

The 2025-2028 Corrymeela Community Strategy:

UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER BETTER, TRUST EACH OTHER MORE

1. INTRODUCTION FROM THE CHAIR OF COUNCIL

In an ever changing and complex world the distinct contribution of the Corrymeela Community is ever more essential as we continue to contribute to the work of peace and reconciliation both here in Northern Ireland and in a wider world. Our influence in the peace sector has been unique as we have sought to engage with those of difference, had difficult conversations and shared our lived experiences to assist us in moving towards a more cohesive and peaceful society.

The vision and leadership of those who have gone before have been pivotal in creating and shaping a culture of generous welcome and acceptance of others. These role models inspired us to honestly look at ourselves and to have the courage to begin that change of respect and understanding of others within each of us. As we look to the future, we acknowledge the legacy of these inspirational leaders and recognise that the work of the Corrymeela Community is ever more essential as the baton continues to be passed to the next generation of peace builders.



As the baton continues to be passed on to the next generation of peace builders.

As the Corrymeela Community continues this journey of peace and reconciliation it recognises that key to its success is a clear strategic plan which maps the direction of travel it is required to take over the next 3 years. The following 5 strategic outcomes form an ambitious plan of activity to facilitate this work for staff, volunteers and Community members and challenge us as we continue this vital work.

—Eleanor Hayes, Chair of Council

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2025–2028 Strategic Plan for the Corrymeela Community focuses on peacebuilding and reconciliation in Northern Ireland and beyond, emphasising the importance of understanding and trust among diverse groups.

This document highlights the need for genuine connection and mutual learning to address emerging and persistent societal challenges, particularly those in Northern Ireland.

The strategic plan will guide Corrymeela's activities over the next three years and help staff, volunteers, members and partners play their part in supporting the mission of Corrymeela.

The plan names five strategic outcomes that will become increasingly obvious in 2025-2028:

- We are a People Pursuing Reconciliation
- We Provide Experiences of Mutual Learning
- We have a Recognised and Valued Voice
- We are an Effective Organisation
- We are a Connected Organisation

Each of these outcomes includes key priorities aimed at enhancing community engagement, fostering partnerships, and ensuring effective governance and resource management.

Corrymeela's 2025-2028 Strategic Plan demonstrates a commitment to building a connected organization that collaborates with and learns from various partners to respond to societal needs and promote sustainable peace and reconciliation efforts.



3. WHO WE ARE

Our Story

Corrymeela's founder Ray Davey was deeply affected by the community he experienced and the suffering he witnessed as a chaplain and prisoner of war during the Second World War. His experiences, especially as a witness to the destruction of Dresden, shaped his commitment to peace and reconciliation.

When Ray and others founded Corrymeela in 1965, their desire was to create a place where people could come together, break down divisions, and build relationships based on mutual understanding. This was particularly important in the context of the sectarian conflict in Northern Ireland. They saw Corrymeela as a “community of the open heart, open hand, and open door,” where meeting, dialogue, hospitality, and shared experiences could foster peace and address injustice.

Over many decades, Corrymeela has been a shelter where people who might not otherwise have met experience the hope of a better life together.



*Community of the open heart
open hand, and open door*

Our Mission To engage with one another, heal division and support peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland and beyond.

Our Vision A just and interdependent society, where we understand each other better and trust each other more.

Our Values

Corrymeela can only carry out our mission and achieve our vision if as a community of members, staff, volunteers and partners we live out the values of:

Welcome: a generous and mutual hospitality based on compassion and empathy;

Respect: the recognition of each other's worth, and openness to each other's experiences;

Courage: honesty to look at the world and ourselves so that change can begin from within;

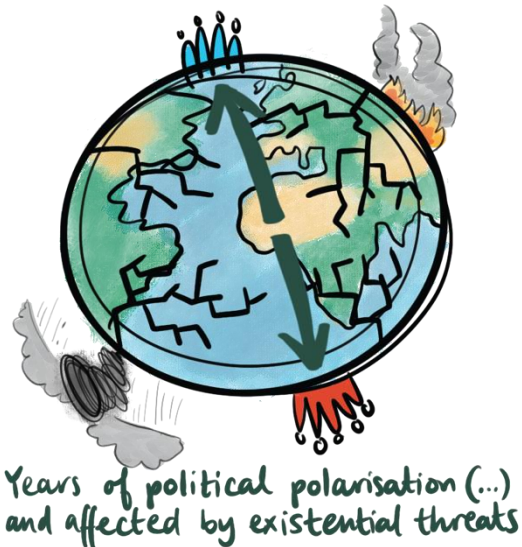
Collaboration: a commitment to working as partners in achieving our ends;

Hope: faith that we can move closer to a future where we all live and work well together.

