

NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2026

Nuachtlitir Meitheamh



**Public
Participation
Network**
Westmeath

Keeping it green at Westmeath PPN

Westmeath Public Participation Network continues its commitment to environmentally friendly operations.

WPPN encouraged its member groups to conduct their activities in a safe and environmentally responsible manner at recent Sustainable Living Workshops.

Three workshops were organised by WPPN on Sustainable Living, the workshops took place in three locations across the county in May.

One of the aims of this training was to assist participants with developing skills to manage local, practical climate projects.

The workshops included a number of practical activities including soap making.

The workshop gave participants some easy switches to make in everyday life, like avoiding chemicals, reducing waste and avoiding single use.



Warm hello from Westmeath PPN.

Hugh Farrell appointed as the new PPN Community & Voluntary rep for Westmeath Community development.

John Corrigan as the new PPN representative for Roads Safety Forum.

*Edel & Lourdes
Westmeath PPN*

WELCOME
TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

1. Taghmon Turin Cemetery Committee
2. Westmeath Indian Community
3. Killucan Raharney Golden Years
4. Integration & Wellbeing Athlone
5. Raharney Hurling Club



SCAN ME

Visit the WPPN Website at <https://westmeathppn.ie>

Contact us by emailing ppn@westmeathcoco.ie

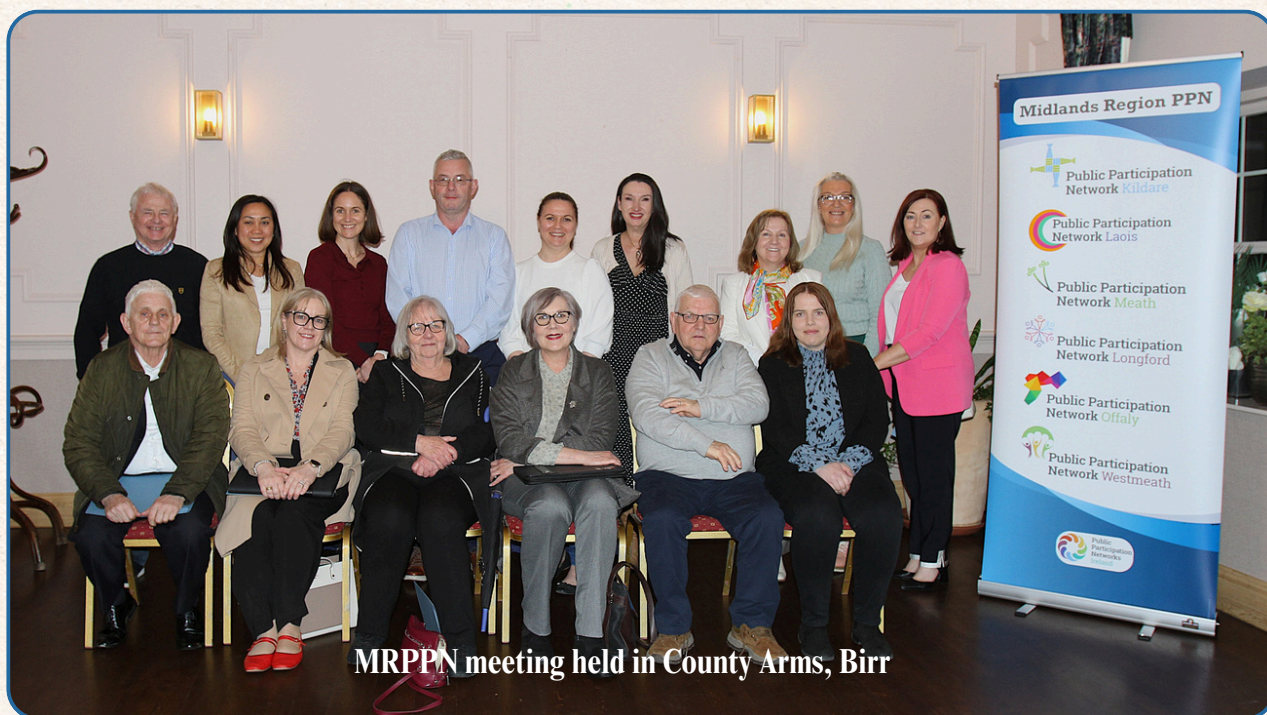
or call 044 933 8903 / 044 933 8939



Disability/Older Persons SICAP Event 18th May 2026.

