



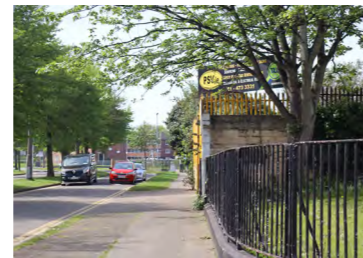
Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin



LIFE IN DOLPHIN HOUSE A COMMUNITY ARTEFACT

**Dolphin
House**
COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT
ASSOCIATION

 Taighde Éireann
Research Ireland



ABOUT THIS COMMUNITY ARTEFACT

This artefact brings together testimonies, artworks, poetry, and photography from the people of Dolphin House, capturing the spirit of a unique community living through a period of profound regeneration and change. More than a record of events, it is an expression of resilience, creativity, and collective memory.

The project unfolded through a series of interviews and dedicated art workshops held at the Dolphin House Community Centre. Across two art based workshops, residents were invited to reflect on their lives and experiences in Dolphin House, creating paintings, drawings, collages, and origami pieces that speak to their personal and shared journeys. A further workshop, led by Patricia McCann, opened a space for residents and participants from surrounding areas to explore their lived experiences through poetry and creative writing.

The photography presented here documents key moments in the life of the community during the summer of 2025—including the Family Fun Day, the Rialto Arts Festival, and the building of the community garden. These images sit alongside the voices and creative expressions of residents, together forming a vivid portrait of a community in transition.

This artefact is more than a collection; it is an archive—an authentic and enduring testament to the people of Dolphin House, their stories, their artistry, and their enduring sense of place.



LIFE IN DOLPHIN HOUSE

AN EXPRESSION
OF RESILIENCE,
CREATIVITY, AND
COLLECTIVE
MEMORY



“We watch out for one another, you know”.

An embedded community living in Dolphin House: “I’ve been in the Flats Sixty Years. From 1965. I was seven when I moved over”.

A unique sense of community: “Do you know the saying you have: ‘You can take a person out of flats and give them a house in Tallaght, Clondalkin, or Inchicore, but you can’t take the flats out of the person’. I know people over the years got houses, and they’d be back here in six months”.

“If I died sitting here...the next day I’d be found, cause once the blinds is not up people know there’s something. We watch out for one another, you know”.

“Coming here in the summer, you’ll see the people out – you know, the women out on their balcony, talking to one another and, you know, you can knock in, ‘Oh, would you have a sup of milk – cup of tea?’. In houses, you can’t do that so much”.

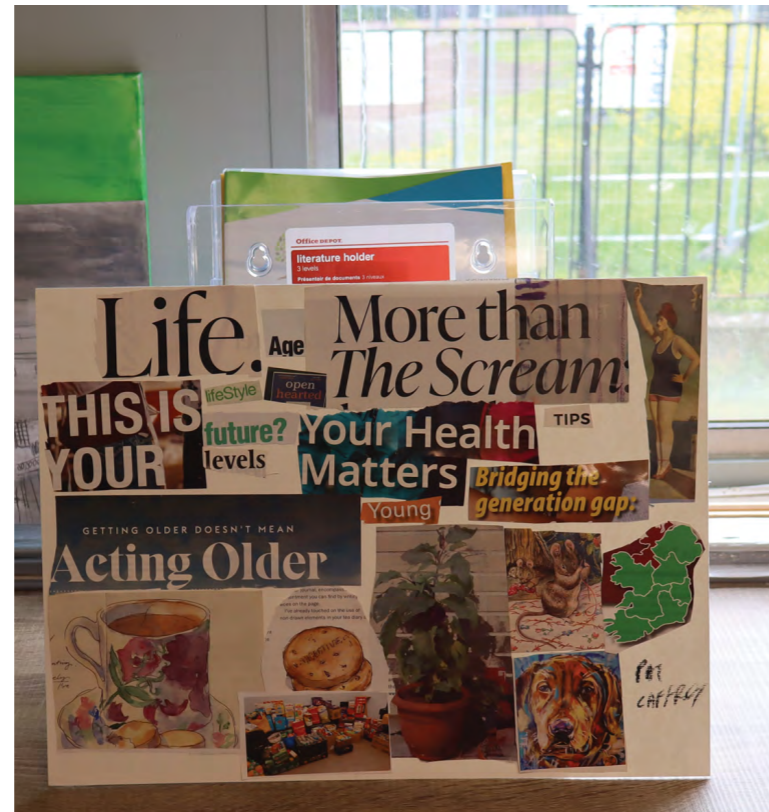
“When we were growing up as children, they were hard times...my nan, (would) say ‘Go up and ask Mary has she any potatoes. Tell her I have spare bread’, and that’s the way they done it. We might have the bread, your mam might have milk, you know, until they got their few bob”.

The Friday Night Club: “Years ago, I was the youngest chairman, at sixteen, on the committee...once a week, we’ do a disco for the kids, and because we didn’t have a centre at the time, we used to hire the hall out next door to Lowe’s (pub). And I had a little stereo system – you know, the two little speakers – and we’d go over and do it once a week for them. Used to charge a penny in or something, and that’ll buy the mineral – you know, the little bottles of drinks and things”.



A COLLAGE BY PAT

Pat used the medium of collage. His work covered themes ranging from life in Dolphin House to his own health. He noted that you hear sometime hearing screaming or raised voices around the flats. Some screaming is bad, and some screaming is good. People in Dolphin House give advice to each other and he believes the community to be open hearted.

