



connswater community
greenway



Naming of Flora Street Walkway Playpark to Friendship Playpark

1. Introduction

The Connswater Community Greenway Trust carried out a public naming process for six new structures along the CCG in 2017. These structures are under Belfast City Council ownership. It was decided to omit one of the naming options (Flora Street Walkway playpark) from the final vote stage after one of the preferred name options (Maureen Ridgeway) had been deemed ineligible in respect of the Council's naming policy.

To ensure that the playpark has the opportunity to be publicly named alongside the other CCG structures, Connswater Community Greenway Trust liaised with Maureen Ridgeway and invited her to name the structure, in line with the Council's policy.

2. Community Consultation

During the naming process of the Flora Street Walkway playpark, the name 'Maureen Ridgeway' was the most popular nomination receiving a total of 81 out of 149 possible nominations. The catchment area of the vote came from across east Belfast and was not just isolated to the Flora Street Walkway area. Nominations were many received through an online process and hard copy nominations were also submitted in local facilities including Elmgrove Primary School, Bloomfield Community Association, Avoniel Leisure Centre and EastSide Visitor Centre. Feedback from the nominees included;

"Her work for the children of east Belfast through Avoniel Playcentre for over 30 years should be remembered for years to come."

"Maureen Ridgeway deserves some type of recognition for the 30 years of her life she spent nurturing all of the hundreds of children that passed through Avoniel play centre."

"Maureen worked in Avoniel play centre for years - she was a big part of Avoniel park. She cared and looked after the kids from that area for years."

It was discovered after this public consultation process that the name 'Maureen Ridgeway' did not meet the current Belfast City Council policy and as such the naming of the playpark was postponed.

However, to ensure that the playpark has the opportunity to be publicly named alongside the other CCG structures, Connswater Community Greenway Trust liaised with Belfast City Council and suggested that Maureen Ridgeway be invited to name the structure, in line with the Council's policy. The decision to do so was based on the community consultation carried out and the support from the public to name the play park after Maureen Ridgeway.

After consultation with Maureen she has suggested to name the structure 'Friendship Play Park' to reflect how the play park and other facilities in the area

such as the leisure centre and primary school all encourage friendship and play in the community.

As a result, Connswater Community Greenway Trust agreed to carry out community consultation of the name 'Friendship Playpark' in order to ensure local support for the renaming.

Consultation was carried out with several community groups in the area including Bloomfield Community Association, Charter NI, The Diamond Project and Avoniel Community Garden. All groups are in full support of the naming and feel that 'Friendship playpark' will support the positive image of the area.

Bloomfield Community Association in particular feel that the naming of the park will help to alleviate some of the recent issues of anti social behaviour and will encourage a sense of positive community ownership amongst local children and families. Bloomfield Community Association is the main community organisation in the area with a catchment area including Bloomfield, Beersbridge and Orangefield. The group delivers early years support, after schools, youth programmes and community support to children and families in the area. Bloomfield Community Association has been in operation for over twenty years.

The local volunteers and residents from the Diamond Project are extremely passionate about recognising Maureen Ridgeway due to her many years of volunteering and support to the local community. By inviting Maureen to name the play park will again encourage a sense of ownership in this area and reinforce the benefits of outdoor play in the community. The Diamond Project is a subsidiary project of Charter NI, and is made up of a group of 12 local residents mainly in the Lord Street and Avoniel area. Their main focus is targeting dereliction and encouraging physical improvements in the area. Charter NI have been in operation since 2000 and have a long track record of working with grassroots local communities especially in the Avoniel, Beersbridge and Albertbridge areas.

The proposed name 'Friendship Playpark' has also been reported to the naming Connswater Community Greenway Trust naming panel who have gave full support. The naming panel is made up of the following representatives.

Representatives
Connswater Community Greenway Trust
Belfast City Council Parks and Leisure
East Belfast Community Development Agency
Bloomfield Community Association
The Very Local History Group

