

Annual Report

NEWRY & MOURNE CO-OPERATIVE



1997-98

GENERATING PROSPERITY



NEWRY & MOURNE CO-OPERATIVE

INCORPORATING

NEWRY & MOURNE ENTERPRISE AGENCY

NEWRY & MOURNE DEVELOPMENTS PLC

Annual Report

1997-98



A COMMUNITY BASED PROJECT

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

1997-98



1972-1997

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1997-98

**NEWRY & MOURNE
ENTERPRISE AGENCY**



GENERATING PROSPERITY

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NEWRY & MOURNE CO-OPERATIVE

THE TWENTY FOURTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF

NEWRY & MOURNE ENTERPRISE AGENCY

Incorporating
NEWRY & MOURNE ENTERPRISE AGENCY

Held in Enterprise House, WIN Business Park, Canal Quay,
Newry, Co. Down
at 7.00pm on 1st December 1998.

AGENDA

1. Apologies.
2. Minutes of Last Annual General Meeting.
3. Chairman's Report.
4. Enterprise Agency Report
5. Financial Director's Report.
6. Auditor's Report.
7. Elections to Board of Directors.
8. Election of Corporate Representatives to
Annual General Meeting of Newry and
Mourne Developments PLC.

By Order of the Board,
Kevin Starrs, Hon. Secretary.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chairman: John MacMahon
Vice-Chairman: Sheila McGuigan
Secretary: Kevin Starrs
Directors: Conor Patterson, Michael Hughes,
Joe Magill, Gordon Coulter, Peter McEvoy,
Councillor Jim McCart, Peter Fitzsimmons, Kathleen Magee,
Kevin Magill, Ronan Denny.

BANKERS

Ulster Bank, Hill Street, Newry

AUDITORS

Fitzpatrick & Kearney,
10c Marcus Square, Newry

SOLICITORS

Donnelly, Neary & Donnelly
Downshire Road, Newry



Past and present Directors of Newry & Mourne Co-operative met to reflect on the organisation's 25 years of service to the community of the region - December 1997

NEWRY & MOURNE CO-OPERATIVE STAFF 1997/1998

Conor Patterson	Chief Executive
Liam Quinn	Financial Controller
Michael Durkin	Senior Business Development Executive (Manufacturing & Technology)
Siobhan O'Gorman	Senior Business Development Executive - Part-Time (Manufacturing & Technology)
John O'Hare	Programme Manager (Newry/Dundalk Business Linkage Programme)
Barbara Whitfield	Senior Business Development Executive
Jennifer Malone	Business Development Executive (Property)
Enda Magill	Business Development Executive (Community Development)
Gráinne Moody	Business Development Executive
Sharon McGrath	Development Officer (Peace & Reconciliation)
Patricia Phillips	Office Services Co-ordinator
Róisín Rushe	Library Administrator
Maria Coyle	Finance Officer
Michelle Frost	Receptionist
Deirdre Goss	Receptionist

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

This is the twenty fourth Annual Report of Newry & Mourne Co-operative. It is an honour to have been the Chairman of the organisation in what was its twenty fifth year of activity and to have been involved in co-ordinating the service to the public provided by the Co-operative and its Enterprise Agency division during 1997/98.

The Co-operative's role in contributing to job creation and to the prosperity and social stability of Newry, South Down and South Armagh was a significant one during the year. Our Board and Executive team have further developed the Co-operative's position as a stakeholder in the creation of a brighter future for our young people. That was why the Co-op was established back in 1972 by a group of local people committed to community self-help.

Those were dark days. Remembering the circumstances which led to the foundation of the Newry & Mourne Co-operative Society helps us to reflect on just how far we have come since then. Unemployment stood at almost 40%, large areas of Newry's commercial centre had been destroyed, politically motivated violence was at its height and emigration was at its highest level since the 1950's. Twenty five years on the principles on which the Co-operative was founded continue to be what motivates our Board of voluntary directors. They are drawn from all sectors of our community and are committed to principles of concern for our fellow citizens, of co-operating together to create a brighter future for our young and of removing barriers of class, creed and religion to the realisation of opportunities.

