This newsletter will inform you of what is going on in and affecting community groups in Westmeath.

We intend to send out a PPN newsletter at the beginning of every month, so if you want your event or news items featured, please send them in well in advance.

For news items, please keep it to approx 175 words, and an image (with permission to use) is always good.

Let us know your successes, your ideas, and things that you want to share with the PPN’s affiliated groups. There are over 600 groups affiliated in County Westmeath.

Send events, news etc to info@westmeathppn.ie

We will happily also feature events & news on our website: www.westmeathppn.ie

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Check it Out!!

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Emerald Lakes finished top of the Medals Leader Board in the WIDA World Championships

Active Retirement Ireland reaches out to all older people to stop loneliness through friendship and support.

By joining us, we can offer you:

- Friendship
- Shared interests
- New Creative Skills, i.e. Computers, new banking, smart phones etc.
- Holidays and Day Tours
- Support and information.
- Physical Activities, e.g. Pickleball, Walking for Fitness, Go For Life Games, Bowls, Bocce and many more.
- Social Activities i.e. Evenings Out at the Theatre, Arts Centres, Local and National Concerts, Dancing, Singing, meals out and socializing. Cultural Outings, i.e. Museums, Holidays abroad and short breaks

It is a non-party, non-sectarian national network of over 500 local active retirement associations.

Membership includes Insurance Cover.

Active Retirement Ireland Midlands Region Contact:
Maureen McCormack, Development Officer
Tel: 0872198080
E: mmccormack49@gmail.com.

Central Support Office: 01 8733836

Latest News & Events - www.westmeathppn.ie
Irish Wheelchair Association

Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) is Ireland’s leading representative organisation and service providers for people with physical disabilities. We advocate for the needs of people with physical disabilities and provide services and support to over 20,000 members in their homes and communities throughout Ireland every year.

Everything we do is driven by IWA’s vision of an Ireland where people with disabilities can enjoy equal rights, choices and opportunities and live their lives independently. IWA is also one of the largest providers of services for people with physical disabilities. Each year IWA provides over 2 million hours of essential services and supports to people with physical disabilities including; community centres, training facilities, social activities, holiday centres and driving tuition.

Throughout Co. Westmeath, IWA has two vibrant Community Centres located on the Coosan Road, Athlone and Springfield Centre, Devlin Road, Mullingar. The Community Centres deliver essential services including educational and training programmes, social and recreational opportunities, and a dedicated information and advice service. Comprising large multi-functional rooms, community meeting rooms, therapy rooms, kitchen and dining areas, the Community Centres benefit local people with physical disabilities and their families.

In addition, the Community Centres host and partake in local cultural and community events, such as art exhibitions, local history or swimming classes. Information and publications are available in each centre on a range of community and disability issues. Activities are person-centred and individuals decide which activities they wish to participate in. IWA’s friendly and highly trained staff work in partnership with local members with the emphasis on ensuring a welcoming and relaxed atmosphere in each Community Centre.

Mobility is very important for IWA members. Alongside our Community Centre’s, IWA also provides a driving Assessment and tuition service which allows people the opportunity to learn to drive for the first time, or return to driving. IWA’s team of specialist and experienced driving instructors provides over 5,000 lessons annually and boasts a very high driving pass rate. IWA’s specially adapted automatic cars feature a wide range of Adaptations. These Adaptations make driving possible for those with a very wide range of physical disabilities.

IWA promotes best practice in accessibility for people with physical disabilities. We work with companies, outdoor venues, sports facilities and public sector bodies advising and developing accessibility guidelines for public spaces. Hotels, bars and restaurants are a particularly important sector in terms of ensuring that entrances and bathrooms are wheelchair accessible and we are actively involved in improving accessibility for people with physical disabilities. Our dedicated Access Advisory Service looks at how best to make progress in this area and engage in direct consultation with organisations, architects, engineers, planners, developers and others regarding the planned design of facilities, stadiums, venues and other public spaces.

IWA is delighted to welcome new volunteers to the organisation. People are at the heart of everything that we do and we provide excellent training, support and experiences to our dedicated volunteers. People volunteer for different reasons including; a personal involvement with disability, an interest in contributing something back to the community, a wish to meet new people or an interest in developing new skills and experiences. Whatever your motivation may be, we are committed to ensuring that your volunteering experience will be a pleasant and positive one.

IWA as a not for profit organisation depends on community fundraising and the generosity of the public, in addition to Government grants, to continue to deliver and develop essential services to people with physical disabilities in local communities. We welcome volunteers to assist us in our fundraising initiatives throughout the year. One hour of your time for our National Angels Campaign in November or your local Church Gate Collection throughout the year can make a big difference.