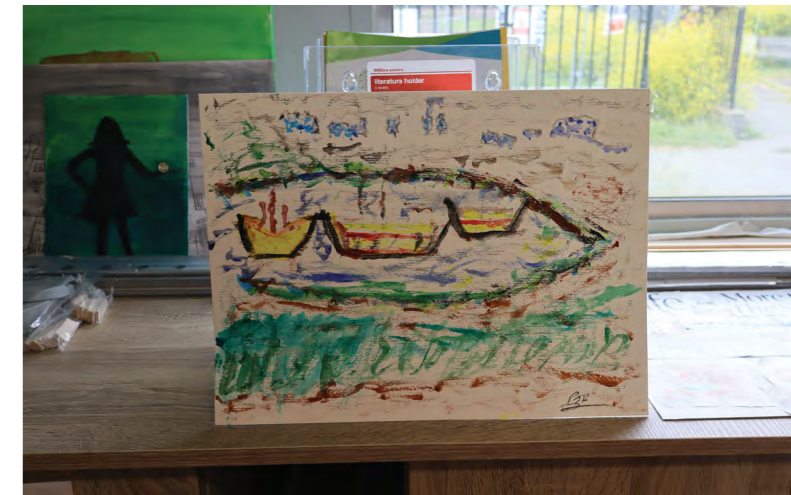


A PAINTING BY PJ

PJ doesn't live in Dolphin House, but he attends community events there. He noted that he wouldn't dare say he is from the flats implying that there is a strong sense of community which he sees and respects. He has lived across from the Coombe since 1995. PJ ended up painting a beautiful picture of the canal.

When asked what the picture represents. PJ responds:

“The canal, boats, people arriving, all my friends, my lost family”.




 A man named Paul is standing in a room. He is wearing a white t-shirt and has tattoos on his arms. Behind him is a window showing a building at night. The name 'PAUL' is written in large white letters over the image.

PAUL

“99% of people in flats would wipe your eye - in two seconds with their brain, like. They’re very, very witty, intelligent and can work around things”.



Number of years living in Dolphin House:

“I’m in here (In Dolphin House) about twelve years now. But I was reared in me family area. And me – like, I was up here, down here, all me life. You know what I mean? All around”.

Unique sense of community:

“They’re lovely people. Well, all the – as I call them – golden oldies, about me own age...You can ask them for anything, or if they’re wise enough, like meself, like, you see somebody struggling, you walk over and give them a hand. Like, that’s what I love about it. And there’s very few golden oldies, as I call them. Not their age; it’s just they’re flats”.

“Nobody was ever stuck. With the golden oldies, back in the day. You’d knock at the door for milk. You’ve Jimmy upstairs now, he’d drop me down...I get flowers

there on the balcony off Cathleen next door; put them out the front. That’s the old style, you know what I mean?”

“Like, you see somebody pass away, the churchover there’d be black, you know what I mean?”

Community Supports:

“They’re after getting the park done. They help other people in here. If I need anything – like, reading, writing, things – you go over – photocopy – they’ll help you out, 100%”.

“I go over to the Men’s Shed. When I pass it ... I go in for a yap”.

Great people:

“We’ve a sense of humour that people won’t listen to. Like, around there now, the craic we do have...But if you walk up and down these flats, and that’s all you get. There’s fellas...you can crack a joke with them, you know what I mean and they’d come back at you”.



FAMILY FUN DAY

Each year a family fun day is organised in the community to mark the end of summer.

Below is a selection of photos taken during the family fun day on August 20th, 2025.







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GLENN

“I’m excited to see what they’re doing with the new football pitches, the new community stuff, – for my own kids and for the kids in here”.

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Number of years living in Dolphin House:
“Thirty-five”.

Unique Sense Of Community:
“I think the community factor. You can’t beat it...there’s a lot said about kind of flats or complexes or Dolphin House. It’s safe...everyone watches out for each other...the parents and adults would always look out for each other and each other’s kids. So, you know, I think you can’t really beat that, like, sense of security in that form”.

Clear regeneration timeline needed:
“It’s changing all the time which is fine, but tell us. ‘Look, it’s not gonna be for ten years’. And people, OK, they might moan, but they’ll get to a point where they know and at least they can make plans. A lot of people aren’t doing their place up anymore, – because they’re holding on and waiting for this, you know, which mightn’t happen for a good few years”.

Community Supports:
“A lot of funding has been cut, so they (DHEDA) have to manage it. And in fairness, they do. I mean, there’s homework clubs here, there’s creches – you know me own kids went to the creches here – which is a lot cheaper than the normal creches – and they’re brilliant. You know, so they do a lot with the funding they have”.

Hopes for the future:
“I’m excited to see what they’re doing with the new football pitches, the new community stuff, – for my own kids and for the kids in here that – I think a lot more can be done for the kids in the area to...show them that there is other ways... I know a lot is being done, – but it’s being done, you know, in other places. You know, it’s across the road; it needs to be here”.



**ART IN THE
COMMUNITY
EVENT**



Some photographs from one of our art in the community workshops. Artists were asked to create a piece of art that speaks to life in Dolphin House.





Number of years living in Dolphin House:

“All me life; so, thirty-two years”.

A sense of Pride:

“Years ago, when I was younger, and say we went off to the square or something, people say ‘Where you from?’ and they’d be like, ‘Ew them flats’, and we used to – no matter where we went, we always sang ‘Everywhere we go’. We always sang that song like and...I love – I’m proud to be from here, yeah”.

“I just hope that they follow through with the regeneration and we all just become a community again, like we were years ago”.