In the last year, there was, I think, a change in mood, referred to by many as a "new dispensation" which was palpable in our region. The cease-fires of 1997 opened the door, to intensive talks and an historic agreement. The shadow of violence began to fade, the first time a whole generation of young adults had experienced such an atmosphere in their lives. For Newry & Mourne this picture of hope was given added practical relevance by the development of significant new facilities which also occurred during the last year. The opening of the Canal Court Hotel was an enormous step forward for the people of Newry, the first hotel facility available in the town centre for more than 25 years; but more fundamentally perhaps was the lead it gave to investors who were considering Newry as a business prospect. The vibrancy of Newry's town centre has been added to by Marks & Spencer and Sainsbury's with much more to come. At last Newry & Mourne has begun to capitalise on the enormous advantage of having one of the best strategic locations in Ireland, offering easy access to both Belfast and Dublin.

For us in the Co-operative, 1997/98 was a time when a milestone in our own history as an organisation, coincided with a watershed in the history of our country and of our town. At a time when our future probably looks brighter than at any time in the past 25 years I would like to pay tribute to the past Directors, shareholders and staff of the Co-operative who worked so hard to create better conditions for the people of our area. It is in no small measure due to their efforts that the Co-operative and Enterprise Agency has been able to exercise such an influence in

the development of the Newry & Mourne area.

During 1997/98 the Agency was the principal delivery agent for Newry & Mourne District Council's economic development strategy; it co-ordinated with the District Council the implementation of the Peace & Reconciliation Programme in Newry & Mourne and it worked through the Community Regeneration Agencies Network (CRAN) to foster collaboration between the Co-operative, ROSA, ROMAL and the Confederation of Community Groups.

On a wider geographical stage the Agency put in place a comprehensive package of cross-border measures to promote economic collaboration between Newry & Mourne and Louth; it administered the EU PESCA Programme for fishing communities in Northern Ireland; and delivered the Community Business Programme for LEDU in Craigavon, Armagh, Down, Banbridge and Newry & Mourne. The Agency was also appointed as an appraiser of project proposals in the border counties of the Irish Republic by Combat Poverty/ADM.

At a policy level the Co-operative was represented on, among other influential groupings, the Newry & Mourne Economic Forum, the Newry & Mourne Peace & Reconciliation District Partnership, the South Down/South Armagh LEADER Action Group, the CBI/IBEC Belfast-Dublin Economic Corridor Taskforce, the Ulster Community Investment Trust and the Business In The Community Business Leadership Team.

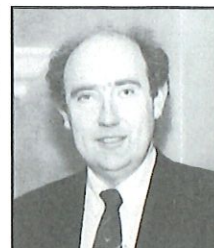
The Co-operative hosted visits by the Secretary of State Mo Mowlam, Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs David Andrews, the Chairman of the US Senate Appropriations Committee (Foreign Operations) Mitch McConnell, a group of 10 US Congressmen and the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs Alexander Downer.

In all of this activity, the Co-operative, through the Enterprise Agency, has placed great emphasis on its partnership with Newry & Mourne District Council, LEDU, DANI, the IFI, Enterprise Newry and other agencies.

Our ability to pursue this collaborative agenda has, to a considerable degree, been made possible by the commitment of the Newry & Mourne District Council. I would like to pay special tribute to our Councillors for their efforts on behalf of the people of Newry, South Down and South Armagh.

Finally, I would like to thank the Chief Executive and staff of the Co-operative and Enterprise Agency. The range of activities listed in this report and the influence which the Co-operative, as a relatively modestly resourced organisation, has been able to exercise, testifies to the quality of our team and their commitment to the community.

