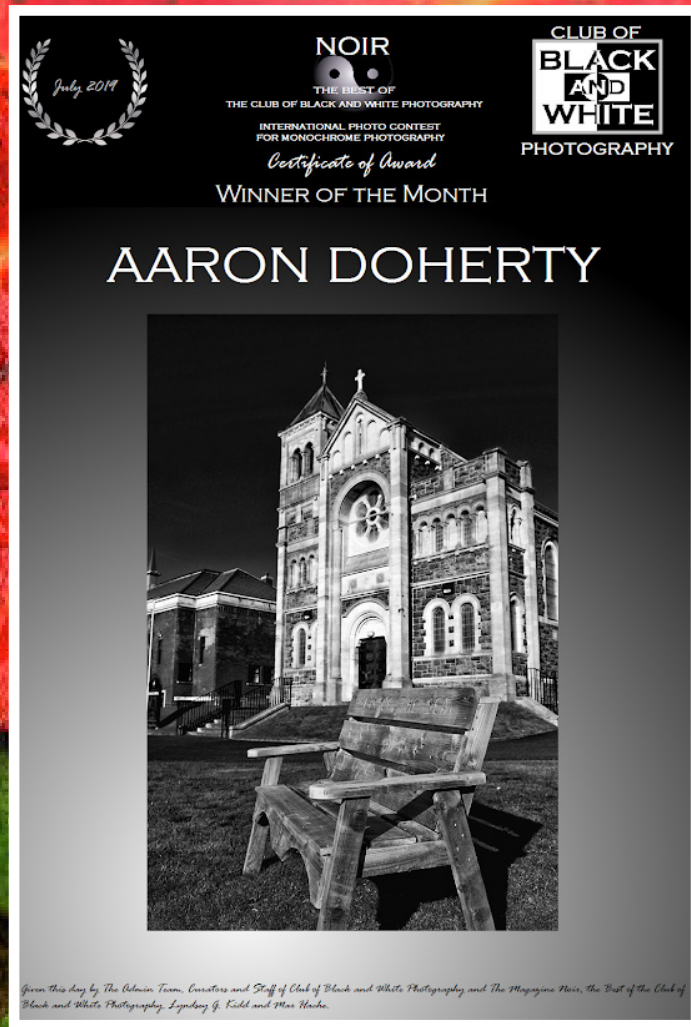
Season of Mists and Mellow Fruitfulness

As many of our readers will know, in "Ode to Autumn", John Keats called this time of year the "season of mists and mellow fruitfulness". Indeed, thank God, harvest time has come around again. I have often been guilty of taking that miracle for granted. The cycle of nature's new growth in the spring, reaching ripeness in the autumn, is nothing less than fundamental to sustaining all human life on Planet Earth. Fr Austin's article, "God's Gardeners", is a timely reminder of that – and of what we can all do to help as the natural world faces threats as never before.

In other news, our long-time Stella Maris photographer, Aaron Doherty, has supplied a striking cover image once again – and he also recently won the Black and White Photo Club's "Photo of the month" in July with a memorable view of our church which we have reproduced inside this issue.

Once again, thanks to all the Stella Maris staff and our other contributors for this issue of the magazine.

Bryan Rooney (Editor)



Given this day by The Admin Team, Curators and Staff of Club of Black and White Photography and The Magazine Noir, The Best of the Club of Black and White Photography, July 2014, Field and Main Roads.

Mass Time Changes

Please note that from the beginning of September 2019, the weekend mass times in the Triangle parishes will now be as follows:

Portstewart – Saturday vigil at 5pm and Sunday morning at 10am

7pm University Mass is in Star of the Sea on Sunday evenings (during term time only) and will recommence on Sunday 22nd September.

Portrush – Saturday vigil at 6pm and Sunday morning at 12 noon

St Malachy's Coleraine – Saturday vigil at 7pm and Sunday morning at 11am

Fr Raymond's Silver Jubilee

Fr Raymond celebrated twenty-five years in the priesthood with parishioners, family and friends this June. A mass in Star of the Sea was concelebrated with Fr Austin and Fr John Forsythe and followed by a reception in the Parish Centre.

