



Our History and Community.	2
A Note about the Meaning of ‘Corrymeela’	4
The Corrymeela Site	4
Holy Places - The Croí	5
The Building	5
The Cross of Nails	6
Why a Statement of Commitment?	7
STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT	8
Becoming a Member of the Corrymeela Community	9
Pastoral Care for Members	11
The Role of Council, Community Meetings and General Meetings	12
Whistle Blowing Policy	13

Our History and Community.

Ray Davey was the founder and first community leader of Corrymeela. During World War II he joined the YMCA to provide spiritual and physical support for troops. Ray was captured by the Germans and was a prisoner of war in Italy and then close to Dresden, Germany when it was bombed by the Allies. The bombing of Dresden affected Ray deeply, underscoring the futility and destructiveness of all conflict. While a prisoner, Ray thought about building community amidst conflict.

After the war, he was appointed the first Presbyterian Dean of Residence at Queen's University. He was an engaging and committed chaplain and his events created a sense of community and gathering.

Ray became concerned at the tensions that were brewing during the 60s and wished to establish a place of gathering, an "open village where all people of good will" could come together and learn to live in community.

In 1965, it became known that a site outside Ballycastle was up for sale - a site that had an old Dutch-style holiday house on it. This Ballycastle property was purchased by Ray and the students for £7,000 in early 1965. The money was raised within 10 days. The current site was officially opened on Oct. 30 1965. 'Corrymeela' was already the name of the area when the community purchased the property.

The word Corrymeela can be interpreted in different ways - "Hill of Harmony", "Hill of Honeysuckle", and "Lumpy Crossroads" are three of the possible interpretations.

From its first days, Corrymeela has been a place of gathering, work, faith and discussion; bringing people of different backgrounds, different political and religious beliefs and different identities together. We believe that there is strength in gathering and that, when we can be with each other in commitment, no difference is great enough to break us. In the early days of Corrymeela, hundreds of volunteers gave up their holidays, weekends and summer breaks to host events, seminars, camps and conferences. In time, some staff were employed who ran the site at Corrymeela and ran programmes in the wider community.

Corrymeela has always had a strong combination of three aspects - people who, like the early founders, had their own careers but who dedicated many many

corrymeela®

hours to the work. Additionally there were those who had the time to volunteer for longer periods of time on site. And full time staff whose skill, expertise and leadership gave shape to the permanent work of Corrymeela.

We are honoured to continue this tradition. Now, 50 years after we began we have almost 40 full time staff, we have a cohort of 15 year-long volunteers and many many other volunteers who come for shorter periods of time. Many of our volunteers have been working on the site for decades, generously giving time and service to the work. The Community of Corrymeela has grown too, with 150 members, 50 associate members and thousands of friends around the globe. Together we make commitments to be engaged with our world, its tension, faith and potential.

We are teachers, writers, people looking for work, retired people, we are young, middle aged and old, we are people of doctrine and people of question. We are people who seek to engage with the differences of our world. We are people who disagree with each other on matters of religion, politics and economics. We are people who wish to name our own complicity in the fractures that damage our societies and places. We are people of dedication and commitment. We are people of prayers, practices, curiosity and questioning. We are people of truth-telling and hope. We are Corrymeela. And you are always welcome.

A Note about the Meaning of ‘Corrymeela’

Corrymeela is often translated from the original Irish as ‘the hill of harmony’ or ‘hill of sweetness’. But there is another and more probable translation. The name comes from a neighbouring townland, Corrymellagh, in the parish of Culfeightrin. Culfeightrin means in Irish ‘the corner of the stranger’. Corrymellagh means the ‘lumpy crossing place’.

Perhaps this etymology is more apt for us: a place where differing groups, strangers to each other, are offered the opportunity to cross over into another space. And the crossing is ‘lumpy’, not easy, full of pitfalls.

The Corrymeela Site

In early 1965 it became known that the Holiday Fellowship Centre, with its 1930s wooden Dutch-barn style building, near Ballycastle was up for sale. The group around Ray Davey decided to purchase it and this was completed in June 1965.

The official opening was on the 30th of October 1965, performed by pastor Tullio Vinay, Leader of the Agape Community in Italy. This building lasted until 1997 when it was replaced by the current building.

There is something spectacular about the site - it is, in a certain way, a theology of place. We are blessed with such a place - with views to Kenbane, Rathlin and the Mull of Kintyre coming down like a ribbon of Scotland. It is a gathering place where the islands of Britain and Ireland are in close view of each other, about 15 miles across at the closest point. Whether it is cloudy or clear, sunny or stormy, the site offers an immediacy to the elements. To be at Corrymeela is to be close to the world, and in being close to the world, we believe that we can become close to each others’ stories - spoken and unspoken.