John McBlair



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NEWRY & MOURNE CO-OPERATIVE

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF SERVICE TO NEWRY & MOURNE

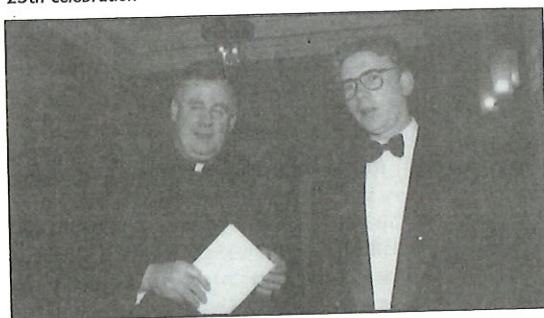
CANAL COURT HOTEL NEWRY
6th March 1998



Some of the almost 500 people who attended the Co-operative's
25th celebration



Chairman John MacMahon



Canon Stephenson and Ciaran Rafferty



Councillors Danny Kennedy and Andy Moffett and their wives



Gordon Coulter and his wife



Current and past Chief Executives, Conor Patterson, Frank Dolaghan and Margaret Andrews and past Chairman Joe Magill and his wife Sheila, with representatives from Sainsbury's and Co-operation North



Arthur Morgan, Peter Connolly, Tom Kelly and their wives



Tom Short (LEDU), Violet McCabe (LEDU) and past director Eddy McIlroy with guests

ENTERPRISE AGENCY DIVISION

NEWRY & MOURNE CO-OPERATIVE

ACTIVITY REPORT

THE ENTERPRISE AGENCY DIVISION'S Mission Statement is "to contribute to the growth and prosperity and thus the social stability of the Newry & Mourne region by undertaking enterprise, business, economic and community development initiatives independently and in partnership with others".

Our main objectives are: 1) to increase the stock of new businesses and increase the competitiveness of existing businesses in the Newry & Mourne area; and 2) to assist in the strategic development of the region by: advising on the efficient allocation of resources, promoting the region as an investment location, and contributing to central and local government policy making. The range of initiatives which we are now involved in is outlined below.

1. PROVISION OF WORKSPACE

1.1 LOW COST WORKSPACE - VITAL ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE

In 1997/98 WIN Business Park, Warrenpoint Enterprise Centre and the RDC at WIN provided 68 business units. During the year the level of occupancy in the three centres was 100%, 100% and 100% respectively. There were 68 businesses located in the three centres occupying approximately 70,000 sq. ft. and employing 200 people.



Enterprise House at WIN Business Park, Newry

1.2 EXPANDING WORKSPACE PROVISION

During 1997/98 work began on refurbishing the derelict area of WIN Business Park which had in previous years been occupied by Community Industries. The plan involved the creation of 6 office and 3 manufacturing units at a cost of approximately £350,000. Work also began on a 2,000 sq. ft. (20%) extension to the Enterprise units at Warrenpoint Enterprise Centre.



Redevelopment of derelict premises - WIN

2. DEVELOPMENT OF NEW BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT

In 1997/98 the Agency was involved in a wide range of activities to support business development in Newry & Mourne:

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2.1 COUNSELLING

This year our business counselling service for prospective start-up companies was provided to 223 local people which means that a total of 4,199 people have availed of this service since 1984. As a free and confidential service, which we are able to provide because of support from LEDU, it is provided to anyone considering the option of self-employment.

During the year the Agency helped to set up 58 new businesses in Newry & Mourne through the Self Start Programme.

2.2 TRAINING

Developing the skills of managers and employees is the key to business success. It is therefore important that anyone considering the self-employment option takes the opportunity to complete Business Start Training.

From April 1997 to March 1998 we provided 12 training courses for 110 people. Business Start Training is funded by LEDU and is free of charge to participants.

The Agency also delivered training through a number of its target programmes. Namely: 1) the Enterprise Training for Part-Time Business Programme which provided training for 15 people, and, 2) the NOW (New Opportunities for Women) Programme through which 10 women received training in Personal Development and Return to Work Skills.