Well-known for his work in and beyond the parish, Fr Raymond is an energetic supporter of Habitat for Humanity and has been involved in seeing multiple projects come to fruition in far-flung destinations across the globe. He is a tireless worker and fundraiser for this very worthy charity.

Between that and his invaluable contributions to parish life and in his roles as chaplain at the University of Ulster and Dominican College, Fr Raymond has walked the walk! May his next twenty-five years be as fruitful as those that have gone before.

Congratulations, Fr Raymond!



God's Gardeners

Creation Time (September 1st to October 4th)

Do you have a garden? Do you spend much time caring for it? If you do, have you noticed any seasonal irregularities in recent years? Have you noticed fewer honey bees at work? If you were in England during the month of July, you would have experienced the hottest day on record there – ever. The ten hottest years on record have occurred since the year 2000. Climate change is undoubtedly with us.

In 1989 the Ecumenical Patriarch suggested that September 1st, the first day of the Eastern Orthodox Church's year, should be observed as a day "of protection of the natural environment".

Ten years later in 1999, the European Christian Environmental Network (ECEN) widened this proposal, urging churches to adopt a **Time for Creation** stretching from September 1st to the feast of St Francis on October 4th each year.

This was endorsed by the third European Ecumenical Assembly in Sibiu, Romania in 2007, which recommended that the period "be dedicated to prayer for the protection of Creation and the promotion of sustainable lifestyles that reverse our contribution to climate change".

Creation Day, also called the **World Day of Prayer for Creation**, opens the season each year. Pope Francis, Patriarch Bartholomew, the World Council of Churches, and many other leaders have called the faithful to celebrate it.

Globally, Christians are invited to join services to come together in a joyful celebration of our common cause. (Watch the parish bulletin for the date and time of our local ecumenical prayer service.)

Pope Francis promulgated "Laudato Si", his global encyclical on Christian ecology in June 2015, six months before the historic, 195-nation Climate Agreement in Paris.

The Pope's encyclical sets out Christians' duty to address the dangers we cause to God's Creation, and to step back from environmental despoliation. Unusually for an encyclical, the document is addressed not only to Roman Catholics, but rather to every person on Earth.

It is timely to remember that the book of Genesis begins with God's affirmation that all of creation is 'very good' (Genesis

1:30). We are part of a complex, delicate and interdependent web of life which is valuable because it is created, sustained and redeemed by God.

Humanity is called to reflect God's image through godly leadership within the community of fellow creatures (Genesis 1:26-28). Today, human behaviour is damaging the fabric of God's creation at an unprecedented rate.

According to the *Living Planet Report 2018*, there has been a 60% decline in global wildlife populations between 1970 and 2014. There are multiple causes, from deforestation, habitat destruction, climate change, and pollution of soil, water and air, including the tide of plastic pollution filling the oceans.

It may seem like a huge task to care for God's Creation, but as "God's Gardeners", it is our responsibility to do so. But how? Thankfully, there are small, simple things we can all do that will make a real difference. Take at least one of the positive actions below that will enable us all to live out our faith with integrity.

This might be:

- a commitment to choose to buy *Fairtrade* products;
- lobby political representatives for the rights of internally displaced people.
- action for climate justice by walking locally and taking fewer trips by air.
- taking public transport more often or switching to a green energy provider.
- cut down on plastic use where you can – avoid disposable plastic water bottles and buy a reusable one.
- carry a reusable shopper and recycle wherever possible.

Our planet Earth is God's Garden – the only one we all have – and the survival of future generations depends upon it. It is our job (not someone else's) to take care of it - we are God's Gardeners and we must be equal to the task.

Fr Austin



Safeguarding In Our Parish

As a constituent member of the Catholic Church in Ireland, the parish recognises and upholds the dignity and rights of all children and vulnerable adults and is committed to ensuring their safety and wellbeing.