Family and Community:

“My sister lives in here, my brother lives in here, Lyndsey lives in here, my nieces and nephews, my two uncles live in here, my auntie, my cousins...if I run out of milk, I’m, like, ringing me ma, like, if I can’t go to the shops –saying, ‘Ma, will you send Callum down with some milk?’. You wouldn’t be able to do that in a house”.

Unique Sense Of Community:

“A lot of people that moved out would love to come back. I don’t think you get what you get on a road in a house what you do in flats, do you know what I mean? Like, you probably wouldn’t see either side of your neighbours for days in a house. Where here, you’re walking down the stairs and there might be three of your neighbours walking up, two walking down, and you are chatting on the stairs then”.

Sense of Safety and Security:

“People say to me, ‘Oh, how did you live in them flats on your own, like, just you and Lily?’. I’m like, ‘I could literally sleep in here and there could be screaming and shouting, and I’d still go to sleep because I feel safe in here. I feel like, ‘Well, everyone knows me in here; they’re not gonna come near my house’. And I know that doesn’t make sense cause it could be anyone from the outside, – but I just feel so safe living here like”.

The Friday Club:

Years ago, we had a thing called the Friday Club. We had a Friday disco every Friday night. We paid a pound in. There was a shop and a disco. Everyone slow-danced. It was great”.

The Summer Project:

Years ago we used to – the night before registration, we’d camp out over at the centre. Cause there was only, say, like, twenty-five places. the highlight of – like, we loved doing that. And then at seven o’clock in the morning when the

shop would open, we’d all go up and get breakfast rolls, and we’d come back. The summer project went on for eight weeks; And the fun day, we used to have, like, bouncy castles everywhere, sumo wrestler suits, candy floss machines”.

Hopes for the future:

“That they do follow through with the regeneration and everyone gets what they want, and for us all to be a better community, do you know what I mean? Like, do more community things. Like, that community garden might obviously get people out and mixing again and do you know what I mean? We’ve gone over a few times, and it is, it’s lovely. You wouldn’t even think you were in Dolphin House when you’re sitting in it. But yeah, I just hope that they follow through with the regeneration and we all just become a community again, like we were years ago. Like years ago, you wouldn’t be able to pass a block and there’d be, like, millions of us out, sitting out, and kids’d be all playing together”.

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BUILDING OF THE COMMUNITY GARDEN

After initial preparation, the community garden was planted over the course of one (very wet!) day during summer 2025. The planting was facilitated by Difference Days and over 300 volunteers laid lawns, planted gardens, built raised beds and allotments, beautifully tarmacked

pathways throughout, erected a greenhouse, and laid a purpose-built all-weather astroturf football pitch for the kids. These photos represent stages from the initial site development, to the planting day, to the official garden opening.

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SEAN



“I hope the residents of Dolphin House...I hope they’re just listened to...I think they just need to assess what they’re doing next, look at the mistakes they made, and own up to them”

Number of years living in Dolphin House:

“All me life. Twenty-eight years”.

Unique sense of community.

“I’d feel the community in the flats hasn’t changed, but – it’s always been there...I was never a football fan, but I always remember the lads used to always have – I think it was called a five-a-side –between each block. So like, the fourth block versus the third block. You’d never hear of that nowadays”.



Memories:

“My memory tells me that the summers were hot; all of our friends were always out playing; were always involved in the project; like that, the five-a-side, sitting down, robbing the ball off the lads playing football. The other lads that were acting the bollox, the lads that were acting the maggot, they were on the transition of, like, growing up themselves. So they were gonna carry on and go off and do their own thing. So it started getting quieter. Everybody, like, palled with one another. There was no beef between blocks. There was beef between Fatima and Dolphin; I remember that. That was like ‘We’re Dolphin and you’re Fatima’, and it was like England and Ireland. That’s what it was a couple of years ago. Like, would I go back? I’d go back in a heartbeat, just to revisit. I don’t have any bad memories of it as a child in Dolphin – no bad memories as a kid in Dolphin House, no. Pure joy”.

Hopes For The Future:

“I hope the flats go back to the way they were years ago - no, I don’t mean in terms of the conditions of the houses. I hope everyone’s flat is fully equipped to what they need; there’s not dampness; they are to knock them and rebuild them, as opposed to just refurbishing them”.

“(I hope that) everyone just feels the same sense of safety that I feel. But that’s just been down to me feeling safe as a person. The tenants also have to be accepting of diversity, as well”.

“I think they (Dublin City Council) just need to assess what they’re doing next, look at the mistakes they made, and own up to them. Cause that’s the thing; you can say you made a mistake, but if you don’t own up to it, you’re gonna just make the mistake again. I hope the residents of Dolphin”.



Some testimonies from our creative writing workshop.

SHARING THE WASHING MACHINE
IN POOR TIME'S
THE WOMEN OF THE FLATS
RENTED ONE BETWEEN THEM

I LIVED IN A HOUSE IN BALLYFERMOT
AND HAD A GREAT CHILDHOOD
I DIDN'T KNOW FLATS EVEN
EXISTED. THEN I MET A BOY
FROM DOLPHIN HOUSE AND LOVED
GOING TO HIS HOME I LOVED
IT SO MUCH I REALLY WANTED
TO LIVE THERE. WHEN WE
WERE 16 WE GOT MARRIED AND
I NEVER GAVE UP ON MY
HOPE FOR A FLAT. I MOVED
AROUND PRIVATE FLATS UNTIL
THE DAY CAME THAT I GOT MY
FLAT IN DOLPHIN HOUSE. SOO HAPPY
THE FLATS WERE VERY COMMUNITY

ORIENTATED. I GOT INVOLVED
IN A LOT IN THE COMMUNITY
AND LOVED EVERYTHING ABOUT
IT. FOR 42 YEARS LIVING
THERE ~~AS A GROUP~~ WE FORMED
A CLOSE GROUP AND WORKED
WITH OTHER WOMEN AND CHILDREN
TO MAKE THE FLATS THE BEST
PLACE TO LIVE.

