

Marrowbone Community Association

Marrowbone Community Association are a small community based organisation that provide local people living in the Ardoyne area of North Belfast with advisory services around training, employment and access to affordable housing. The organisation has purchased and is in the very early stages of refurbishing the Sacred Heart Parochial Hall which is based just off the Oldpark Road.

The organisation had already secured capital funding from Belfast City Council to restore the currently vacant asset into a thriving community hub. However with limited experience in managing commercial buildings, Marrowbone sought advice on how they could operate the restored Hall as a sustainable asset in the long term



What support has NBEI provided?

Given this limited experience in the management of commercial buildings, the North Belfast Social Enterprise Hub sign posted Marrowbone Community Association to NBEI for potentially further investment support and technical assistance around asset management.

After an application, NBEI provided Marrowbone with funding to procure the services of a **business mentor** with experience in this area. The appointed mentor worked alongside Marrowbone's in house project worker for **15 days to develop their business skills** and enhance the **commercial capacity** of the organisation moving forward.

The mentor also provided a detailed review of the project's current business plan and other existing feasibility documents. They were then able to provide a number of strategic recommendations which could potentially make the Marrowbone project a sustainable asset based social enterprise in the long term.

How has NBEI support helped and who has benefited so far?

- The strategic recommendations made by the business mentor were wide ranging but focussed on how the Marrowbone project could operate as a sustainable asset based social enterprise. The 15 days of mentoring activity involved a review and re-working of the financial projections as well as a comprehensive search to identify potential partners, uses/users and also tenants for the new building once completed. It also provided advice on asset and facilities management, the development of appropriate policies and procedures and how the alternative income streams could be generated to ensure the long term viability of the project.
- The Marrowbone social enterprise project demonstrated that community group's embarking on an asset-based development can clearly benefit from technical support and advice provided by those with previous experience in this process. Although there is still a lot of work to be done to complete both phase 1 and phase 2 of the Sacred Hearth Parochial, as of April 2018 the first phase of refurbishments is under way and will continue of the summer months.