



The Causeway Coast & Glens  
**Natural Resource  
Rural Tourism Initiative**  
Programme Report

Celebrating NRRTI project achievements  
in the Causeway Coast & Glens

# The Natural Resource Rural Tourism Initiative

The Natural Resource Rural Tourism Initiative was a selective financial assistance programme offered under the European Union special support programme for Peace & Reconciliation (Peace II). The overall aim of the programme was; "To contribute to the creation of a more peaceful, prosperous and stable rural society through the processes of economic and social renewal".

In doing this it sought to address the legacy of conflict in Northern Ireland by taking advantage of the opportunities arising from peace. Within the overall aim of the Peace II Programme, four further objectives were identified for the delivery of NRRTI;

- Harnessing Northern Ireland's shared cultural and natural identity and resources for the benefit of tourism
- Ensuring that tourism development is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable
- Stimulating rural regeneration particularly in disadvantaged areas
- Creating opportunities for the two communities to work together in the co-ordinated pursuit of common goals

The Natural Resource Rural Tourism Initiative aimed to assist the tourism industry benefit from the opportunities arising from peace by promoting sustainable tourism which made best use of Northern Ireland's natural and cultural resources. The initiative also helped to stimulate rural regeneration within some of those areas most disadvantaged by thirty years of unrest. It also aimed to raise awareness of the sensitivity of the natural resource amongst visitors and ensure use of



the Northern Ireland countryside was managed to provide a consistently high quality experience for visitors.

NRRTI was delivered by five local partnerships across N. Ireland in Fermanagh, the Mournes, South Armagh, the Sperrins and the Causeway Coast & Glens area. Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust was selected as the local delivery mechanism for the implementation of NRRTI within the Causeway Coast & Glens area and drew up a Sustainable Tourism Strategy to guide this process. This strategy had four strategic aims as follows;

- 1 Promotion of sustainable tourism
- 2 Protection of our natural resource base for tourism

- 3 Increasing opportunities to enjoy the area in an active way
- 4 Maintaining a partnership approach to sustainable tourism

Whilst individual measures were revised at different times to assist delivery, especially in response to recommendations within the Causeway Coast & Glens Tourism Masterplan published in 2004, the overall aims remained consistent.

The strategic aims of the NRRTI programme fully complemented the overall aim of the Trust and as part of the programme Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust were able to deliver a number of self implementation projects itself. The Natural Resource Rural Tourism Initiative was open to projects based in the following wards:

Larne	Ballymena	Limavady	Coleraine	Ballymoney	Moyle	
Carncastle	Broughshane	Aghanloo	Castlerock	Ballyhoe	Armoy	Glendun
Carnlough	Glenravel	Forest	Macosquin	Corkey	Bonamargy & Rathlin	Glenshesk
Glenarm	Glenwhirry	Magilligan			Bushmills	Glentaisie
Kilwaughter	Slemish				Dalriada	Kinbane
					Dunseverick	Knocklayd
					Glenaan	Mosside & Moyarget
					Glenariff	

In exceptional circumstances projects were assisted in other areas but only where these projects could show clear strategic benefit for the NRRTI target area. Strict criteria were drawn up to ensure this was the case.

# JOINT CHAIRPERSONS REPORT

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*Cllr. Roy Craig & Kevin McGarry at the NRRTI Awards*

I was delighted to be afforded the opportunity to chair the local NRRTI partnership as I was well aware of the major impact the programme could have on tourism infrastructure development throughout the region. The partnership was comprised of a good cross section of interests from all sectors and I am delighted to say it was a pleasure to chair. I think we approached this project in a strategic and professional manner and concentrated on one of the main aims of the programme i.e. “to target those areas most in need of financial support”.

I believe the delivery of the programme was an enormous accomplishment achieving a good geographical spread of both hard and soft sustainable tourism projects across the region. Visitors to the area now benefit greatly from the projects which were made possible under NRRTI, such as coach parks, toilet blocks, stop off points and especially, for Moyle, the completion of a substantial environmental improvement project at “The Cottage Wood” in Cushendall.

I want to congratulate the staff of the Heritage Trust for making the position of chair so easy. This was a challenging project with challenging timescales but was completed successfully, on schedule, as a result of their hard work and guidance. I have no doubt this programme has brought significant benefit to the area and would encourage DARD and other such agencies to consider the same delivery mechanism for future programmes.

*Kevin McGarry  
Joint Chairperson NRRTI Subgroup*

It has been a privilege to share the role of Chairperson of the NRRTI subgroup with my colleague Kevin. Throughout this time we had the opportunity to direct funding to many deserving projects. Prior to any offer of financial assistance, all promoters were asked to demonstrate the viability of their project to the assessment panel. Many took advantage of the opportunity NRRTI provided to boost their business and benefit tourism.

Core funding from NRRTI also provided the support Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust needed to develop and implement the programme. Local councils also provided support for the Trust and many of these got further involved by developing and implementing successful projects themselves.

Tourism delivery is sometimes dominated by large organisations, however, NRRTI tried to factor in support for smaller projects as well. Developing a sustainable tourism industry is dependent on a partnership approach involving the public, private and voluntary sector and, of course, the visitors themselves. It also requires funding and new programmes to build on the success of NRRTI as without continued financial support the industry will continue to jump from one crisis to another. Successful delivery of this programme has only been made possible by the commitment and drive of the promoters themselves and the NRRTI team. The results are clearly evident throughout the Causeway Coast and Glens.