MY DARKEST DAY CAME WHEN
THE MEETINGS IN THE FLATS
WAS ABOUT REGENERATION
AND THATS WHEN EVERY
THING STARTED TO CHANGE
THE OLDER TENANTS VOTED
FOR MORE UPKEEP BUT THE
YOUNGER TENANTS THOUGHT
IT WAS A GREAT WAY TO GET
TO A HOUSE SO USED THE
FLATS AS A GAP STOP....

I lived in a house in Ballyfermot and had a great childhood. I didn't know flats even existed then I met a boy from Dolphin House and loved going to his home. I loved it so much I really wanted to live there. When we were 16, we got married and I never gave up only hope for a flat. I moved around private flats until the day came that I got my flat in Dolphin House. Soo Happy.

The flats were very community orientated. I got involved in the community and I loved everything about it for 42 years. Living there we formed a close group and worked with other women and children to make the flats the best place to live.

My darkest day came when the meetings in the flats was about regeneration and that's when everything started to change. The older tenants voted for more upkeep but the younger tenants thought it was a great way to get a house so used the flats as a gap stop....

So they started to vacate blocks for demolishing. It tore the community apart, When it came to my block, it broke my heart. I held on as long as I could. But there was a lot of pressure to vacate the flat and after 42 years it was very hard to know where to relocate to. So we got as near as we could to Dolphins Barn so I could keep in touch with my neighbours from the flats. We still got together once a week. But it will never be the same as living together. They spilt the community and we all got sent our separate ways.

WE MADE A GREAT
TIME IN DEPTS
WE PLAYED IN
THE FLATS AND ONLY
CAME HOME WHEN
WE WERE HUNGRY WE
WOULD GO TO A
MACHINE AND I GOT
SO AND I WOULD
MAKE THE CUP OF
POCCAL AND SEND ME
I APPLIES TO BEING
HOME THOUGH MY
MAD DIDN'T MAKE APPLES ONE
I GOT A CUPPER FOR
LEAVING THE FLATS. BUT
A FEW OF SAME THING THE
NEXT WEEK LIFE WAS
GOOD IN THE FLATS BUT ONE
MORNING ALL THE OTHER
I MISS THEM TIMES
BOUNCE HOME

My Home
Dawn and Raped
My Home House
The memories but I miss
the flowers
The Best Days of my life
My life was full of friendship
That's still gone on today.
We St Stephen's Green
was our Back Garden
it Filled our Day with Fun
If someone Die straight to
the green we RUN TO Pick
Some Flowers for the Decayed
The Gardeners he would Show
us. We keep him on his Grass
Don't Worry We Picked
Flowers for him when it was
his Turn
Tina Johnston



“I’d like just to be able to rear me kids here, peacefully”.

Number of years living in Dolphin House:

“Me whole life. Me ma was born and reared here. Me ma was born in 248 – : reared in 248. We lived over in the long block first, in a one-bedroom, and then we moved to 153, and then we moved to 266, and now I live here....My sister lives down in the last block as well, yeah; and me brother lives here”.

Unique sense of community:

“I mean, people do still sit out; don’t get me wrong, people do still sit still out; but years ago, everybody was out. The whole block was out, and everybody was just friends with everybody. Back then, it was the whole block out and – when I mean the whole block, I mean the whole block and it was just brilliant. It was just great. It was just great atmosphere, great energy. You know, somebody’d go in and put the soup on some, somebody would make the rolls, somebody else’d have all the boxes of ice pops”.

“...growing up here years ago, I mean, running around playing tip the can. You name it was a great place to grow up in. I have great memories of Dolphin’s Barn”.

“We could go to the shop; we’d be fine. You know, the neighbours – so, years ago, obviously, when we were younger, we’d have a lot of old neighbours – like Miss Lacy and Miss Kyne, all of them – and we’d have to go to the shop for them. You

know? We would be made go and if you didn’t go to the shop, you’d get a clatter... They’d give us, say, a pound or whatever, for going, and that’s just the way it was”.

Uncertainty With Regeneration:

“...well I want to take that wall down; I’d love to get this done up; get that –’ and then you’re like, ‘What’s the point in me putting all this money? They could come to me now in six months’ times and say, ‘Right, Laura, your block is next’, and you’re like, ‘What?’. So, you don’t know. They’ve given you no sense of when it’s happening, the time frame, who’s next, what’s next. You don’t know. You don’t know anything”.

Hopes for the future:

“We should be able to just live here peacefully and not have to worry about walking to the shops, someone letting off gunshots – We shouldn’t have to worry about that”.



AOIFE

“I love being from Dolphin House. People’d look out for me more than they would while you’re living in a house. You know you’re safe in the flats like”

Number of years living in Dolphin House:

“Oh, since I’m three. So, what? Twenty-six?”

Unique sense of Community:

“I know everyone in the flats; I know everyone in the community centre; I know everyone in Andrews Hall and all. you kind of have to grow up – to have a relationship with people in the flats. I’d move into a house outside the flats but I wouldn’t move into another flat complex”.

Sense of Safety and Security:

“I love being from Dolphin House... People’d look out for me more than they would while you’re living in a house. You know you’re safe in the flats like... if someone’s knocking at your door, you could ring someone and say, ‘Who is that at me door?’”