ACTIVITY REPORT

2.3 NEWRY & MOURNE ENTERPRISE FUND

The Enterprise Fund is now in its thirteenth year and has made a significant impact in terms of financial support for new businesses in the area. To date the Fund has made 287 loans totalling £452,050. The recipients of the Fund have been able to raise further financial support from local banks, LEDU and the Princes Youth Business Trust. In the year under review 15 projects were approved for financial support. the Fund is an integral part of the Agency's activities but particular mention should be made of our external finance committee members, Mr R. Connolly, Ulster Bank and Mr P. Kane, F.M. Systems.

2.4 COMMUNITY BUSINESS PROGRAMME

The Enterprise Agency manages and administers the Community Business Start-up Programme for LEDU in the Southern Region (i.e. in the District Council areas of Newry & Mourne, Banbridge, Craigavon, Armagh City and District and Down) up to March 2000.

The main aim of the Programme is to establish and develop community based businesses which will be economically sustainable. Enda Magill manages the Programme. Groups supported during the year included Tele Iúr (Newry), Vincents Ltd (Downpatrick), Oznam Enterprises Ltd (Newry), OnTrack Business Bureau (Craigavon), East Down Trainers Association Ltd (Downpatrick), Keady IT and Slieve Gullion Courtyard Restaurant Ltd.

2.5 PEACE & RECONCILIATION PROGRAMME

During 1997/98 the Agency continued to service the Peace & Reconciliation District Partnership Programme in Newry & Mourne, as part of the Consortium formed with Newry & Mourne District Council.

By December 1997 the District Partnership had committed its allocation of £2.3m to 125 projects and programmes in the Newry & Mourne area. The impact of the programme right across the region, the efficiency of its delivery and the innovativeness of its strategic approach were remarked upon publicly by the Secretary of State. In addition Minister Paul Murphy cited the Newry & Mourne Peace & Reconciliation Programme in the House of Commons as an example of best practice.



'Sparks in the Dark' - One of the groups supported by the Newry & Mourne Peace & Reconciliation Programme

As a result of its efforts in administering the first phase of the Programme the Consortium of Newry & Mourne Enterprise Agency and Newry & Mourne District Council was appointed by the District Partnership in March 1998 to deliver the second phase of the programme for the 1st April 1998 - 31st March 2000 period, i.e. an allocation of a further £1.4m.

2.6 PESCA PROGRAMME

In December 1997 the Agency's contract was renewed with the Department of Agriculture N.I. to administer and manage the Northern Ireland PESCA Programme, which provides EU aid to fishing dependent communities in Northern Ireland. By 31st March 1998 approximately 92% of the three year PESCA Programme budget had been allocated. An independent mid-term evaluation of the Programme by Edinburgh based Nautilus Consultants stated that: "The high proportion of individuals and private sector applicants compared to other regions is encouraging and a credit to the delivery organisation. All parties involved in the delivery of the Programme have developed good working relationships." The success of the PESCA Programme was in no small measure due to the efficiency and dedication of Barbara Whitfield.

2.7 NEWRY AND MOURNE DISTRICT COUNCIL LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

In April 1997 the Agency was appointed by Newry & Mourne District Council as the principal deliverer of measures in its 1997-1999 Local Economic Development Strategy. During the year the Agency implemented the following programmes to which Newry & Mourne District Council made a financial contribution:

- Newry & Mourne Ambassadors Club
- Export Development in TSN Areas
- Enterprise Training for Part-time Businesses
- Rural Outreach Programme

ACTIVITY REPORT

- Manufacturing Effectiveness Programme
- Entrepreneur Linkage Programme
- Newry & Mourne Business Education Partnership
- Cross Border

- ▶ Newry/Dundalk Business Linkage Programme
- ▶ Product Transfer Programme
- ▶ PLATO Programme

2.7.1 NEWRY AND MOURNE EXPATRIATE NETWORK (AMBASSADORS CLUB)

During the year the Agency expanded its Expatriate Network, the Newry & Mourne Ambassadors Club to include more than 300 members across the world. The Club is a network of graduates and business people originally from the Newry & Mourne area now living overseas who wish to be involved in regeneration initiatives in the area and to be kept informed of the development of the area's business and trade. It is hoped that some of these may be encouraged to return home to set up in business. A news bulletin for expatriates, 'Vision21', was published each quarter during 1997/98 and distributed to some 1,200 expatriates and key influencers each quarter.