4. OUR EMERGING CONTEXT

Corrymeela's mission, our vision and our values become unmistakably vital as we consider our emerging context.

Authoritarianism is on the rise in 2025, fuelled by 'us versus them' politics that capitalise on the human need to belong. Years of political polarisation have led to an increase in mistrust. **There are few outlets for honest dialogue, open-minded curiosity, and mutual learning.** As more become aware of and affected by existential threats such as climate disasters and future pandemics, we are less able to provide responses as a global family, choosing instead to take care of our own.



In Northern Ireland, this wider crisis meets the reality of a post-conflict society affected by transgenerational trauma. Division here has deep trenches and high walls. Sectarian violence continues while the number of racist and homophobic attacks increases. Numerous publications in Northern Ireland are highlighting worsening inequalities and the links between paramilitarism, substance use, high levels of domestic and gender-based violence, and deteriorating mental health, all amplified by fear and lack of connection.¹ Poverty harms children in Northern Ireland disproportionately in the areas most affected by the conflict. The majority of women and girls in Northern Ireland have experienced forms of gender-based violence. **At a time of increased isolation, our legacy of violence compounds the debilitating effects of disconnection.** As conversations about the future of these islands become more pressing, there is growing need to trust each other's good will.

Our Strategic Plan is informed not only by a renewed sense of who we are and who we are for, but by the evolving social policy landscape. We will ensure our work aligns with broader efforts to build a reconciled society. We welcome the Northern Ireland Executive's Programme for Government 2024-2027 and its cross-cutting commitment to peace. The plan is shaped by the goals of devolved administration in Northern Ireland and its relationship with the UK Parliament. Our policy engagement extends beyond Northern Ireland as we continue to strengthen our relationship with the Irish Government, particularly the Department of Foreign Affairs. As a civic society



¹ See <https://www.community-relations.org.uk/files/communityrelations/2024-01/CRC-peace-monitor-report-6-web.pdf>; <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/execoffice/strategic-framework-evawg.pdf>

organisation, we are committed to informed advocacy, working alongside those affected by varied inequalities.

Corrymeela offers hope. For more than sixty years, we have provided glimpses of a better world – not because we are special or have ready answers to the world’s problems, but because we commit to relationships where people can simply be themselves with others, including those with whom they disagree. Corrymeela is a collection of professional and amateur practitioners who wrestle with questions of



Corrymeela offers hope

faith and doubt, share differing opinions, acknowledge how we have hurt each other and consider forgiveness. Corrymeela recognises that the power to change comes from within. We commit to seeking peace and reconciliation with ourselves and with the world. We are people who have experienced, in a community of diverse views and backgrounds, real hope and profound joy.

The world desperately needs more experiences of genuine connection where we learn how our own wellbeing is inextricably linked to the wellbeing of the whole. **This is what Corrymeela will continue to offer with our 2025-2028 Strategic Plan.**

5. STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

Going forward in 2025-2028, these outcomes will be increasingly obvious:

- **We are People Pursuing Reconciliation²**

Corrymeela is leading out as a visionary, reconciling community of members, staff, volunteers and partners. We intentionally nurture good relations, sustain and ritualise peace, and develop inclusive, restorative and reflective practices.

- **We provide Experiences of Mutual Learning**

Corrymeela is welcoming diverse collections of people locally and globally to learn from conflict and challenge persistent inequalities. We achieve this

² **Reconciliation** is a term that is often used, rarely defined and highly contextual. For Corrymeela, **reconciliation is about mutually respectful relationships where we learn from one another (particularly from those we have hurt or been hurt by), understand each other better, and trust each other more.** Only in finding ways to new relationships can we start to build a just and interdependent future where we all feel we belong.

through residential experiences and the long-term mutual support and network building.

- **We have a Recognised and Valued Voice**

Corrymeela is using its voice to influence public discourse on reconciliation with empathy, understanding and evidence.

- **We are a more Effective Organisation**

Corrymeela is sustainably and ethically governed and resourced, enabling us to focus on our mission.

- **We are a Connected Organisation**

Corrymeela is working closely with grassroots, inter-faith, local and international partners to develop and deliver responsive programming, increase reach, and secure funding.