“...people that live in a house don’t have a summer project for their kids, don’t have playgrounds like this. That’s great for the kids. I love having that. I know if my child runs out on the road, I know – not runs out on the road – like, runs out of the block – I know he’s safe”.

Community Supports:

“It’s a good community, and I have to say, the workers in here are great. Like, I’d come to them quicker than I’d go to the council. And they’d always help me”.
“I’m so grateful for the playground and the Astro and the new little things”.

Summer Project:

“We used to have to queue up – like, it’s gas, cause we used to queue up to go on trips cause there’d only be like fourteen spaces. Now, obviously, all the kids get to go on the trips, which is good...And then we used have, like, the three day festival where we’d have, like, a little mini – a talent show. Then you’d have a movie night; they used to get a little (projector). We’d all go to the chipper; used to come over, sit down; the whole community’d watch a film; – and then at the end, they’d have, like, bouncy castles, ice creams, everything”.

Hopes for the future:

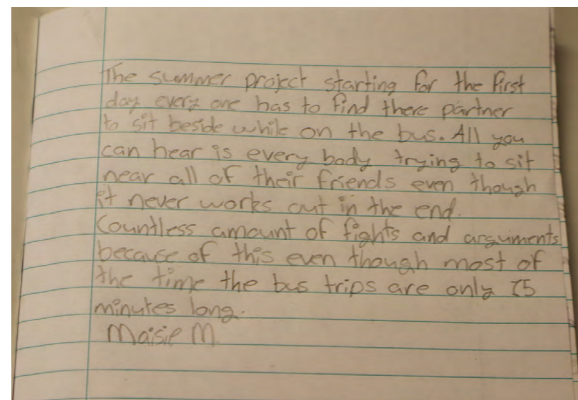
“I’d like people not have to be worrying about dampness in their house”.



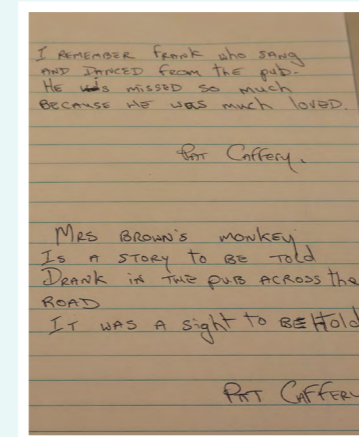
THE SUMMER PROJECT POEM BY MAISIE

The summer project starting for the first day. Everyone has to find their partner to sit beside while on the bus. All you can hear is everybody trying to sit near all of their friends even though it never works out in the end.

Countless amount of fights and arguments because of this even though most of the time the bus trips are only 15 minutes long.



POEMS BY PAT



I remember Frank who sang and danced from the pub.

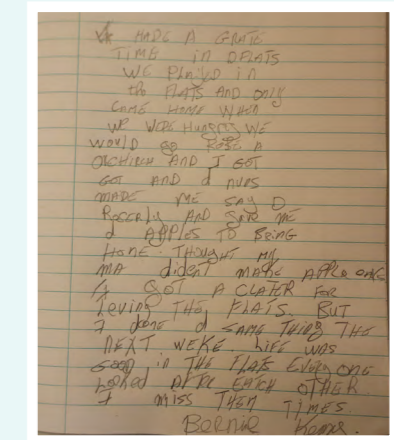
He is missed so much because he was loved.

Mrs Brown's monkey is a story to be told.

Drank in the pub across the road.

It was a sight to behold.

POEM BY BERNIE



I had a great time in D Flats. We played in the flats and only came home when we were hungry. We would go to our church and de nuns made me say the rosary and gave me de apples to bring home. Though my ma didn't make apple cake. I got a clatter for leaving the flats but I done the same thing the next week

life was good in the flats, everyone looked after each other. I miss them times.

DONNA



*“I moved in in 2004.
Twenty-one years”.*

Number of years living in Dolphin House:

“I moved in 2004. Twenty-one years. But I was born and reared in Fatima before that”.

The reality of living in old buildings

“Me and me husband were sitting in the sitting room, watching a film, and it was raining like this, and here I am, ‘That rain sounds like it’s on the inside of the flat, Ger’. But it wasn’t. What was after happening: the rain was so bad; all the blockages came up through all the flats”.

Lack of maintenance:

“...if you think about it, the length of time people live here – like the length of time I lived here, and I never needed any maintenance. Right? 2004, I think, or 2007 – it was one or the other when I moved in – and I never needed any maintenance till 2018. That’s a lot of money – maintenance money – building up over the weeks just to get leak fixed, – and I couldn’t get that fixed. I could show you photographs of my ceiling, and them beetles running around it, and they just wouldn’t do anything about it”.

“The corporation workers in here are great... the fellas that go around to clean the blocks and everything, they’re amazing”.



MERCER HOUSE, MY HOME: A POEM BY TINA

*Born and Reared in Mercer House.
The best days of my life*

*My life was full of friendship that still
goes on today*

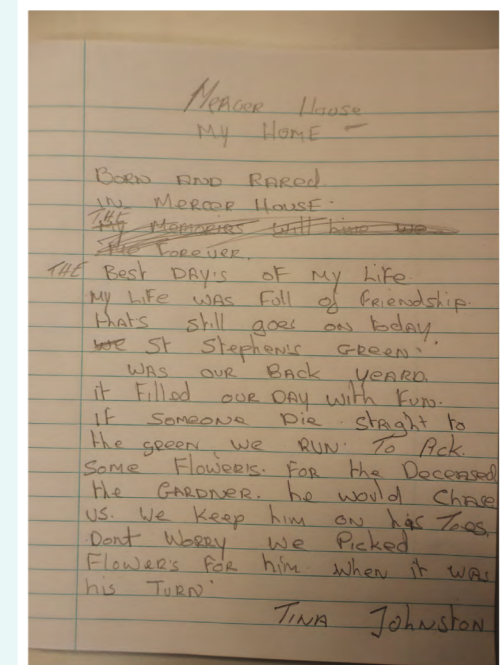
*St Stephens green was our back
yard*

It filled our day with fun

*If someone died - straight to the
green we run to pick some flowers
for the deceased*

*The gardener, he would chase us
We kept him on his toes*

*Dont worry we picked flowers for
him when it was his turn*



RAYMOND

“There’s so many good people here. There’s so many people willing to make the community better. So like, why not give people chances?”