Newry & Mourne Ambassador Ray Doherty, originally from Killeel, now living in South Africa, pictured outside the Enterprise Agency with John O'Hare.

2.7.2 EXPORT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME IN TSN AREAS

This Programme was funded by Newry & Mourne District Council and the Peace & Reconciliation District Partnership and comprised two actions:

2.7.2.1 Newry & Mourne Export Survey

The Agency, under the Programme, carried out the first ever

comprehensive survey of export trends amongst companies in the region. The survey revealed that for 73% of local companies the Republic of Ireland was their biggest market - a key finding. The survey made a number of recommendations which were submitted to LEDU and Newry & Mourne District Council for consideration.

2.7.2.2 Export Development Programme

Focusing on young companies with growth potential, this element of the programme provided mentoring, a business plan and assistance to attend overseas joint venture brokering events to 8 companies. In addition, it enabled the Agency to represent the interests of several of the Newry & Mourne companies at trade events in Europe.

2.7.3 ENTERPRISE TRAINING FOR PART-TIME BUSINESSES

Following a successful pilot programme in South Armagh, this programme for part-time businesses wishing to develop into full-time trading was mainstreamed across Newry & Mourne. During the year, 15 part-time business owner/managers received advice and counselling.

2.7.4 RURAL OUTREACH PROGRAMME

This programme enabled the Agency to hold a monthly surgery in Crossmaglen and in various centres in South Down for people considering starting or expanding a business. The Agency was also able to provide on-site counselling for people generally interested in accessing grants for community development, as well as students interested in a career in business.

2.7.5 MANUFACTURING EFFECTIVENESS PROGRAMME

Also part funded by LEDU, this programme provided a unique, practical service to local manufacturers. It provided technical advice on restructuring production lines, saving energy and so on. As an example of its impact one company employing 25 people was saved from closure. The 7 companies assisted achieved improvements in production efficiency ranging from 25%-47%.

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2.7.6 ENTREPRENEUR LINKAGE PROGRAMME

This programme enabled the Agency to attend, on behalf of Newry & Mourne companies, European trade brokering events.

2.7.7 NEWRY & MOURNE BUSINESS EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

During the year the Agency helped to secure funding for the Newry & Mourne Business Education Partnership. The Agency was then appointed to assist in delivering the Partnership's Action Plan. The Business Education Partnership links all Newry & Mourne's 15 post-primary schools and representatives of the business community in the region. The aim of the Business Education Partnership is to (a) improve the employability and achievement levels of our young people, and (b) provide schools with a sharper economic focus by facilitating collaboration with the commercial/industrial community.

Among the activities of the Business Education Partnership during 1997/98 were a series of Enterprise Awareness events for pupils aged 14-16, a curriculum awareness programme for the business community, and the production of a signposting manual for school teachers.

2.8 NOW/DEVOTE PROGRAMME

The NOW/DEVOTE Programme officially ended in November 1997. During the year 10 women completed training in Personal Development and Return to Work Skills. The women also achieved an NVQ Level II in Business Administration. As part of the transnational dimension of the Programme 21 women involved in similar programmes in Finland visited the Enterprise Agency. All the women as a result of the Programme made a successful transition into further training, full-time education or employment.



The Agency's partner in Finland, the Vaasa Womens Group

2.9 LEDU ACTION PLAN



A strong partnership developing the economy of Newry & Mourne (L-R) Eddy Curtis (Newry & Mourne District Council), Mary Young (LEDU), Kevin O'Neill (District Council Clerk), Tom Short LEDU and Conor Patterson (Newry & Mourne Enterprise Agency).

In April 1997 the Agency was one of only two Enterprise Agency's in Northern Ireland awarded funding by LEDU for three years (1997-1999) for its Economic Development Programme. Several of these initiatives are being co-funded by Newry & Mourne District Council.