*Cllr. Roy Craig  
Joint Chairperson NRRTI subgroup*

## TRUST DIRECTOR'S REPORT



Peter Harper  
TRUST DIRECTOR  
Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust

Now that the Natural Resource Rural Tourism Initiative is drawing to a close it's useful to look back at what we have achieved. This was a special initiative delivered under Peace II which it was hoped would 'harness Northern Ireland's shared cultural and natural identity and resources for the benefit of tourism'. Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust was one of five local delivery bodies selected to draw up sustainable tourism strategies which it was hoped would stimulate rural development and create opportunities for all communities to work together.

Implementation of the programme presented challenges. The late start squeezed delivery time particularly when set against N+2 commitment and spend targets. As far as possible staff tried to make a complicated application process simpler and worked hard to provide advice to potential applicants and encourage applications. On several occasions initial priorities had to be reviewed, for example following the Ministerial Initiative to undertake a Tourism Masterplan for the Causeway Coast and Glens area. This lost valuable delivery time but led to the production of a revised NRRTI strategy more reflective of key recommendations within the Masterplan. It also presented the opportunity to fund a series of improvement works along the Causeway Coastal Route which were later chosen as an award-winning project at the NRRTI Awards as was the improvement works undertaken at Downhill Hostel. The Causeway Coastal Route was also commended as 'Area Tourism Initiative of the Year 2006' at the NITB Tourism Awards.

Summing up the NRRTI programme has had a definite impact on the area. It has further advanced the case for **sustainable tourism** rather than any tourism development. In doing so it has recognised the fundamental link between tourism and the environment. Individual applicants

were encouraged to incorporate best environmental practice wherever possible and in terms of performance over £2.6 m was delivered to 88 projects with less than 0.6% slippage. These figures speak for themselves and are a credit to all members of the team including at various times Karina McCollum, Mark Christie, Clare Dore, Maxime Sizaret and Deirdre Scullion. Our different Chairmen, of both the NRRTI assessment panel and the Trust, Paul Mullan, Kevin McGarry, Cllr Roy Craig and Dr. David Erwin endured many marathon meetings but always ensured the programme stayed on track. Ongoing advice from NITB, EHS and DARD proved invaluable but special mention goes to Gareth Evans, John McKee and all the team at DARD who helped out on operational issues. Lastly but not least, credit should be given to the project promoters who actually delivered the projects on the ground. Everyone worked hard to ensure the programme was a success.

Having delivered the programme I am confident that NRRTI has achieved what we intended it to do and possibly more. The impact of the programme is clearly visible and will benefit the area for many years to come.

## PROJECT OFFICER'S REPORT

Since the NRRTI Programme was launched in March 2003 over £2.6m has been released to 88 projects in the CCGHT NRRTI area with a further £2m levered as match funding. This produced a total investment of over £4.6m with obvious benefit for the local tourism industry.

Over 120 applications were submitted to CCGHT for financial assistance and each was assessed and scored by the NRRTI Subgroup before receiving final approval or otherwise from the CCGHT Board. Many long hours were spent by both groups assessing applications and ensuring that the selection process was fair and transparent throughout. Sometimes when

faced with very tight commitment timeframes this led to long meetings and the efforts of all those involved in the Subgroup and Board meetings were greatly appreciated.

Credit must also go to each of the project promoters who worked closely with CCGHT staff to ensure that their projects were completed within deadline and complied with programme regulations.

I feel that the programme has demonstrated the potential for sustainable tourism in the Causeway Coast and Glens area and has helped to stimulate those rural areas most disadvantaged by thirty years of unrest.



Mark Christie  
NRRTI Project Officer  
Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust

## ACCOMMODATION PROJECTS

### William & McCall Gilfillan Downhill Hostel Improvement Scheme



Financial assistance helped William and McCall Gilfillan undertake major renovations to Downhill Hostel, a magnificent old Victorian building beside Downhill Strand, formerly known as Glenhassan Hall. This enabled them to both expand capacity and improve visitor facilities. The project ensured the hostel was accessible to people with disabilities and incorporated best environmental practice. William and McCall's project won the "Best Accommodation Provider" category at the NRRTI Awards. Commenting, Cllr Norman Hillis said "William and McCall have made marvellous changes to the hostel they run at Downhill, taking great care to ensure the facility is operated in an environmentally friendly manner. This is a tremendous credit to both of them".

### Liz Weir Ballyeamon Camping Barn



Under this project Liz Weir developed a wildflower garden, nature walks and storytelling circle to enhance visitor amenities at Ballyeamon Camping Barn. Where possible, the project involved the use of local materials and native planting schemes. Liz hopes to use the new facility as a performance and exhibition space to compliment other facilities at the camping barn, for example, the 'session house'. Financial assistance from NRRTI has helped to enhance an already successful accommodation project and the nature of the work exemplifies the core values of the programme.

### James & Ann McHenry Dieskirt Farm Enhancement

Grant assistance under NRRTI helped project promoters James and Ann McHenry refurbish and enhance their existing farmhouse B&B. The project allowed for the provision of a new dining area, an extension to an existing bedroom with ensuite together with the provision of a reflexology and relaxation room. This project brought much needed investment to a beautiful rural area and fits perfectly with the overall objective of the programme. Commenting James and Ann said; "The financial assistance we received enabled us to carry out much needed improvement work. We have transformed our Farmhouse B&B into something we can be proud of".

# ACTIVITY TOURISM



## Ulster Gliding Club New Glider

Based at Magilligan the Ulster Gliding Club is the only gliding club in Northern Ireland. Financial assistance from NRRTI enabled the purchase of a modern glider to replace the existing 30 year old glider previously used for training. The new facility has proven extremely popular and encouraged the promoter to extend the range of service it offers to visitors. It provides an additional activity opportunity within the heart of Binevenagh Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.