Holy Places - The Croí

On the site we have a space of worship called The Croí. "Croí" is the Irish word for "heart".

As Ray Davey has said

This place is rightly called An Croí – the heart. Indeed it is heart-shaped. Here we can take time to listen to the great heartbeat – in a society where there are so many violent and destructive beats, here we can take time to listen to the Heartbeat that guides, inspires and unites us all together.

The Croí is an open place. It is not for any particular group or tradition but for all. It is for those who try to follow Christ and those who have not reached that stage, but want to be here.

It is a place of reflection and challenge, where Bonhoeffer's question is often asked: 'What does it mean to follow Christ today?'

It is a place of celebration and hope. There are times of laughter and joy with songs and music and drama, proclaiming the unity of God's creation and the totality of life together. Sometimes it is a place of sadness and tears, where the bereaved and broken find hope and strength.

The Building

The architect, Norman Hawthorne, said the following about the building:

My attempt has been to make the building become landscape but with obvious quotations from some of the most ancient Christian sources, as for example the Skelig Michael settlement off the coast of Kerry.

Peace is a theme in the building and the word is picked out from the prayer on the handle of the door as one enters. The circle has been used everywhere – a symbol of the unity which people gathered in a ring to achieve. The dome over the circular worship area reinforces this unity and is another reference to traditional spatial motifs.

The stained glass window in the small Croí 'The Descent of the Spirit' was designed by Neil Shawcross. Elizabeth Andrews designed both the lettering on the entrance and 'The Tree of Life' mural.

The bronze 'St Francis and the Birds' is by John Behan and is a reference to a Seamus Heaney poem.

The Croí was opened on June 16, 1979 and the London Corrymeela Venture raised most of the money to build it. The building was renovated in the autumn of 2008 with most of the money coming from a legacy by Mrs Wright, mother of Frank Wright, a well-loved community member who died in 1994.

From a poem by Reggie Askew spoken at the opening in 1979

The Croí is like an ear,
A great intricate ear to catch prayers in.
It is a trumpet wound round
Into a winding horn for sounding praise
For heralding good news.

The Cross of Nails

Following the destruction of Coventry's medieval Cathedral in 1940 a charred cross was erected behind the altar amid the ruins and later the inscription "Father Forgive" was made on the stonework. Three of the roof nails were put together into the form of a cross (the Cross of Nails) and this later became the symbol for an international movement of healing and reconciliation at first between Dresden and Coventry – two cities destroyed by bombing – but later extending to a worldwide network of Cross of Nails Centres.

Corrymeela became a Cross of Nails Centre in September 1971 and the first Coventry House was largely funded by the Coventry Cathedral Cross of Nails Network under the inspiration of Provost Williams and Canon Horace Dammers. It was opened in 1976.

Why a Statement of Commitment?

All language is powerful - and language has the capacity to create meaning as well as create division. For at Corrymeela we know that any language about commitment must be demonstrated in the quality of our love for each other, our dedication to a way of life and our engagement with our world.

We offer our commitment to each other, before God, on an annual basis. We do this to keep ourselves to a centre - a centre of commitment and love, engagement and reconciliation, committed to curiosity and questioning.

Our commitment is less a doctrinal statement for us and more an acknowledgement of the sacred story around which we are based. People join Corrymeela for many reasons. For some, Corrymeela was an experience of inclusion and community that was transformative and so we became members. For others, it was the theological commitment to a particular way of being in the world. For still others, the commitment to Corrymeela comes as a result of being involved in the work, and believing that the work is important.

When we say the Commitment we are saying that we wish to be part of a community that holds these things at its 'centre'. Further, when we say the Commitment, we are also making a speech-act; it is not just words: we are promising that actions ensue.

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

The Community was founded in 1965 by the Rev Ray Davey and makes the following commitment together:

As a community of Christians drawn from many traditions, we

AFFIRM our faith in the reconciling power of God in Jesus Christ;

CELEBRATE the promise of life;

CONFESS our own responsibility for the destructive conflicts in our society;

BELIEVE that we have been called to seek a deeper understanding of our faith;

SURRENDER ourselves to the spirit of Jesus to overcome our own divisions and make ourselves instruments of His peace;

COMMIT ourselves to work for a society whose priorities are justice, mutual respect, the participation of all, concern for the vulnerable and the stranger, stewardship of resources, and care for Creation;

AGREE to pray regularly for each other,
to join in the worship of the community,
to give time to the life and work of the community,
to care for and support each other,
to live out our commitment in our daily lives,
to give, according to our ability, to the funds of the community;*

And WISH, through the power of the Spirit, to walk the way of the Gospel together.