Number of years living in Dolphin House:

“Bar two years, we moved out. we’ve been here for twenty-seven of my twenty-nine years”.

Unique sense of community:

“...we’re close to family – myself and my partner Shauna. Like, she has her mam, her sisters and all, brother and everything lives in the flats. Same as me. I have brothers, sisters, my mam and dad – all live here”.

“...it’s great to have family close...like, you just drop in on a whim, see your

mam for ten minutes for a cup of tea or – whoever it may be. For me, that’s a nice thing, you know. You’ve a good, strong community, do you know what I mean? Like, the majority of people get on; they get on well and look after each other where possible...”.

“...we moved to Drimnagh, years ago; like, you couldn’t tell who your neighbours were, you know? look, could be lovely, but I think, in those situations, a lot of people tend to keep themselves to themselves a lot more”.

“There’s not a stage in the day where you go out on the balcony, just – maybe even if I’m working, I’ll take five minutes, I’ll go out on the balcony, and you’re bound to talk to at least one or two people, or at least say hello to one or two people”.



Hopes for the future:

“I’ve always said I’d never wanna go too far, you know what I mean? I’d love to see this place – I’d love to see it done up really well. I’d like to see it vibrant...Like there’s art, there’s community, there’s business. It’s all local. Everybody looks after each other. That would be ideal. That would be perfect”.

“I suppose, whoever might read or maybe listen to this interview, is that there’s four hundred odd houses or apartments in this place; could be close to a thousand people living there. There’s so many good people here. There’s so many people willing to make the community better. So like, why not give people chances? Doesn’t matter where they’re from, what they do; if you see somebody, speak to them as a person and like, give people a chance, you know”.

“Honestly, make your judgements off what you see, not where they’re from or how they look. There’s so many good people here, and I think it’s growing culturally as well”.

“And I think people are not living in council flats because they have a lot of money. It’s because they are working class. They’re not middle class or anything above, you know. They’re gonna own their own home or rent privately if they can, because it is generally a better quality of life, you know? But no, if they’re here, they’re here for a reason; why not welcome people in, you know what I mean? Because I think, as Irish people as well, we’ve always wandered, haven’t we? We’ve always had to leave and emigrate, and this and that and nine times out of ten, we’ve been welcomed and always been kinda looked after. So, when the right people are coming here and looking to get into the community or country as a whole, give them a chance. Until proven otherwise or shown otherwise”.

SUSAN

“I learned how to count going up the steps of the flats”

Number of years living in Dolphin House:

“Came in at four. So I’d be, what, fifty odd years in Dolphin House? Like, me granny came in here in 1957 when they opened. She lived over here, and she actually seen where we were reared – the block where the first phase is now. She would have seen that block actually being built”.

Memories: “I learned how to count. Going up the steps of the flats, you’d be counting. Like, I remember me da would have me by the hand, and he’d be singing ‘One, two, three, four’. That’s how you learned to count. And because I live – and on the same stairway, I learned my daughter how to count; I used to do the same thing with her. And now I’m doing it with me granddaughter. Isn’t it crazy?”



On the same – set of steps, the three generations are doing the same thing”.

“I’m coming up and down now with me little three-year-old granddaughter, I’m saying ‘one, two, three’, and it brings me back to memories when I done it with my daughter and when me dad done it with me”.

Unique sense of community:

“You went to school and you came back and you went out and everyone played in the block; kids went around on bikes; Christmas morning, you’d see kids out on their bikes and their scooters and stuff like that. The parents went to the local pub, and they all mixed with each other, and the women would sit down at the pram – we had pram sheds at the time. The kids would play. The women all interacted with each other. It was just such a great community. And then as we got older, then we kind of grew up, went to work whether it be a sewing factory or the old mushroom factory some of them



worked in up in Crumlin. But – then we all danced together. Do you know, it was always a great community...If someone was in – you could knock in next door and get a bit of sugar”.

Safety, security and a changing environment:

“...always felt safe in Dolphin House; – always felt connected to it–; and you always had a sense of community and family were in Dolphin House”.

“Me sister moved out three year ago. She got a house up in Rutland Avenue. She would have been the last. Me mother has since passed. Me granny has passed. Who else would have lived in here? Me other brother. I have a niece that lives above me, but she is in the process of moving out. And me daughter now got her own flat there last year cause she has a little one...he’s a little three-year-old, so she’s down. So, which means I’m on in a flat now on me own, on a block on me own. There’s three of us left in it, but when one of the girls, which is me niece,