## Alan Wilson Diving Holidays

Before benefiting from NRRTI funding, Aquasports was a part-time diving supplies business. Funding enabled the project to expand to attract more interest from divers and day tourists visiting Rathlin Island. The purchase of a new rigid inflatable boat and diving equipment has enabled the promoter to provide a flexible charter service for divers. Off season, Alan delivers powerboat and navigation courses in addition to sub aqua dive training at all levels. Other activities catered for by this business include seal watching, bird watching, sea angling and general sight seeing. Commenting, Alan Wilson said, "Funding from NRRTI helped me to expand and develop my business. The North Coast has so much to offer and visitors are keen to experience this by boat. I am confident demand for this service will continue to grow".

## Bryan McAuley

### Bodyboarding & Surfing Without Frontiers

Bryan McAuley's project established the first surfing school in Northern Ireland. It has successfully opened up a new niche for surfing and body-board tuition. As part of the business Bryan runs a "come and try it" session for beginners giving people the chance to sample the surf along the North Coast. Commenting Bryan said,

"It's all about having fun and enjoying the sport. Interest in the sport is growing all the time. We have such a wonderful asset here on our doorstep, we might as well use it".



## Anne Bowen

### Ardclinis Outdoor Adventure

Since 1990, Cushendall based business Ardclinis Adventure Centre has offered a range of different adventure learning and personal development programmes. Keen to expand her business, promoter Anne Bowen took the opportunity to purchase more activity equipment including a zip-line, climbing tower and sit-on-top canoes. The centre attracts visitors from all sections of the community.



## EVENTS

### Ballymena Borough Council Tourism Development At Slemish

Funding from NRRTI helped Ballymena Borough Council develop their traditional St. Patrick's Day event and highlight the saint's connection with Slemish Mountain. As part of the project a coach service was organised from the ECOS centre in Ballymena to take visitors to Slemish. A range of entertainment was provided at both sites and visitors were carefully managed to minimise their environmental impact at Slemish. Funding was provided for two consecutive years allowing enough time for the project to become well established.



### Moyle Arts Development Forum Four Swans Festival

Funding from NRRTI helped Moyle Arts Development Forum and the Four Swans Group develop the Four Swans Festival which has since become an annual event in Ballycastle. The Four Swans Festival is a celebration of local, national and international cultural activities including storytelling, creative writing, poetry, song, music, drama, dance and visual arts. This event was designed to replace the former Northern Lights Festival and attracts visitors from all sides of the community.

### Glens Of Antrim Historical Society Kids And Kulture



This project was established in 2004 and completed over a 3 year period. It aimed to examine the role of the Clachan in the social & economic life of the Glens of Antrim. A dedicated schools project was also established to promote greater appreciation and awareness amongst young people.

One aspect of the project was the "American Wake" where primary school children acted out a play about people from the Glens who emigrated to America during the famine. Another element of this project was the 'Traditional Children's Games' event held at Cushendall beach. Young children had the opportunity to dress up and play the games their parents and grandparents played long before the computer arrived! The project was aimed at primary schools within the Glens and helped improve understanding and interest in the Clachan and the wider cultural heritage of the area. Several schools have since repeated the project which is a good indicator of its success. Commenting at one of the Clachan's activity days, Chairman, Graham Gault said,

"The Clachan Project has really gone from strength to strength. Since our launch, we have taken the opportunity to compare the clustered settlements of Ireland and Scotland with our own clachans, and in particular the relationship their people had with the sea".

# CAUSEWAY COASTAL ROUTE INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

## Background

Midway through the delivery of the NRRTI programme, a Ministerial Initiative identified the need for a Causeway Coast & Glens Tourism Masterplan. The key recommendation within the Masterplan was the development of a tourist trail to rank with other world class car touring routes such as the 'Ring of Kerry' or South Africa's 'Garden Route'. Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust revised their NRRTI strategy to allow for improvements to stop-off points and public amenities along the route and associated 'scenic loops'. Whilst more work needs to be completed, the Causeway Coastal Route has already been featured as one of the top ten most scenic driving routes in the world. A total of 15 stop-off points along with 9 public amenity projects were either created or enhanced as part of this project and all work was undertaken to a high environmental standard. Collectively, these works were commended under the Area Tourism Initiative of the Year category at the 2006 NITB Tourism Awards. Some of the projects assisted under NRRTI included;



### Larne Borough Council Glenarm Stop-off Point

NRRTI assisted improvements to public amenities and an existing visitor stop-off point at Glenarm. This included the provision of children's play facilities. All works were undertaken to incorporate best environmental practice and the site has proven very popular with visitors especially family groups.

### Coleraine Borough Council Magheracross Viewing Point

Magheracross viewing point was transformed into a scenic and attractive stop-off point. The site is situated in the heart of the Causeway Coast AONB and overlooks some of the most stunning scenery on the North Coast. Work undertaken as part of this project included surfacing, footpaths, stone walls, fencing, planting & landscaping. The project also provided picnic facilities, litter bins and interpretative signage.



### Ballymena Borough Council Public Visitor Amenities At Slemish

Financial assistance from NRRTI helped Ballymena Borough Council upgrade the existing public visitor amenities at Slemish Mountain. This included the installation of new interpretation panels within the amenity block. These helped to improve the visitor experience and enhance the annual St. Patrick's Day event.



### Moyle District Council Ardclinis Old Church Layby

This project created a new stop-off point at Ardclinis Old Church and Graveyard. The finished product included car parking spaces and a picnic area for visitors and works undertaken included resurfacing, erection of a stone wall & fence and pathways created. It also included interpretation highlighting the importance of the site for example, its connection with St. MacNissi and the Ardclinis Crozier.