We recognise each person as unique and a gift from God, and we value and encourage participation in all activities that enhance spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual and social development.

All Church personnel (including clergy, religious, staff and volunteers) have a responsibility to safeguard children and vulnerable adults through promoting their welfare, health and development in a safe and caring environment which supports their best interests and prevents abuse.

Our church has a National Safeguarding Board



If you have a concern about a child or adult in our parish approach a member of our

Portstewart Parish Safeguarding Committee

Ruth McGuckian (Chair)
Fr Austin McGirr
Karen Kelly
Ita Harley
Michele Shaw
Bernadette Thompson

tel 028 70832534 or email secretary@portstewartparish.co.uk
www.downandconnor.org/safeguarding

which has seven safeguarding standards. For more information on these standards please check the website www.safeguarding.ie.

In the parish of Portstewart, safeguarding involves all of us; the Parish Priest, the Safeguarding Committee (PSC), volunteers and the entire Parish community. The welfare of our children, young people and adults at risk is of paramount importance in everything we do.

We warmly welcome and fully appreciate the contributions made by all those who volunteer, in whatever way and using whatever skills they have, to enhance the temporal and spiritual life of our parish.

What is the Parish Safeguarding Committee?

Portstewart PSC is a committee of volunteers set up within the Diocese of Down and Connor in 2005 to ensure that the key messages of safeguarding and best practice in relation to children and adults are in place at parish level. We are guided and advised in all we do by the Down and Connor Safeguarding Office.

What is the role of the Parish Safeguarding Committee?

The PSC exists to develop and promote 'best practice' when working with children, young people or adults at risk and to ensure all volunteers have access to appropriate information relating to safeguarding. We ensure that all volunteers are vetted and trained through the correct channels and provide ongoing support to parish groups.

It is not the role of the PSC to become involved in any investigation or assessment of suspicion, concerns, knowledge or allegations relating to child or adult safeguarding matters. This is the role of the statutory authorities and/or the Designated Liaison Person.

If you want to find out more about the work of the committee or would like to become a volunteer, there is information on the church notice boards, or you can contact the parish office or any of the committee members.

Believe, Achieve and Succeed!

(Motto of St Joseph's College, Coleraine.)

The school bell for the end of lessons rang for the last time in St Joseph's College at the end of the summer term this year.

A celebration was held in the school to give all those who formed part of the St Joseph's community an opportunity to meet and share their own special memories. It was a joyous occasion.

Hundreds of pupils and staff, past and present, along with well-wishers, arrived at the school to celebrate 58 years of the College.

Father Martin Moran, a past pupil, and Father Diarmuid Sheehan, celebrated Mass. Those visiting the school had the opportunity to view a huge range of photographs from different eras, which were displayed throughout the college.

Tea, coffee and buns for visitors were plentiful and craft stalls many and varied, as younger children enjoyed playing on the bouncy castles. Happiness was palpable as memories and anecdotes were shared by visitors, though this was mingled with sadness at the realisation the school would be closing its doors for the final time at the end of June.

St Joseph's was a very special place of faith and learning and the thousands who passed through its doors have lived out its ethos of Believe, Achieve, Succeed.

(Provision for Catholic secondary education in this area from now on will be the responsibility of the enlarged Loreto and Dominican Colleges, without the requirement for academic selection at age eleven.)



St Joseph's College Factfile:

1961 September 1st - St Joseph's opens its doors to the first 353 pupils along with Principal, Mr JJ Devlin, and 15 teaching staff.

1960s - Sports Hall; Arts and Technology rooms; resource centre and new classrooms added.

1979 - Peak enrolment of 665 pupils achieved with a complement of 39 teaching staff.

1980s - Motor vehicle, bricklaying and tiling, hairdressing and beauty workshops added.

1990s - New music suite and five refurbished IT rooms incorporated into the college.

2009 - St Joseph's moves into the top ten best performing N. Ireland. non-grammar schools at A level and GCSE.