For further information about the range of services and supports provided by IWA or volunteering opportunities in your local community please visit www.iwa.ie

To find out more about local activities please contact: Irish Wheelchair Association Athlone – 090 647 1118 / clonbrusk.athlone@iwa.ie
Irish Wheelchair Association Mullingar – 044 934 7511 / mullingar@iwa.ie
Irish Men’s Sheds—One man’s story

The humble garden shed has traditionally been seen as a place of refuge where men could retreat for a few hours, tinker with some ideas or tackle a few minor DIY jobs, or maybe just simply sit and contemplate on life or the world around us.

Life drastically changed for one Westmeath man Kevin Brady in 2008 after being made redundant due to the economic downturn. Kevin said “I found myself in a very dark place, like many men at the time I was used to being part of a busy lifestyle, to one filled with solitude and isolation brought on by unemployment. I became part of a stereotype of men, keeping their cards close to their chest doing little to offload my festering worries, not knowing who to trust or confide in…” He continued to say “I was searching the internet one day for ideas when I came across something I thought might bring likeminded men like me together. I soon made contact with Wexford man John Evoy who like me was eager to find out if this idea called the Men’s Shed might work in Ireland.”

The Men’s Shed originated in Australia from a back yard scenario in the 1990’s where a few men got together, used a communal shed to carry out tasks like fixing lawnmowers or restoring furniture. Soon the idea took up pace and spread across Australia. Since its introduction to Ireland, a national Men’s Shed Association was formed in 2011 where we now have 430 mensheds around Ireland with over 10,000 men taking part weekly.

Kevin says the menshed concept is thoroughly focused on men and groups of men who work on project’s together, have the opportunity to learn a new skill or who simply enjoy spending a few hours of companionship and meaningful purpose. “I am delighted to announce that this year the Men’s Sheds Gathering will take place at Páirc Uí Chaoimh, Cork, from September 12th to 13th. This will be the largest such gathering of men’s shed members anywhere in the world. The gathering will feature top-class speakers including Irish Olympian David Gillick and rugby legend Donncha O’Callaghan. It is a great opportunity to meet with other sheds from around the world as well as hearing stories from sheds around the country, share their triumphs, achievements, and plans for the future.

We currently have twelve Men Sheds in Westmeath who are always delighted to hear from new members. If there is anyone who is interested in learning more, visiting or joining please contact TP O’Gorman 086 165 3090 or Kevin Brady 087 1375222.

Women and rural electrification social history project

The National Museum of Ireland – Country Life in Castlebar is recording the memories and stories of women related to the rural electrification in Ireland. These will be used for an exhibition that will take place in 2019. The project will be concerned with detailing the changes electrification made to the lives of rural housewives and mothers in Rural Ireland.

If you, or anyone in your family, has memories or stories relating to rural electrification please contact jhamilton@museum.ie or (094) 9031764 or see www.electricirishhomes.org.

Swift Survey

Swift Survey: last Thursday 31st May; Ricky Whelan gave a very interesting talk and we saw a great display of swifts in Kilbeggan. Thanks to those who attended. If you are interested in getting involved in the Westmeath Swift Survey contact the Westmeath Branch of Birdwatch Ireland, the survey coordinator: antonkrastevmail@gmail.com, or Heritage@westmeathcoco.ie.

For more information on this amazing bird see http://bit.ly/2LsNExl

Another event will take place during Swift Awareness Week on 17th June at 8pm, in St Mary’s Square Athlone.

Irish Military Seminar

Fri 8th – Sat 9th June 2018,
Riverbank Arts Centre, Newbridge

Irish Military Seminar

further information: https://www.riverbank.ie/event/talk-irish-military-seminar/

Historic Graveyards Information Day & Field trip

Historic Graveyards Information Day & Field trip, on Sat 9th June
Annebrook House Hotel, Mullingar at 10:30am

Come along and hear tips and advice from Archaeologist Caimin O’Brien of National Monuments Service, DCHG and Ecologist Donna Mullen on Best Practice Care and Conservation for Historic Graveyards, followed by a field trip to some local graveyards.

Free event and all welcome please book your place by contacting:
Heritage@westmeathcoco.ie or ph: 044-9332098
Birdwatch Ireland Westmeath Branch June outing - Meeting at Scragh Bog

Thurs 14th June-7:30pm afterwards visit to Jim & Bridie Bourke’s at Knockdrin.

Scragh Bog is located just three miles north of Mullingar - just off the N4 (Longford Road).

Scragh bog is one of the best examples in Ireland of the transition from alkaline fen to acidic raised bog. The greater part of the bog was purchased by the Irish Peatland Conservation Council with funds generously provided by the Dutch Foundation for the Conservation of Irish Bogs. It was then handed over to the State for management as a Nature Reserve. In recent years the National Parks & Wildlife Service have developed a wooden boardwalk and a raised viewing platform.