# NRRTI ASSISTED PROJECTS

Aim	Project	Promoter	Grant offered
1	<b>Victorian Walled Garden</b> Establishment of a tearoom,craft outlets, new toilet facilities, reception area and car-parking	Antrim Estates Co	£50,000.00
1	<b>Natural Landscape &amp; Recreational Project</b> Provision of environmentally friendly play equipment at nine self-catering cottages	Antrim Glens Cottages	£10,624.00
1	<b>Writer's Chair</b> Construction of a decorated natural stone sculpture as a focal point for the Rathlin Creative Writers workshop held on Rathlin each year	Ballycastle Creative Writers	£13,181.25
1	<b>St Patrick's Day, Slemish 2004 &amp; 2005</b> To enhance the annual St. Patrick's Day event at Slemish	Ballymena Borough Council	£18,437.00
1	<b>Public Visitor Amenities at Slemish</b> To improve public visitor amenities at Slemish	Ballymena Borough Council	£62,953.38
1	<b>Promoting Culture, Improving Relations</b> Financial support for promotion & organisation of Scottish Pipe Band Championship.	Broughshane Community Association	£12,518.00
1	<b>Entrance Improvements</b> Environmental improvement works at five entrance points to Bushmills	Bushmills Residents Association	£21,626.00
1	<b>Audit of Events</b> Audit of existing events within the Causeway Coast & Glens	Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust	£7,000.00
1	<b>Photographic Project</b> Portfolio of professional images for use in promotion of sustainable tourism and protected area management within the Causeway Coast and Glens	Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust	£5,000.00
1	<b>Rathlin Island Sustainable Tourism Strategy</b> Preparation of a sustainable tourism strategy for Rathlin Island	Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust	£50,000.00
1	<b>Coastal Moorings Study</b> Study identifying coastal visitor mooring sites within the Causeway Coast & Glens	Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust	£50,000.00
1	<b>Cultural Heritage Audit</b> Cultural heritage audit of the Causeway Coast & Glens	Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust	£30,000.00
1	<b>Domestic Marketing</b> Promotion of the Causeway Coast & Glens area to the domestic tourism market- various initiatives including, for emample, an improved Rathlin Island leaflet & a Guide to The Glens	Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust	£60,000.00
1	<b>Camus Viewing Point</b> Upgrade of existing stop-off point	Coleraine Borough Council	£50,000.00
1	<b>Harbour Hill Viewpoint</b> Upgrade of existing stop-off point at Harbour Hill	Coleraine Borough Council	£50,000.00
1	<b>Castlerock Viewing Point</b> Upgrade of existing stop-off point at Castlerock	Coleraine Borough Council	£43,074.00
1	<b>Ballyreagh Road Viewpoint</b> Upgrade of existing stop-off point at Ballyreagh Road, Castlerock	Coleraine Borough Council	£50,000.00
1	<b>Magheracross Viewpoint</b> Upgrade of existing stop-off point at Magheracross, Portrush	Coleraine Borough Council	£50,000.00

# NRRTI ASSISTED PROJECTS

Aim	Project	Promoter	Grant offered
1	<b>East Strand Amenities/Toilet Block</b> Improved visitor amenities and specialist facilities for surfers at East Strand	Coleraine Borough Council	£100,000.00
1	<b>Cultural Environmental Improvements</b> Ulster Scots memorial at Dundarave Estate in Bushmills	Dundarave Residents Association	£13,835.00
1	<b>Glens Feis</b> Financial assistance for the promotion & organisation of Glens Feis	Glens Feis	£9,131.00
1	<b>Kids &amp; Kulture</b> The Clachan Project helped young people to understand more about the importance of this distinctive settlement pattern within the Glens of Antrim	Glens of Antrim Historical Society	£9,998.00
1	<b>Dieskirt Farm B&amp;B Enhancement</b> Enhancement and extension of farmhouse accommodation at Dieskirt B&B	James & Ann McHenry	£18,750.00
1	<b>Play Facilities at Glencloy Visitors Picnic Site</b> Provision of improved visitor amenities at Glencloy visitors picnic site including children's playpark	Larne Borough Council	£50,000.00
1	<b>Carnfunnock Interpretative Signing (1)</b> Comprehensive interpretation project at Carnfunnock Country Park	Larne Borough Council	£4,875.00
1	<b>Carnfunnock Interpretative Signing (2)</b> Comprehensive interpretation project at Carnfunnock Country Park	Larne Borough Council	£5,000.00
1	<b>Ballygally Play Area</b> Improvement of visitor amenities at Ballygally visitors picnic site including children's playpark	Larne Borough Council	£50,000.00
1	<b>Drains Bay Play Facilities</b> Improvement of visitor amenities at Drains Bay visitors picnic site including children's playpark	Larne Borough Council	£50,000.00
1	<b>Glenarm Play Facility</b> Improvement of visitor amenities at Glenarm visitors picnic site including children's playpark	Larne Borough Council	£50,000.00
1	<b>Ballygally Rest Facilities</b> Upgrade of visitor amenities at Ballygally Rest Area	Larne Borough Council	£56,431.50
1	<b>Carnfunnock Amenities</b> Improvement of visitor amenities at Carnfunnock caravan park	Larne Borough Council	£100,000.00
1	<b>Drains Bay Visitors Rest Facilities</b> Improvement of visitor amenities at Drains Bay	Larne Borough Council	£56,431.50
1	<b>Glenarm Visitors Rest Facilities</b> Improvement of visitor amenities at Glenarm	Larne Borough Council	£56,431.50
1	<b>Glenarm Castle Summer Music Festival</b> Establishment of annual outdoor music event at Glenarm Castle	Larne Borough Council	£5,704.00
1	<b>Ballyeamon Camping Barn</b> Enhancement of Camping Barn to include wildflower garden, nature walks, storytelling circle & parking	Liz Weir	£9,436.00
1	<b>Environmental Improvement Scheme</b> Environmental improvement works at mainentrances to village. Cross community scheme with links to similar project in Bushmills	Loughgiel Community Association	£23,264.16