2010 - St Joseph's is third-best performing non-grammar school at A level and GCSE in N. Ireland.

2012 - The College becomes the best performing N. Ireland. non-grammar school at A level and GCSE, with 98% achieving high grades (A*-C) at GCSE!

2019 - The college pupils move into a new era of non-selective Catholic school provision in the area under the leadership of the Principal, Mrs Mary Miller and her staff.



Outside the Chapel Gates

With Eugene Kelly



Sheila posing before her shop in the early days.



How Sheila's shop on the Prom looks today.

Thank God For Sheila Conway's

Thank God for Sheila Conway's
And her multitude of jars
That quarter pound of clove rock
Did keep me sweet for hours
A Mecca for us connoisseurs
Of brightly coloured bars
A pit stop with refreshments
For countless passing cars

Never disappointing
Always streets ahead
Of those who tried to tempt us kids
With iced up donut bread
"Forget it guys" we used to cry
As through the door we fled
Grabbing football specials
"We're looking these instead"

Every craving conquered
With a little bit or bob
As Sheila's friendly smiling face
Gave that educated nod
To know what was the ticket
To satisfy our need
A bag of highland toffee
Or some balls of aniseed
So thank God for Sheila Conway's
As you gaze out to the sea
Your little shop of everything
Lives in my memory
And my children always visit
For they're just the same as me
They like their cola cubes from jars
Two ounces, fifty pee.

Pablo Doherty



Marathon Man

In life we all set targets for ourselves, some short term or long term, but usually achievable. How does this sound to you – 500 marathons in 375 weeks? Not possible I hear you say. Then take a look at one of our own parishioners Eugene 'OGGIE' Winters who has just recently achieved this unbelievable target.

Back in 2012 Eugene ran his first marathon in Belfast at the age of 55 and completed his target this summer with the Wild Atlantic Marathon in Killybegs in Donegal. His marathon achievements have taken Eugene all over the world and have helped him raise thousands of pounds for a very wide range of charities. Well done Eugene. And if you think that he is about to hang up his running shoes along with all his medals, you have another think coming. Further targets are set and look set to be broken.



The Sound of Silence



that can result. If we attach this sense of rejection to our relationship with God, then this too will have a damaging effect on our faith.

Can it really be then that God is 'always listening' and hears our pleas including the sound of our silence? I'll suggest three steps that I have found helpful here.

The first step is to believe that God is 'always listening' and as our difficulties test us, we can bring them directly to God. An 'always listening' God means an 'always close' God who never sleeps and is never worried about being disturbed, no matter the time of day or night. Such a God who, having heard the plea as it was uttered silently in the heart, may prompt us to put our pleas into words spoken aloud.

I have returned to learning the piano with more determination and enthusiasm than in previous attempts some years ago. One song that I have been working on is 'The Sound of Silence' recorded by Simon and Garfunkel in 1964. The track was not initially well received, and the duo split up temporarily. After a remix, the song was released as a single in 1965, became a world-wide hit and the rest is history.

God is also 'always listening' to those close to him and it is a common practice to pray through Mary the Mother of God and the Saints in difficult times in the absolute certainty that we will be heard by an 'always listening' God. I like to repeat 'Holy Mary Mother of God Pray for us'. Others might say 'Sacred Heart of Jesus, I place all my trust in you'. Our loving God will hear and respond to our needs.

This song poses some challenging questions though: 'Does silence have a sound?' If so, 'Who can hear silence?' We sometimes use the phrase, 'The silence was deafening', when referring to a lack of an appropriate response to a tragedy or crisis situation. In this sense then, we do sometimes give silence a 'sound', although, perhaps, a negative one.

In the Book of Proverbs, we are told to listen for God's voice wherever we are and whatever we are doing. This is an important second step - to take time to listen, to become aware of God's presence working for our good. Often the latter is not obvious at first. What seems a bitter blow may turn out to have unexpected benefits when enough time has passed.