2.9.1 THE BUSINESS INCUBATION PROGRAMME

This was a LEDU led initiative which provided intensive assistance to two new companies with growth potential during the year.

3. CROSS BORDER PARTNERSHIPS AND ACTIVITIES

3.1 NEWRY & MOURNE/LOUTH PRODUCT TRANSFER PROGRAMME

This major joint initiative between the Enterprise Agency, the Louth County Enterprise Board, and International Business Initiatives Belfast, was launched in November 1997. Its aim is to introduce new products and/or manufacturing processes into the Newry & Mourne/Louth region under licence from North America. Twenty-four companies were recruited onto an intensive programme of assessment, training and market research with a view to securing joint ventures for them with US or Canadian business partners. The Programme will run to 31st December 1999.

ACTIVITY REPORT

3.2 NEWRY/DUNDALK BUSINESS LINKAGE PROGRAMME

This major programme to stimulate trade, business co-operation and Government Agency collaboration between Newry & Dundalk was launched in April 1997. In June 1997 a Programme Manager, John O'Hare formerly of O'Hare Animal Feeds and An Bord Trachtala, was appointed. A Newry/Dundalk Business Linkage Forum was established comprising 35 business and public sector leaders from Newry/Dundalk, a major Newry/Dundalk Manufacturing Excellence Directory was commissioned and a number of Working Groups established to look at co-operation in the fields of rural development, education and IT/innovation.



Board member Ronan Denny addressing the Newry/Dundalk Business Linkage Forum. Also pictured are Dermot O'Doherty (Forfas), Co-operative Board member Kevin Magill, Brian Rowntree (Newry Chamber of Commerce) and Eamon Nugent (Training & Employment Agency)

3.3 NEWRY/DUNDALK COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

3.3.1 Community Leadership/Advanced Economic Development Training

In March 1998 the Agency launched an innovative training programme for community activists from Newry & Mourne and Dundalk. The Programme was accredited by the Northern Ireland Open College Network at Level III (i.e. providing university entry). The aim of the Programme is to formally validate the experience of community activists and to provide structured training to enhance their ability to engage in community economic development.

The following groups appointed representatives to participate in the programme:

- Meadow/Armagh Road (Newry)
- Whitegates Community Business (Newry)

- Kilkeel Development Association
- Camlough Regeneration
- Central Mournes Community Association
- Redeemer Parish Council (Dundalk)
- GROW (Dundalk and Drogheda)
- Dundalk Deaf & Hard of Hearing

3.3.2 Newry & Mourne/Louth Skills Survey

In February 1998 the Agency published the first comprehensive cross border skills survey carried out in Ireland, focusing on the Newry & Mourne, Dundalk and Drogheda labour market areas.

This report led directly to the establishment of an EU sponsored Territorial Employment Pact in Newry & Mourne, the only such designated area in Northern Ireland.

3.4 PLATO

In March 1998 the 2 year PLATO pilot programme in Newry & Mourne/Louth officially ended. The Programme had a considerable impact during these two years. An independent evaluation by Dublin based Goodbody Consultants, commissioned by the Department of Trade, Enterprise and Employment, concluded that the PLATO pilot programme in Newry & Mourne/Louth had contributed to the creation of 143 jobs in the region and resulted in a growth in turnover of 30% p.a. for participating companies with £12m being added to the local economy. As the pilot programme neared its completion Irene Monaghan decided to resign her position as Programme Manager to take up a post in Dublin co-ordinating PLATO at national level. The success of the pilot was in no small measure due to the efforts of Irene, supported by the Agency, particularly Deirdre Goss. In January 1998, Irene Monaghan was replaced by Margaret Hearty, formerly of Co-operation North. As a result of the success of the pilot programme Margaret was able to secure funding for a second PLATO programme in Louth/Newry & Mourne which will run from 1st April 1998 - 31st March 2000.

3.5 APPRAISOR OF PROJECTS IN BORDER COUNTIES

In 1997 the Agency was appointed by Combat Poverty/ADM to appraise projects in the Republic of Ireland. In the course of the year the Agency appraised some 12 projects.