# NRRTI ASSISTED PROJECTS

Aim	Project	Promoter	Grant offered
1	<b>Limepark Arts &amp; Cottages</b> Installation of a geothermal heating system for self catering cottages	Melanie Ward	£6,175.00
1	<b>Art of Convenience</b> Public art projects at 6 different public conveniences and 2 community sites within the Moyle District Council area	Moyle Art in Public Places	£18,060.00
1	<b>Four Swans Festival</b> Support for cultural heritage event featuring storytelling, music, drama and the visual arts.	Moyle Arts Development Forum	£10,000.00
1	<b>Dunseverick Picnic Site and Lay-by</b> Development of a new stop-off point and picnic area	Moyle District Council	£50,000.00
1	<b>Coach Park, Quay Road Ballycastle</b> Provision of new coach park at Quay Road Ballycastle	Moyle District Council	£50,000.00
1	<b>Ardclinis Old Church Lay-by</b> Development of new stop-off point at Ardclinis Old Church	Moyle District Council	£50,000.00
1	<b>Toilet Facilities Rathlin</b> Provision of new toilet facilities at Church Bay on Rathlin Island	Moyle District Council	£100,000.00
1	<b>Toilet Facilities Bushmills</b> Provision of new toilet facilities in Bushmills	Moyle District Council	£100,000.00
1	<b>Coach Park Dundarave, Bushmills</b> Provision of new coach park at Dundarave, Bushmills	Moyle District Council	£50,000.00
1	<b>Cottage Wood: Boundary Walls</b> New stone boundary walls at Cottage Wood, Cushendall	Moyle District Council	£10,000.00
1	<b>Torr Brae B&amp;B upgrade</b> Upgrade of Torr Brae B&B	Oonagh McHenry	£9,644.00
1	<b>Signage Project: Rathlin</b> Tourist directional signage on Rathlin Island	Rathlin Development & Community Association	£3,966.00
1	<b>West Light Public Toilets</b> Improvement of visitor amenities at the West Light on Rathlin Island	RSPB	£100,000.00
1	<b>Signage To Church and Holy Well</b> Tourist directional signing to St Aidan's Church and Holy Well	St Aidans Parish	£3,410.44
1	<b>Downhill Hostel Improvement Scheme</b> Upgrade and improvement of accommodation facilities at Downhill Hostel	William and McCall Gilfillan	£50,000.00
2	<b>Visitor Payback Scheme</b> Research study to examine the feasibility of establishing a Visitor Payback Scheme in the CCGHT area	Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust	£5,000.00
2	<b>Castlerock/Downhill Beach Improvement Scheme</b> Improvement works at Castlerock and Downhill Beaches	Coleraine Borough Council	£19,950.00
2	<b>Castlerock/Downhill Blue Flag Scheme</b> Improvement works to Castlerock and Downhill Beaches	Coleraine Borough Council	£5,550.00
2	<b>Whiterocks/East Strand Beach Improvement Scheme</b> Improvement works at Whiterocks and East Strand Beaches	Coleraine Borough Council	£16,133.00
2	<b>Dungonnell Way</b> Creation of a waymarked walking route and interpretation at Dungonnell Way	Glenravel Environmental Improvement Association	£14,233.00
2	<b>Ballygally Beach</b> Various improvement works aimed at enabling Ballygally Beach to reach Seaside Award Rural Beach standard	Larne Borough Council	£10,000.00

# NRRTI ASSISTED PROJECTS

Aim	Project	Promoter	Grant offered
2	<b>Carnlough Beach Phase 1</b> Various improvement works aimed at enabling Carnlough Beach to reach Seaside Award Rural Beach standard	Larne Borough Council	£7,148.00
2	<b>Carnlough Beach Phase 2</b> Various improvement works aimed at enabling Carnlough Beach to reach Seaside Award Rural Beach standard	Larne Borough Council	£8,625.00
2	<b>Glenarm Beach Phase 1</b> Various improvement works aimed at enabling Glenarm Beach to reach Seaside Award Rural Beach standard	Larne Borough Council	£10,000.00
2	<b>Glenarm Beach Phase 2</b> Various improvement works aimed at enabling Glenarm Beach to reach Seaside Award Rural Beach standard	Larne Borough Council	£10,000.00
2	<b>Carnfunnock Tree Enhancement Phase 1</b> Employment of an arboriculturalist to undertake a survey of existing tree stock and implementation of tree management works	Larne Borough Council	£8,550.00
2	<b>Carnfunnock Tree Enhancement Phase 2</b> Employment of an arboriculturalist to undertake a survey of existing tree stock and implementation of tree management works	Larne Borough Council	£50,000.00
2	<b>Path Upgrading Scheme at Carnfunnock</b> Upgrade of existing path system at Carnfunnock Country Park	Larne Borough Council	£27,375.00
2	<b>Old Mineral Railway Path</b> Upgrade of Old Mineral Railway path between Carnlough village and Gortin quarry	Larne Borough Council	£20,000.00
2	<b>Duneland Boardwalk at Benone</b> To establish a way-marked trail and interpretation at Benone Beach	Limavady Borough Council	£13,578.00
2	<b>Cottage Wood: Footbridges &amp; Pathways</b> Development of a community woodland scheme with improved access, indigenous planting, playpark and carparking at Cottage Wood, Cushendall	Moyle District Council	£20,000.00
2	<b>Cottage Wood: Environmental Management</b> Development of a community woodland scheme with improved access, indigenous planting, playpark and carparking at Cottage Wood, Cushendall	Moyle District Council	£20,000.00
2	<b>Cushendun Beach Seaside award Project</b> Various improvement works aimed at enabling Cushendun Beach to reach Seaside Award Rural Beach standard	National Trust	£4,489.00
2	<b>Portstewart Sand Dune System</b> New way-marked trail and interpretation at Portstewart Strand	National Trust	£20,000.00
2	<b>World Heritage Site: Dunseverick Viewpoint</b> Improvements to existing stop-off point and enhanced alternative access to World Heritage Site	National Trust	£45,671.00
2	<b>Straidkilly: Interpreting Nature</b> Development of a waymarked walking trail at Straidkilly Nature Reserve	Ulster Wildlife Trust	£9,938.00
3	<b>Aquasports</b> Purchase of a 9.1m Rigid Inflatable Boat, air compressor and ancillary diving equipment to provide a charter service for divers & to provide sight seeing and nature watching trips	Alan Wilson	£40,000.00
3	<b>Bushmills Bike Company</b> Provision of a bicycle hire service	Alex Clarke	£709.60