Melanie McQuade, Heritage Officer, Westmeath County Council, Áras an Chontae, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath.
N91 FH4N—(044) 9332098 /(087) 6074496

New Date for Strete Vintage Show 24th June

Thousands are expected to flock to the midlands Family Fun day and Vintage show in the parish of Strete, North Westmeath on June 24th.

This is the shows sixteenth year and has become the highlight of the vintage calendar and also the Midlands favourite place to meet up for fan’s and enthusiast of all things vintage. Over the years, Strete Vintage show has become renowned for its welcoming and friendly approach, impressing the national Irish Vintage Society’s committee members so much they decide to host the National Finals back in 2005 and again in 2015.

Every year the show goes from strength to strength, attracting a large crowd of exhibitors who travel from all over the midlands with classic cars, tractors, vans and every sort of vintage implement you could think off to show on the day. There will be many exhibitions and demonstrations with a great entertainment for children with face painting and a new spectacular magic show.

Along with a host of arts and crafts with new and exciting fashion accessories also on display.

The annual dog show is a huge crowd pulling event which is open to all classes of dog.

The outdoor bandstand is always entertaining with all day music. This year the show’s main artist is the new Queen of Country music Olivia Douglas.

Admission to the show is €10 & under 16’s go free.

Great raffle on the day with lots of great prizes.

“Thousands are expected to flock to the midlands Family Fun day and Vintage show in the parish of Strete”
100 year historical event in commemoration of the Anti-Conscription

We would like to invite you and other community groups to the 100 year historical event in commemoration of the Anti-Conscription.

Sunday 10th June at 2 pm at St Mary’s CBS, signing of pledge and for to end stigma in mental health.

Vintage Tea Party in Caffreys Garden in Mount Street afterwards.

All welcome, free or you can make a donation on the day.

Transformative Recovery College
M: 085 143 0909

Athlone Canal Awareness Event

Athlone Canal Heritage Committee in partnership with Local Authority Waters & Community Office are holding an

Athlone Canal Awareness Event

12th June in Shamrock Lodge Hotel @ 10:30am

Speakers
*Basil Mannion Local Authority Waters and Community Officer
*Gearoid O’ Brien Author & Historian
*Billy Flynn Ecologist
*Flynn Furney Environmental
*Caithiona Maher Ecologist- specialist knowledge Shannon Callows
*Ricky Whelan - Birdwatch Ireland

Athlone Castle will host its Annual Medieval Fair

Sat 9th June 9 & Sun 10th June at 12:00 - 5:00pm

Athlone Castle will host its Annual Medieval Fair

in collaboration with the Society for Creative Anachronism.

Medieval Fair and Market stalls, from 12 noon 5pm each day.

http://www.athlonecastle.ie/events/
No! Emerald Lakes has finished at the top of the Medals Leader Board in the WIDA World Championships, held in Maastricht, The Netherlands! We came home with 12 World Globes and World Champions.

This is very unique for such a Group like Emerald Lakes as we cover everything from competition solo dancing to Irish Dance Drama and Show Dance, Freestyle Choreography etc from a Voluntary element of Arts in the Community. No other school is like Emerald Lakes, nor do they afford local children and adults the opportunity to do take part as all the Irish Dance Drama classes are free along with teams classes.

On our show team our cast was aged from 6 years old to 42 years old. Our oldest dancer is 66 years old who also took part in other categories. As you may be aware we afford the opportunity to all who wish to take part by offering free Theatrical Irish Dance Drama and Teams Classes with an emphasis on Irish Cultural and Expression of Irish Culture through music and dance. We are not permitted to include song in these events but we play music and sing etc after the events at the venues.

Our local Primary school is also doing very well locally here, we currently Volunteer time every week to attend the school to develop dancers for the school cultural events in Westmeath and also all 180 children of Scoil Chroí Naofa in Rochfortbridge have now completed year 3 of our cultural St. Patrick’s week Dance project where all classes learn about Irish Music, timing, bars and how to dance. Year 3 on this programme has seen a huge respect grow for Irish Dance in Rochfortbridge especially among the boys who normally shy away from dance. Now they see it as ok and kinda cool!

The Secondary School Transition years will also have a project with us, where they will learn Riverdance as a part of their learning in the TY programme and this will be done over up until they finish out the school year for an end of year performance.

We also continue to continue to bring Irish Dance & Culture to the Elderly. We are due to dance for the residents of the Scanta Maria Home in Kinnegad again. We do this also a number of times a year. Finally, we are continuing to forge ahead for a production in Irish Music, Song and Dance for October/November time if we can and we have plenty of talent available and to develop locally.

Congratulations & Well done
The Emerald Lakes Academy
Westmeath PPN is a network of over 600 Community & Voluntary Groups in County Westmeath

The Voice of the Community... Have your Say...