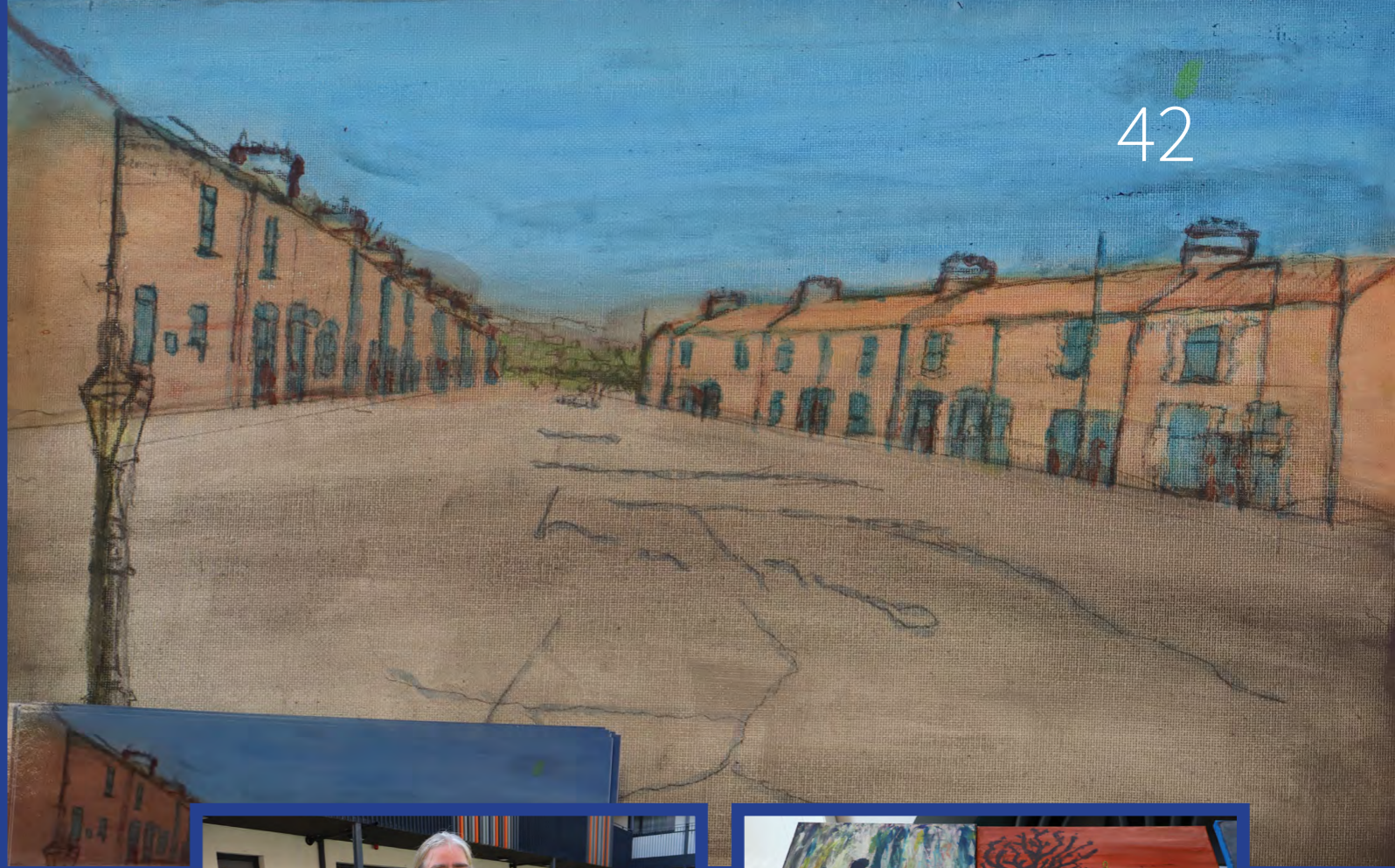
is ready to go – she’ll be gone in the next few weeks – it’ll only leave two of us on that block. You have no neighbours. You see nobody. You talk to nobody. It’s a complete and utter disgrace the way Dublin City Council has left us. The sense of safety is gone”.

Hope for the future:

“...that they would build decent housing. I probably won’t see it, but for me – I hope that me daughter and me granddaughter – get what they deserve, do you know what I mean; – that they’re not living in this – well, they’re not filth, don’t get me wrong, you know, but – don’t grow up with the issues that we’ve grown up with. (...) Them issues only occurred, say, in the last, say, twenty years. We didn’t have that mould living at home or sewage problems living at home. But I’d hope that they do benefit from their regeneration process; that DCC do build, and give people the decency and respect that they deserve...Build communities, not buildings”.



RIALTO ARTS EXHIBITION IN DOLPHIN HOUSE CAFE



MICHAEL

“We have a lot of hard-working people. You know, you can hear them going – like, when I wake up at five or six in the morning”

Unique sense of community:

“Well, they all look out for each other. They do. With the block I’m in. And you can kind of – you can leave your door open and all that stuff, you know?...As I said, they all stick out for each other”.

“As I said, we all have our problems. Worse – some worse than yours. You’re never out on your own, you know?”.

“We have a lot of hard-working people. You know, you can hear them going – like, when I wake up at five or six in the morning, cause of the f* seagulls, I can hear them”.

“No, like, the community, I think, is very, very important. They’re doing a hell of a lot...that you can see with the work going on. It wasn’t always like that, you know”.

Hopes for the future:

“I’d like more amenities for the kids. There was talk of a new centre – community centre. There’s talk of a lot of stuff. That’s fantastic if they do that build an astroturf pitch. Cause that pitch out there – that football pitch, when it was a football pitch, Paul McGrath used to play on that. And a lot of good footballers came from Dolphin”.



“...a lot of good footballers came from Dolphin”.



JOHNNY

“I was born and reared in these flats; I wouldn’t let anyone say anything bad”.