# NRRTI ASSISTED PROJECTS

Aim	Project	Promoter	Grant offered
3	<b>Ardclinis Outdoor Adventure</b> Purchase of equipment to extend range of activities offered including fixed zip line, climbing tower, orienteering area and sit-on-top canoes	Ardclinis Outdoor Adventure	£15,990.00
3	<b>Body Boarding &amp; Surfing without Frontiers</b> Establishment of surf & bodyboard training business	Bryan McAuley	£7,088.00
3	<b>Ocean Adventures</b> Purchase of a Rigid Inflatable Boat to provide sight seeing trips and dive support service	Graham Latimer	£37,013.00
3	<b>Carrowmena Activity Centre</b> Establishment of a new activity centre. This involved the installation of a low ropes course, abseil tower and climbing wall together with the purchase of climbing safety equipment, canoes, wetsuits and archery equipment	Gerald Miller	£23,000.00
3	<b>Marina Development</b> Provision of deep water mooring facilities catering for larger vessels	Moyle District Council	£36,676.00
3	<b>North Irish Diver</b> Purchase of a rigid inflatable boat to provide dive support and sightseeing service along the Antrim Coast	Peter Steele	£32,753.00
3	<b>Tourism Access: Rathlin</b> Upgrade of roads on Rathlin Island as part of a longer term strategy to improve infrastructure	Rathlin Development & Community Association	£40,000.00
3	<b>Cycle Touring Routes</b> Creation of two new cycle routes; Larne to Ballycastle and Glenarm to Ballymena	Sustrans	£35,460.00
3	<b>Glider</b> Purchase of new glider to enable provision of extended training programme for both beginners and visitors	Ulster Gliding Club	£40,000.00
4	<b>Green Accreditation Scheme Phase 1</b> Joint project with Mourne Heritage Trust & South Armagh Tourism Initiative to develop criteria & implement a pilot green tourism accreditation scheme	Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust	£21,122.26
4	<b>Green Accreditation Scheme Phase 2</b> Support for participating businesses to meet the criteria of the pilot Green Tourism Accreditation Scheme	Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust	£43,000.00
4	<b>Raising Awareness</b> This initiative was intended to raise awareness and understanding of sustainable tourism and the unique heritage of the Causeway Coast & Glens. It includes the production of a website, workshops, 2 conferences & various publications	Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust	£44,142.00
4	<b>Study Visits</b> Study trips for the Board and NRRTI Subgroup members to enable them to learn from best practice sustainable tourism and protected area management elsewhere	Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust	£30,000.00

# RATHLIN ISLAND PROJECTS



## Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust Rathlin Island Sustainable Tourism Strategy

The need to prepare a Rathlin Island Sustainable Tourism Strategy was highlighted as a key recommendation within the Causeway Coast & Glens Tourism Masterplan. This ten year strategy aims to establish Rathlin Island as an example of best practice sustainable tourism. Some of the priority actions identified within the strategy include; improving visitor access to the island, developing distinctive products and improving infrastructure & visitor servicing capacity. Developing a sustainable tourism industry is seen as critical not only for tourism but also for the long-term survival of this unique island community.

## Ballycastle Creative Writers Writer's Chair

Ballycastle Creative Writers have been organising a creative writing event; "Let me take you to the Island" on Rathlin for many years. Financial assistance under NRRTI enabled them to create a natural stone sculpture engraved with the names of different writers, past and present, who have taken part in the event. Inspiration for the writer's chair came from the works of Seamus Heaney. Commenting, Heather Newcombe, festival organiser said

"We are honouring the writers of Ireland by erecting this majestic carved stone chair as part of 2004's 'Let me take you to the Island' event".



## Rathlin Development & Community Association: Rathlin Tourism Access & Signage Project

A partnership project involving the RSPB, Sustrans, DRD Roads Service and the Rathlin Community Development Association enabled improvements to be undertaken to both access and signing around Rathlin Island. The project included the installation of new directional signs and an additional visitor information panel.

## RSPB West Light Public Toilets

The provision of new visitor amenities was part of an overall improvement plan at the RSPB West Light seabird centre. NRRTI provided funding for the provision of new public toilets, however, enhanced visitor information facilities were also provided as part of a larger improvement project. The West Light offers visitors the opportunity to visit one of the largest and most accessible seabird colonies in Europe. The new facilities incorporate best environmental practice and have helped to improve the visitor experience at Rathlin's most popular visitor attraction.