6. KEY PRIORITIES FOR EACH OUTCOME

Outcome 1: We are People Pursuing Reconciliation

Corrymeela is leading out as a visionary, reconciling community of members, staff, volunteers and partners. We intentionally nurture good relations and sustain and ritualise peace through inclusive, restorative and reflective practices.



*We are People
Pursuing Reconciliation*

Key priorities:

- a. We will continue to learn as a community of reconciliation in our emerging context, applying our learning to our practice and our work.

Measure of success – Increased understanding of both Corrymeela’s distinct role in the peace and reconciliation sector and the relationship between faith/spirituality and our mission; annual evaluation of our work; progress updates on how much we have done, how well we have done it and whether anyone is better off.

- b. We will ensure staff, volunteers and members are supported and challenged, to grow both personally and in their work, to ensure the future of peacebuilding in Northern Ireland

Measure of success – Regular reflective conversations with staff, volunteers and members; practical and relevant support for professional development for staff, volunteers and members.

Outcome 2: We provide Experiences of Mutual Learning

Corrymeela is welcoming diverse collections of people locally and globally to learn from conflict and challenge persistent inequalities. We achieve this through residential experiences and the long-term mutual support and network building of our programmes.

Key priorities:

- a. We will nurture our relationships with partner organisations and groups to extend our circle of collaboration.

Measure of success – increase sustained partnerships with organisations that widen our connection.



- b. We will provide opportunities for hospitality, welcoming new partners from across our increasingly diverse and divided society.

Measure of success – captured information from people who engage with our work to monitor group diversity and determine whether they feel welcomed and included.

- c. We will challenge persistent inequalities through relationships and be informed by the learning of our lived experience.

Measure of success – learning evident in our public voice and civic engagement, our reflective practice and our programmatic offerings and uptake.

Outcome 3: We have a Recognised and Valued Voice

Corrymeela is using its voice to influence public discourse on reconciliation with empathy, understanding and evidence.

Key priorities:

- a. We will use Corrymeela's public voice to find ways of sharing our experience and insights courageously and intentionally.

Measure of success – a Corrymeela Communications 'style guide'/protocol is in place and followed.



We have a Recognised and Valued Voice

- b. We will implement a Communications Strategy

Measure of success – a 3-year Communications Strategy is in place with a staff member responsible for it; new website; positive social media presence with increasing engagement.

Outcome 4: We are a more Effective Organisation

Corrymeela is sustainably and ethically governed and resourced, enabling us to focus on our mission.

Key priorities:

- a. We will implement a Fundraising Strategy

Measure of success – Annual action plan drafted, implemented and reviewed; income generation increased.

- b. We will have a centre site development plan in place that is widely understood by members, staff and volunteers.



We are an Effective Organisation

Measure of success – plan in place/aspects of plan implemented; funding secured

- c. We will have the right IT support in place.

Measure of success – Integrated systems; minimal manual input for bookings, accounts, and other administrative tasks; succession plan set for IT personnel

- d. We will ensure Corrymeela is governed effectively

Measure of success – Clear understanding of roles and responsibilities; transparent communication of governance decisions; annual review of effectiveness of Council, committees and organisational leadership.

Outcome 5: We are a Connected Organisation

Corrymeela is working closely with grassroots, inter-faith, local and international partners to develop and deliver responsive programming, increase reach, and secure funding.

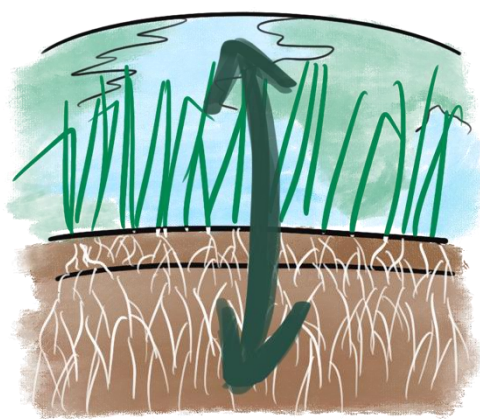
Key priorities:

- a. We will continue to cultivate strategic partnerships with key organisations to proactively respond to challenges and opportunities within the wider peacebuilding and community sectors.

Measure of success – Nurturing of strategic partners; development of wider networks; ongoing analysis to assess sector-wider challenges and opportunities

- b. We will nurture our relationships with statutory bodies and key funders to enhance the impact of our work and ensure it is sustainably resourced.

Measure of success – Strengthened engagement with key funders and statutory bodies; evidence of our work influencing policy and practice; sustainable funding.



We are a Connected Organisation