On another level, we can experience silence as being isolated and alone, as in the stillness of an empty home, especially after a death or illness; or when a grown-up child leaves to study or for work. Silence can also be experienced in the heart of someone whose circumstances are so difficult that words cannot express their feelings.

The third step I suggest is to express gratitude to God for listening and responding. This can be difficult, especially where God's response does not appear to match up with our expectations. Many have been in that difficult place where we feel our prayers do not seem to have been answered or, at least, not yet.

Do such silences have a sound? Are these silences heard? Do they elicit a response?

Sometimes, it is only from looking back that we can really appreciate God's listening presence and how he did respond to our pleas. I, for one, remain convinced of an 'always listening' God who is close and who responds to prayer - spoken and unspoken. In the sixties' folk song, the singer warns that "silence like a cancer grows..." I assume he was thinking of a negative "silence", which ignores suffering and the needs of others. In sharp contrast, the Holy silence I know is comforting, responsive and uplifting. In that silence we can hear God's love, for in that quiet, there is also communion.

The people of Israel endured much in their long and troubled history. They were told they were the chosen people of God, and yet awful troubles still occurred. In the Book of Psalms, we hear their pleas to God not to be silent but to respond to the suffering of his people.

Yet God had such a presence in all aspects of the Israelites' lives that they talked to him about anything and everything in the understanding that God was 'always listening'. In times of great suffering and great need they acknowledged their dependence on God for their survival. They had an 'expectant faith' in that they expected God to hear and respond to their prayers.

By the way, if you live close enough to me, you might want to hear my rendition of the 'Sound of Silence' (or, on second thoughts, perhaps not just yet!)

Do we have such an awareness of a God who is this close and 'always listening' to every word, spoken and unspoken, no matter in what trouble we may find ourselves? Do we really expect God to respond?

Kieran Hill

If we have experienced not being listened to by others, we will be all too aware of the negative and hurtful effects

*Look out for information on The Silent Retreat in the Ards Retreat Centre, Co Donegal, from September 16-22nd in the parish bulletin (€390 full board) or call Helen on 00353 861678027.

Bowled Over!

(St Colum's Bowling Club Celebrates Half Century)

This year St Colum's Bowling Club celebrates fifty years since its beginnings back in 1969 in the old St Colum's Hall in Heathmount. After the hall was destroyed by fire in 1972, the club used various venues to keep going, including the old Strand Hotel; the Town Hall and St Colum's school until finally putting down new roots at the Parish Centre when it opened its doors in 1997.

In the accompanying photographs here you may recognise many well-known faces, past and present.

The club currently plays every Tuesday and Thursday from 7-10 pm and new members are most welcome. No experience or special equipment is needed and all ages can take part. Just come along and enjoy the craic!



First Communion at Star of the Sea



Confirmation at Star of the Sea

THE ANCHOR
 PORTSTEWART
 TEL: 028 70832003

Award winning food, beverage service & accommodation
YOUR LOCAL BAR & BISTRO

Homemakers

Beds - Flooring - Sofas - Furniture

Tel: 028 70344554
 86-96 New Row, Coleraine, BT52 1EJ (opposite Tesco)

Portstewart Cabs
07562 096 430
 Prop: Brendan Finnegan

Portstewart Family Practice
 DR. HARLEY'S

Tel: 028 70832149 • Fax: 028 70833223
 6 Lever Road • Portstewart • BT55 7EF

www.portstewartfamilypractice.co.uk

Dr. James B Harley MB BCH BAO (NUJ) 1975 MRCGP DRCOG FIMLS MSc
Dr Dearbhla Harley MB BCH BAO LRS&PI (NUJ) DRCOG MRCGP

Mullan's Fashion

47 THE PROMENADE
 PORTSTEWART
TEL: 7083 2960

BABY WEAR • LADIES FASHIONS include
 Aria, Tulchan, Emreco, Paul Separates, Silken Ladder, Chianti, Fosby, Blast, Lady Laird, Slimma, Peter Gribby

ARMSTRONG GORDON
 THE PROFESSIONAL PROPERTY AGENT | Est. 1947

Armstrong Gordon & Co
 64 The Promenade
 Portstewart BT55 7AF
 Phone: 028 7083 2000
 Fax: 028 7083 2950
 Email: info@armstronggordon.com

GRIDDLE BAKERY
 STRAND ROAD, PORTSTEWART

Famous for its home-baked bread and pastries

Tel. Shop 028 - 7083 6939
Bakery 028 - 7083 3334

Morelli's of Portstewart Ltd

Morelli's
 SINCE 1911

OPEN EVERY DAY!!