ACTIVITY REPORT

4. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



WIN Business Park working closely with its host community

The Co-operative was active in community development in Newry & Mourne through the Community Regeneration Agencies Network (CRAN), a partnership of community based regeneration agencies in the Newry & Mourne area. The members of CRAN are Newry & Mourne Co-operative, ROSA (Regeneration of South Armagh), ROMAL (Regeneration of the Mournes Area Ltd), and the Confederation of Community Groups.

The Co-operative is also represented at Board level on the District Partnership for Peace & Reconciliation by Mr Michael Hughes.

The Co-operative Enterprise Agency division has played a pivotal role in the delivery of the Peace & Reconciliation Programme in Newry & Mourne which has had a very significant impact on disadvantaged communities and excluded groups across Newry & Mourne.

During 1997/98 the Co-operative has worked closely with its host community in Mourneview, Murphy Crescent and Canal Street:

- Jennifer Malone represents the Co-operative on the Canal Street/North Ward Regeneration Group;
- The Canal Street Group and the Mourneview Community Association were both offered the meeting rooms and administrative services of the Co-operative free of charge;
- The Mourneview Community Association was assisted in securing £15,000 for environmental improvements from the Programme for Peace & Reconciliation;
- The Co-operative provided sponsorship to the Mountainview Football Team in Mourneview;

- The Co-operative part sponsored a Christmas Party for the elderly residents of Mourneview/Murphy Crescent.

5. INFLUENCING POLICY & PROMOTING THE REGION

During the year Newry & Mourne Co-operative and its Enterprise Agency division exercised considerable influence in lobbying for economic and social development in the Newry & Mourne and the east border region

Conor Patterson, Chief Executive, served as Chairman of the Newry & Mourne Economic Forum, a member of the South Down/South Armagh LEADER Action Group, a Board member of Enterprise Newry, and a Board member of the Ulster Community Conference Ltd. He also sat on the CBI/IBEC Belfast-Dublin Economic Corridor Task Force.

Michael Hughes represented the Co-operative as a Board member on the District Partnership for Peace & Reconciliation. Chairman John MacMahon was a Board member of ROSA, Peter Fitzsimmons was Chairman of the Newry & Mourne Business Education Partnership, a member of the LEDU Finance Committee and a member of the CBI. Gordon Coulter (M.B.E.) was Chairman of Kilkeel Development Association and Chairman of the Business In The Community Leadership Team in Newry & Mourne. Joe Magill was a Board member of Enterprise Newry whilst Ronan Denny was a member of the PLATO Steering Committee and the Newry/Dundalk Business Linkage Forum. Peter McEvoy was Chairman of the Northern Ireland Business Education Partnership Cultural Awareness Working Group. Jim McCart, as well as being a local Councillor, was on the Board of the Warrenpoint Harbour Authority and the Southern Education and Library Board.

During the year the Agency hosted visits, in partnership with the District Council, by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Mo Mowlam; Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Republic of Ireland David Andrews; Mitch McConnell, Chairman of the US Senate Appropriations Committee (Foreign Operations); a group of 10 US Congressmen; Alexander Downer the Australian Foreign Minister; and contributed to visits by Ministers Paul Murphy and Lord Dubs, the Low Pay Commission, and various senior European Commission officials.

ACTIVITY REPORT



Chief Executive Conor Patterson with David Andrews and Seamus Mallon at WIN - December 1997



Pressing Newry & Mourne's case for increased investment with Secretary of State Mo Mowlam



John MacMahon (Chairman), Conor Patterson and Peter Fitzsimmons with Senator Mitch McConnell and IFI Chairman Willie McCarter - August 1997



American Congressmen and business leaders listening to a presentation on the Newry & Mourne region as an investment opportunity - WIN November 1997

6. BUSINESS LIBRARY

The Business Library is a valuable resource for the community providing a wide range of business reference material. It is a free service which business owners, third level students and school pupils are encouraged to use.