# CARNFUNNOCK PROJECTS

## Carnfunnock Country Park

Carnfunnock Country Park is one of the most popular visitor attractions on the Antrim Coast attracting over 150,000 visitors annually. NRRTI funding helped Larne Borough Council undertake the following improvement works within the park.



### Paths

Extensive improvement works were undertaken to the existing path network. Some surfaces were laid with tarmac to accommodate wheelchair users and families with prams. However in other parts of the park, gravel was used as it was felt this enabled the path network to blend in with the rural character of the park.

### Tree Enhancement

NRRTI funding also enabled Larne Borough Council to undertake a tree management plan. This involved surveying the existing tree stock, the results of which were computerised to provide ongoing management information. The survey recommended the removal of some dead trees but also the need for a comprehensive tree planting programme aimed at preserving the rural character of the park. Another aspect of the tree enhancement programme was the development of a 'tree trail' which involved labelling trees around the park and the production of an educational tree trail brochure for visitors.

### Caravan Park

Visitor facilities at Carnfunnock Caravan Park were upgraded to enable them to reach five star standard. This included improvement work to the existing toilets, baby changing facilities, family suite along with the provision of a new recycling area. Indoor showers and parking for cyclists were also provided.

### Interpretation

Financial assistance from NRRTI allowed Carnfunnock to provide 7 interpretation panels at various locations throughout the park. The panels incorporate braille to accommodate those people who may be partially sighted or blind. The location of the panels was also carefully considered to allow access for people with other physical disabilities and provide information on birdlife, butterflies, native mammals, the walled garden and the history of the park.

# ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES



## Glenravel Environmental Improvements Association: Dungonnell Way

This project involved the completion of a 9 mile way-marked walking route starting and finishing at Cargan Picnic Site. This included the creation of a new section of path linking Dungonnell Dam with Glenariff Forest Park. The Association were keen to attract people to this less visited part of the Antrim Coast & Glens Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The project also incorporated interpretation aimed at raising visitor awareness about the natural, cultural and built heritage of the Glenravel area.

## Loughgiel Community Association Environmental Tourism Improvements Bushmills Residents Association Entrance Improvements

These two groups worked in close co-operation to undertake similar environmental improvement work in both Loughgiel and Bushmills. The project helped participants from both villages build community relations. Each village shared their expertise building a firm foundation for further co-operation at a later date. Improvement work undertaken included signing, picnic tables, and planting schemes at the main entrance points to both villages.

## Moyle Art in Public Places Art Of Convenience

The Art of Convenience project was developed by Moyle Art in Public Places Group and intended to challenge the assumption that art should be hidden away in galleries and museums. Professional artists worked with young people and community groups to create public artworks at 6 public conveniences and 2 further sites within the Moyle District Council. Each artwork made an association between the overall theme of water and the individual site. For example, "Rathlin, Our Island Home" was created by local school children to celebrate everything that was good or bad about island life. The project used art to improve the appearance of each public amenity and in the words of the promoter, Pauline Russell from Moyle District Council, "encouraged more visitors to spend a penny in Moyle."

## Ulster Wildlife Trust Interpreting Nature – Straidkilly

Financial assistance allowed for the development of a circular walking trail around Straidkilly Nature Reserve near Carnlough. As well as providing a new visitor attraction, the Ulster Wildlife Trust provided interpretation to raise awareness about their work and the importance of the site for biodiversity. Work undertaken included the installation of an interpretation panel, paths, benches, directional signing and the production of an information leaflet. Andrew Upton of UWT commented, "This new facility aims to make Straidkilly Nature Reserve more accessible and helps to raise visitor awareness of the rich biodiversity within the site."



# BEACH IMPROVEMENTS



## The National Trust Portstewart Sand Dune System

Funding from NRRTI enabled the National Trust to provide a way-marked trail at Portstewart Strand. The completed trail enables visitors to walk a circular route linking Portstewart Strand with the lower Bann estuary. This has helped to channel and manage visitor movement within a fragile dune environment. The inclusion of interpretation panels has helped to raise visitor awareness of the need to balance recreation and conservation at the site.

## Limavady Borough Council Duneland Boardwalk

Limavady Borough Council provided additional board walk facilities at Benone Beach to improve access for people with disabilities. This project also included the provision of interpretation to highlight management issues at this important natural heritage site.



## Larne Borough Council Ballygally Rural Beach Seaside Award

Ballygally Beach is a popular visitor facility which is well used during the summer months. This project involved a series of improvement works to both the beach and the seafront area. Amongst the works undertaken was a huge clean up operation on the beach, the provision of life saving equipment, erection of information panels, installation of litter bins and picnic tables, improved access to the beach itself and the provision of dedicated car-parking for people with disabilities. This is one of a number of similar schemes undertaken at other beaches and seafront areas within the Larne Borough Council area.



# CCGHT SELF IMPLEMENTATION PROJECTS



## Green Accreditation Scheme

This was a joint project undertaken by the Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust, Mourne Heritage Trust and South Armagh Tourism Initiative. The pilot scheme developed criteria for a Green Tourism Accreditation Scheme. Participant businesses were selected from each of the three target areas and each business was then inspected and encouraged to undertake whatever work was identified as necessary to meet accreditation standards. Of the 30 businesses initially selected across the three target areas, 26 were successfully accredited. These included hotels, bed & breakfasts, Tourist Information Centres, small attractions and activity providers. The scheme was modelled on successful projects elsewhere, notably the Scottish Green Tourism Business Scheme and the E.U. Flower. It was hoped the implementation of this pilot would encourage NITB to consider establishing a Northern Ireland wide accreditation scheme. Commenting, Trust Director, Peter Harper said,

“This was a ground breaking initiative. It has demonstrated that a green accreditation scheme for tourism businesses can work and that both visitors and tourism businesses are increasingly interested in environmental issues. Hopefully it has made the case for the establishment of a Northern Ireland wide tourism accreditation scheme.”