Hugh Wade & Son
 Funeral Directors and Memorial Masons

Turn to a friend...
 Arranging a funeral is a time when you should turn to a friend we are here to help you

3 Upper Abbey St., Coleraine BT52 1EZ
 Tel: 028 7034 3438 / 7035 2825 Fax: 028 7035 5212

Ivan Murdock & Sons
 Funeral Directors Tel/Fax: 028 7034 3350

A family business providing quiet, dignified & personal 24 Hour Service

31 Bushmills Road, Coleraine

Funeral Home:
 2a Windsor Avenue
 Coleraine

DEMPSEY'S
 Funeral Directors

(Day & night service) Family Run Business

11 Coleraine St, Kilrea Co. Derry
Tel: (028) 2954 0226

H.E. Wilson
 First Ireland Giftware

33 to 35 The Promenade, Portstewart, N. Ireland, BT55 7AE

Tel: (028) 7083 2239
International Fax: (028) 7082 5491
 or (028) 7083 3378

Internet Shopping: <http://www.firstireland.com>
 E-mail: sales@firstireland.com

MARK SCOTT OPTICIANS
 61 THE PROMENADE
 PORTSTEWART
 BT55 7AF

TEL: (028) 7083 3302

We Value Your Eyes

Impulse Hair Design
 2 Ashfield Drive, Portstewart
 Ladies and Gents Salon

Indian Head Massage, Head and Neck Massage
 Stockists of Tigi, Fudge, Matrix & G.H.D.

Open 9.00am - 5.30pm
 Late Night Friday
 Prop: Ann Cahoon

Tel: 028 7083 2170

Strand House
 105 Strand Road, Portstewart

Select Bed and Breakfast - Family run
 with all rooms en-suite plus television

Internet Access - Most Rooms with Sea View
 Beside Golf Course - Breakfast a Speciality

Tel: 028 7083 4860

Carpet & Couch Cleaning

THE CARPET & UPHOLSTERY CLEANING SPECIALISTS

Get it done right 1st time

DOMESTIC / COMMERCIAL ENQUIRIES WELCOME
 Call Portstewart 70 832814

Cromore halt

NITB Approved ***
 Disabled Facilities
 12 Luxury Bedrooms
 Children Welcome
 NI Tourist Board Award 2004

QUALITY FOOD SERVED DAILY IN OUR RESTAURANT
 PLUS BISTRO MENU AVAILABLE

158 Station Road, Portstewart
 Tel: 028 7083 1919 or 7083 6888
 E-mail: info@cromore.com

McKiernan & Sons
 Funeral Directors
 Established 1882

45 / 47 Maghera Street, Kilrea
 Tel. 028 295 40698

24 Hour Service
 Funeral Home facilities and
 Funeral Planning advice available

THE HARBOUR STUDIO
 ARCHITECTURE • INTERIOR DESIGN
 PLANNING SUPERVISION

52 Millbank Avenue,
 Portstewart, BT557DQ.
 TELEPHONE: 028 7083 3332
 FAX: 028 7083 3360

ARBUTUS
 AT THE CRANNAGH

The Perfect Venue for Breakfast, Lunch or Dinner. Serving only the Finest and Freshest Local Produce.

78 Portstewart Rd, Coleraine
 Tel: 028 7032 7756 www.arbutuscatering.com

To advertise in this space please contact
Ruth McGuckian:
 E: secretary@portstewartparish.co.uk
 T: 70832534