Number of years living in Dolphin House:

“Well, it was all me life. I was born in Dolphin House. I was born in 257, which is only across the road there. And I grew up here. And then I moved out of here for a while. I moved up to Drimnagh. And then all the kids were growing up with their boyfriends and got their own place. And then me daughter she lived down in the old part and they couldn’t get her a place anywhere cause she’d three kids – two girls so I gave her the house up in Drimnagh and I came back here”.

Sense of pride:

“I feel proud...I wouldn’t let people speak bad about it. Like, as I say, I was born and reared in these flats; I wouldn’t let anyone say anything bad. I know there’s bad things going on in the flats, but I wouldn’t let anyone say anything bad about it”.

“...there was a girl coming to work down here; she was from Tallaght, and she said she was afraid to come down to work here, and I said, ‘Why’; she said, ‘People up in Tallaght says it’s a bad area; they rob the runners off your feet’. I said no such thing. We wouldn’t do that down here. They’re the kind of things that people say, you know?” .

Hopes for the future:

“Good place to live. The regen’d be good if in the next ten years, it’s done. As I said, I mightn’t be here to see it. That’s all I’m hopeful for for me grandkids. And good jobs and a more modern place, yeah. There’s great potential. There’s some great people in these flats”.

JUNE

“Oh, now, there’s beautiful memories in them flats for me, but there’s very, very sad ones as well”

Number of years living in Dolphin House:

“I was born in 1950, and I came up to Dolphin – it was before my communion, so I probably would have come up around five-year-old or six-year-old”.

“It was the first balcony – a two-bedroom – and it was looking straight out onto Dolphin’s Barn. So the actual view that you had was just beautiful and your bedroom brought you out looking onto the whole of Dolphin’s Barn where all the shops were. And your balcony then was looking down into the square where we all played. And there was all pram sheds and washing lines and, it was just – they were like hotels”.

Regeneration over the years:

“I was in the long block. And the numbers of our doors was in the eighties”.

“Oh, we were broken hearted seeing the long block coming down. I have a brick and all belong to it. My granny lived over. We lived in 86 and me granny lived in 89...Even now when I walk through it, I just keep looking and saying, ‘Oh my God’. It’s just flat ground now. Nothing there. Just wasteland. heartbreaking now, I have to tell you”.

“Oh, now, there’s beautiful memories in them flats for me, but there’s very, very sad ones as well”.



Unique sense of community:

“They all looked out for one another and – now, don’t get me wrong. There was rows over washing and lines getting robbed and – people trying to hold the line till the next day and all them little things that went on. But it was what made the community, do you know? But you’ll never get the likes of it again. You always had somebody...I’ll miss it till I die”.

Hopes for the future:

“It is hard Joe. I really think you’d have to go back to basics really. You know, you have this thing, people looking into the future and the– it’s – like, the root causes are not being dealt with. They’re building these places, they’re paying for them to be done, – and then they forget all about the people. Like where is the money going that they’re taking in rents and all?”.



ART PIECES BY INNA AND NICOLE



Nicola is living in Dublin 2. She painted a flower and mentioned that she hasn't painted like this since she was young. Both women seemed to really enjoy the space and mentioned they would be very interested in attending something like that again.

Inna joined one of the art events from Blanchardstown and painted a picture of the Liffey with the Samuel Beckett Bridge and the convention centre, her favourite place in Dublin.



FLIGHT OF FANTASY POEM BY PATRICIA MCCANN JULY 2025

Written in response to the damage done to the new astroturf pitch next to the community centre.

I was off on a flight of fantasy
Ya see in me dream I was a pigeon
So I flew over Dolphin House
To see if any neighbours were still living
I soared along the old canal
Then hovered in the sky
When memories came flooding back
Sure, they'd bring a tear to a glass eye
Football tournaments in the pitch
Brought teams from near and far
The auld sing songs upon the steps
We even had our own outdoor bar
Kids were always safe back then
As they played with one another
No phones or social media
No back chat to the mother
I perched upon the centre
As darkness fell from the sky
When a few little gurriers
Caught my beady eye
I flew closer
To get a birds eye view
Oh my God what had they done
To a pitch brand spankin new
What is wrong with these humans
How stupid can they be?
To destroy all the good work
In their own community
Now the moral of this story is
Don't be so easily led
Cause Karma is a wise old bird
That just might shit upon your head

END MATTER

Artefact curators

Dr Joe Whelan, School of Social Work and Social Policy, Trinity College Dublin: Principal Investigator.
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Funding and steering group

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Steering group membership was made up of the following individuals:

1. Bobby McLoughlin: Project Manager (at the time the research was conducted), Dolphin House Community Development Association.
2. Dawn Slattery: Outreach Worker and Resident.
3. Debbie Mulhall: Community Development Worker and Resident.
4. Dr Paula Mayock: Associate Professor and Researcher, Social Work and Social Policy, Trinity College Dublin.
5. Manus Bree: Regeneration Coordinator.
6. Pat Caffrey: Community Activist and Resident.
7. Phyllis McGlynn: Community Activist and Resident.

With thanks to the residents of Dolphin House

This artefact is dedicated to Frank Carroll who sadly passed away in November 2025 before this project was complete. Frank was a tireless community activist and a proud resident of Dolphin House. His words and insights enriched this project just as his humour and kindness enriched his community.

He will be missed.



**“IT’S NOT WHERE YOU LIVE,
IT’S HOW YOU LIVE”**



Frank Carroll 1958-2025
Rest in Peace



LIFE IN DOLPHIN HOUSE A COMMUNITY ARTEFACT



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

**Dolphin
House**
COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT
ASSOCIATION



Taighde Éireann
Research Ireland