As well as being an access point for the EU sponsored Euro Info Centre at Dundalk Institute of Technology the library is now an access centre for the LEDU sponsored EDNET economic development network in Northern Ireland. The Agency now provides on-line access to information on global trade opportunities, market research, policy development, legislation and tender opportunities as well as access to the internet.

7. OFFICE SERVICES

Our Office Services which include telephone answering, word processing, desk-top publishing, photocopying, colour printing and fax are available to businesses, community organisations, voluntary organisations and individuals. Michelle Frost and Deirdre Goss, our Receptionists handle all our enquiries.

8. INTERNATIONAL CONTACTS

The Enterprise Agency continued to exchange experience with agencies in other parts of Europe, particularly in 1997/1998 with Finland under the auspices of the New Opportunities for Women (NOW) Programme.

9. QUALITY ACCREDITATION

9.1 ISO 9002

The Enterprise Agency has been registered as a BS5750 (ISO9002) quality assured body since June 1991. During the year the Agency had its internationally recognised accreditation renewed by the UK National Quality Assurance (NQA) organisation.

ACTIVITY REPORT

The ISO 9002 Operational Manual includes procedures for:

- Managed Workspace
- Training
- Manufacturing Support Programmes
- Office/Secretarial Services
- Self Start
- Business Counselling
- PESCA
- Enterprise Fund
- Peace & Reconciliation
- Newry & Mourne Directory
- Newry & Mourne District Council Programmes
- Community Business
- Cross Border Programmes
- Supplier Approval/Purchasing
- Quality Audit
- Library

Each procedure is subject to internal audits twice yearly and external audits once a year. In addition specific contracts are subject to third party audits which form part of the monitoring process.

9.2 LEDU CAPABILITY REGISTER

During the year LEDU carried out a comprehensive audit of the capabilities of all Northern Ireland's LEA's, looking at the quality of the workspace provided, their competence as business counsellors and managers of economic development programmes, and their role in the strategic development of their areas. The aim of this exercise was primarily to set benchmark standards for economic and business development delivery agents.

Newry & Mourne Enterprise Agency was ranked by LEDU as a highly competent and efficient "A -class" organisation.

10. NEW STAFF

Michael Durkin

(Senior Business Development Executive - Manufacturing & Technology)



Michael is responsible for a number of programmes, the purpose of which is to improve the efficiency of established manufacturing companies. Michael spent over twenty years in the electronics and computer based industries with sales and marketing, personnel and general management experience. He has extensive experience of trade development.

Liam Quinn ACA

(Financial Controller)



During the year Liam was appointed as Financial Controller for the Enterprise Agency. Liam is a Chartered Accountant who, before joining the Agency, worked for Coopers & Lybrand in Portadown and Belfast.

John O'Hare

(Manager - Newry/Dundalk Business Linkage Programme)



John was appointed as the Manager of the Newry/Dundalk Business Linkage Programme in June 1997. The aim of the

programme is to deepen trade and economic links and to foster collaboration between these two main border towns. John, formerly of O'Hare Animal Feeds (Newry and Dundalk) and An Bord Trachtala, managed his own business, 'Marketing on Call' before joining the Agency

ACTIVITY REPORT

II. NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Ronan Denny

Chief Executive, Louth County Enterprise Board



Ronan was appointed to the Board in July 1997. Prior to taking up this position Ronan was employed by Newry & Mourne Enterprise Agency as Senior Business Development Executive with responsibility for the Regional Development Centre. Ronan has 20

years experience at a senior level with US multinational computer companies in Ireland. Ronan is deeply committed to cross-border co-operation.

Kevin Magill



Kevin was appointed to the Board of Directors in September 1997. A Barrister by profession, Kevin served 1 year at Inns of Court School of Law in London, was called to the Bar of England and Wales in 1995 and was called to the Bar in Northern Ireland in 1997. He now

practices full-time in Northern Ireland. Kevin grew up and was educated in Newry and is committed to creating employment opportunities for the region's young people.

NEWRY & MOURNE CO-OPERATIVE

Annual Report

1997-98



GENERATING PROSPERITY



1972-1997