**Members are asked to contribute between 4% and 10% of their net disposable income. The current target, for membership contributions, is £76,000 per annum.*

Becoming a Member of the Corrymeela Community

A. Introduction

1. We need to have a wide spectrum of age, background and denomination in the membership if we are to be a credible sign of reconciliation. We also need to continually renew ourselves by having new members.

2. During the year members are invited to put forward for provisional membership persons who

a) Have the realistic possibility of involvement in the activities of Corrymeela e.g. at the various Corrymeela centres, cell groups, etc.

b) Have a realistic possibility of being in relationship with community members, i.e. they need to be able to attend community meetings on a regular basis.

c) Agree to the Corrymeela Commitment

The year of provisional membership is when these things can be explored and discerned on all sides.

3. There may be persons you know who express an interest in membership but it is not appropriate at this stage to put them forward as provisional members. Encourage them to

a) Get involved in Corrymeela so that they have some realistic knowledge and experience of the work, ethos and vision of the Community.

b) Talk to Community members.

c) Talk to the Leader who can, if appropriate, arrange for names to be put forward.

4. The Leader is the contact point for general discussions about membership.

B. Procedure

1. A Community Member proposes the name of the person seeking to become a provisional member by contacting the leader (leader@corrymeela.org). This should tell something of the relationship and involvement the person has with the Community and their understanding of our vision/work /life. Names may be proposed at any time during the calendar year up to 31st August. It is requested that every person becoming a provisional member note the dates for their provisional year that are outlined on the document (www.corrymeela.org/membership)
2. On receipt of any proposal, the Membership Secretary informs the Leader who will arrange to meet the person interested in membership.
3. The Community Life Committee considers names at its meeting in early October.
4. On recommendation from the Community Life Committee and the Leader, the name of the proposed provisional member is submitted to COUNCIL at its October meeting.
5. If approved, the Membership Secretary of the Community Life Committee communicates with THE PROPOSER (who at this time becomes the sponsor or recommends another member to fill this role) about their duties in relation to the provisional member. The Committee contacts THE PERSON inviting them to become a provisional member and explaining the purpose of this period of time for them.
6. The person is INTRODUCED by the sponsor at the Dedication Service following a positive response to the invitation. At this point the PROVISIONAL YEAR BEGINS.
7. Towards the end of the provisional year, the person MEETS WITH THE LEADER to consider full membership.
8. Full membership is undertaken at the next DEDICATION SERVICE when the Community accepts the person into membership.

Pastoral Care for Members

From the members' commitment:

**We are a community of Christians drawn from many traditions who:
... Agree to care for and support each other.**

The Community Life Committee (CLC) recognises that the most important form of pastoral care is through the personal relationships between members. In this context the role of cell groups is of particular importance. The CLC also recognises the need for a slightly more formal aspect to the pastoral care and support of members.

Thus, CLC acts as a pastoral support group alongside the support mechanisms that already exist amongst members and within cell groups.

Members are already informed of news concerning other members via the email news that goes out regularly from Pádraig. Along with the usual responses of members to such news items the CLC also responds **if necessary** on behalf of the Community.

Members should notify Pádraig (or anyone from Community Life Committee) of any pastoral concerns. Pádraig is Co-chair of the CLC and Philippa Bole is the Membership Secretary.

The Role of Council, Community Meetings and General Meetings

The Role of Council

The Council is the governing body of the Community and manages its affairs, and Council members carry the legal responsibility for the Community's funds and property. Council members are the Trustees of the Charity for Charity Law purposes.

Community Meetings

Community Meetings are held at the spring and autumn community weekends and at other times which Council determines and are for the purposes of:

- Information sharing
- Reporting
- Listening to members' concerns
- Getting feedback on Council actions
- Helping in the formulation of policies and priorities
- Consulting members on important issues before Council takes a decision

Members are also entitled to summon Community meetings.

General Meetings

A General Meeting is a defined legal term and is called for specified and limited purposes:

- To select and remove the Council or part of it
- To control the change in the Articles and Memorandum of Association
- To hold the Council to account at the AGM at which members receive the accounts and a written report on the Charity's activities.
- To elect and remove the Leader
- To control changes in the Statement of Commitment
- To receive provisional members into membership

Only General Meetings are decision-making meetings and these are called for specific purposes. Members are entitled to summon General Meetings for specified and limited purposes related to the above.

Whistle Blowing Policy

Corrymeela takes all misconduct and malpractice seriously. The Whistle Blowing Policy sets out a procedure by which a person can report any concerns they may have. A copy of the policy can be obtained from the Belfast office (belfast@corrymeela.org).