## Promoting The Area To The Domestic Market

Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust commissioned the Regional Tourism Partnership to undertake a series of domestic marketing initiatives. These included the production of a Guide to the Glens and an enhanced Rathlin Island Guide. Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust also produced a North Derry AONB guide. All have proven extremely popular with the public and helped to promote the number of domestic visitors coming to the Causeway Coast and Glens. Commenting on the new “Guide to the Glens”, Cllr. Oliver McMullan said; “This is a much needed and welcome boost for the Glens of Antrim area.”

## Raising Awareness

The overall aim of this project was to highlight the unique heritage of the Causeway Coast & Glens and make the link with tourism. Under this project the Trust was able to design its main website, produce several publications including two AONB guides and a Natural Heritage Site Directory. The Trust also organised a Sustainable Tourism Workshop and two major conferences entitled ‘Scenic Views’ and ‘Scenic Views Ahead?’, the first of which attracted David Bellamy, the well known environmental campaigner, as a keynote speaker. On leaving the conference David Bellamy commented,

“This was the best tourism conference I have ever attended. It was good to see the number of younger people who get involved.”



## WHAT THE PROMOTERS SAID ABOUT NRRTI?

### **Mary Blaney** **Glens of Antrim Historical Society**

*"The Glens of Antrim Historical Society has found that the grant aid from NRRTI gave us a tremendous boost. It enabled us to fund the "Clachan Project for Schools" providing a series of educational workshops for children in traditional skills and crafts including baking, set-dancing, storytelling, soft-toy making & model-making. Equipment and other items purchased under the project will be available on-loan to schools after the project is complete."*

### **Anne Bowen** **Adrcinis Adventure Centre**

*I would like to thank NRRTI for the help they gave us in providing a 50% grant for the purchase of new equipment. This has allowed us to expand the business enabling us to offer; exciting and fun activities for companies, businesses, clubs, schools, children, or festivals. We now cater for staff away days, corporate events, multi activity days and summer camps as well as offering mobile climbing wall hire and cycle hire.*

### **Alison McFaul** **Rathlin Development & Community Association**

*"With little motor traffic, Rathlin's quiet lanes have always been popular with ramblers and hill walkers. Our project to improve the condition of the road surface for safe cycling and to provide distance signage to the various landmarks has made them much more accessible to users. Now families with young children can enjoy the pleasures of cycling or explore the island on foot, without the worries of taking on greater distances than they can manage over rough terrain.*

*Thanks to everyone who pulled together to make this happen, especially CCGHT, Sustrans, Roads Service, EHS and RSPB"*

### **Oonagh & Vincent McHenry** **Torr Brae B&B**

*"Funding has improved my business as I am now able to cater for the disabled and elderly more easily. I have found that guests are appreciative of the fact that they now have ramped access instead of steps. Both wheelchair-users and the elderly welcome the easier manoeuvrability into and around the bedrooms and the car-parking area."*

### **Peter Steele** **North Irish Diver**

*"Without assistance from NRRTI we would have been unable to open up the entire Antrim Coastline to so many Divers & Sea Safari passengers. With this assistance we have been able to raise the awareness of marine cetacean activity on the Antrim Coast to thousands of people."*

### **Christine Butler** **Ballymena Borough Council**

*St. Patrick's Day at Slemish has proven extremely successful and undoubtedly the financial support available from NRRTI helped to further improve this popular event in Ballymena Borough Council's calendar.*

### **Peter Thompson** **Coleraine Borough Council**

*"Much of Northern Ireland's appeal as a visitor destination comes from the quality of the natural environment and the individual landscapes which generate rural tourism. The NRRTI programme aimed to support these areas and promote sustainable tourism to retain their allure as visitor destinations and ensure that local people and businesses could continue to derive economic benefit from tourism for many years to come.*

*Many excellent projects have been completed improving what is already on offer along the North Coast. These include*

*new toilet amenity blocks, scenic view points, interpretation of local and natural history and beach safety education and walking trails. Few of these projects would have happened without assistance from NRRTI."*

### **James & Anne McHenry** **Dieskirt Farm B&B**

*"NRRTI funding allowed our business to really grow and we are now getting regular repeat business which has helped to supplement our income from farming. We have received many positive comments about the new rooms and our confidence in the business has grown."*

### **Zoe Warrick** **Larne Borough Council**

*"Although tourism continues to go from strength to strength in Northern Ireland, it is sometimes easy to forget about the natural woodlands that are not as strongly promoted as some of our better known attractions. Financial assistance from NRRTI has enabled us to upgrade Carnfunnock's visitor facilities and maintain the natural habitats that visitors come here to see. With vital funding, we are now able to offer our visitors more facilities and we were particularly pleased to be able to further enhance Carnfunnock to cater better for people with disabilities."*

### **Steven Patterson** **Sustrans**

*"Working with the Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust in delivering the National Cycle Network on mainland County Antrim and Rathlin Island has developed a popular new product for Activity Tourism. The signed routes, maps and panels provided by funding assistance has made cycling much more attractive and the noticeable increase in visitors has had positive economic and environmental impacts in this sensitive rural area."*

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