Organised by Westmeath Community Development- SICAP Programme in conjunction with Independent People with Disabilities, Westmeath County Council and the Westmeath Disability Working Group.

This event has been hugely successful bringing together service providers and service users.



MRPPN meeting held in County Arms, Birr

Spring 2026- Midlands Regional PPN meeting (MRPPN).

Hosted by Offaly PPN held at the County Arms, Birr on 15th April.

The event brought together representatives from Offaly, Longford, Laois, Kildare, Meath and Westmeath.

Anna Ormon delivered a well-received presentation on Offaly PPN's Environmental College, sparking positive discussion on collaboration and showcasing the strong work being done by PPN groups across the region.

(Attended by WPPN secretariat members Vinnie Bagnall & John Bawle together with Edel Ennis and Lourdes Neary from WPPN)



Mullingar Beaver Scouts took place in the town park, where young participants planted native trees and carried out a litter pick. PJ Fitzpatrick from Crann Trees for Ireland supported the tree planting and explained their environmental benefits.

The group found the park to be very clean, thanks to Westmeath County Council staffs. Community Garda Martina Walsh also engaged with the Beavers, creating a positive and interactive experience.

Thanks were extended to all involved, including Westmeath PPN representative John Bawle, Shane Boyne from the WCC Environment for equipment, Coillte for donating trees, and the Scout leaders for their work.



PLANT MORE TREE

Castlepollard Community College held an information day for the college's TY students.

Castlepollard Tidy Towns along with Westmeath PPN representative and Crann Trees for Ireland all came together to chat to the students about the benefits of trees in our schools and communities.

The students were also asked to help and get involved in their local Tidy Towns.

The students planted some trees in and around their school and also planted a special tree in memory of past teachers and students.

The students also help Castlepollard Tidy Towns out by doing a litter pick up session as well. Lots of work was carried out and we have to say all the students were fantastic.

A big Thank you for the help and support from Teacher Orna McCabe, Castlepollard Tidy Towns- Carol and Kathleen.

Crann trees for Ireland- PJ Fitzpatrick and Westmeath PPN representative John Bawle.

We also want to give a special thanks to Coillte for kindly donating all the trees to the College and to Apache Pizza for as always helping support these workshops we carry out in our communities and beyond



Well Westmeath Expo



Saturday 6th June 2026



11am to 4pm



Belvedere House Gardens & Park, Mullingar N91 EF80

Health & Wellbeing Activities, Information Village, Music, Sports, Tai Chi, Circus Skills and Face Painting.

This is a Free Event

Westmeath Healthy Communities email: healthycommunities@westmeathcoco.ie

Healthy Westmeath email: healthywestmeath@westmeathcoco.ie



Get ready to celebrate all that is healthy and positive about life in County Westmeath as part of this FREE event organized by Healthy Communities & Healthy Westmeath.



Kind Kids Club

Join us in Castlepollard Library on Saturday, 6th June when Orla from Kind Kids Club will be joining us to introduce your child to the world of wellbeing and mindfulness through a fun range of creative activities. Places for these workshops are limited, so booking will be required. There will be two workshops, the first at 11:00 am, the second at 12:15 pm.

Spatial Poetry

Join Anna Browne of Big Sky Flowers for the second workshop in her series at Castlepollard Library.

Participants will enjoy creative play with dried flowers and other long lasting botanicals. You will make hanging flower strings and other indoor wall hangings that catch the eye, the breeze and the light.

Spatial Poetry with Anna Browne of Big Sky Flowers



Grúpa Comhrá Gaeilge



Irish Conversation Group

Visit Kilbeggan Library on Thursday afternoons at 4pm agus bain triail as cúpla focal Gaeilge le cairde.

All welcome, no booking required.



Toddler Storytime and Play

Saturday 27th June @ 1030

Come along to Kilbeggan library and enjoy a storytime and singalong in Kilbeggan Library followed by a play session

Suitable for toddlers and children up to 6 years old

No booking required, just pop along and enjoy

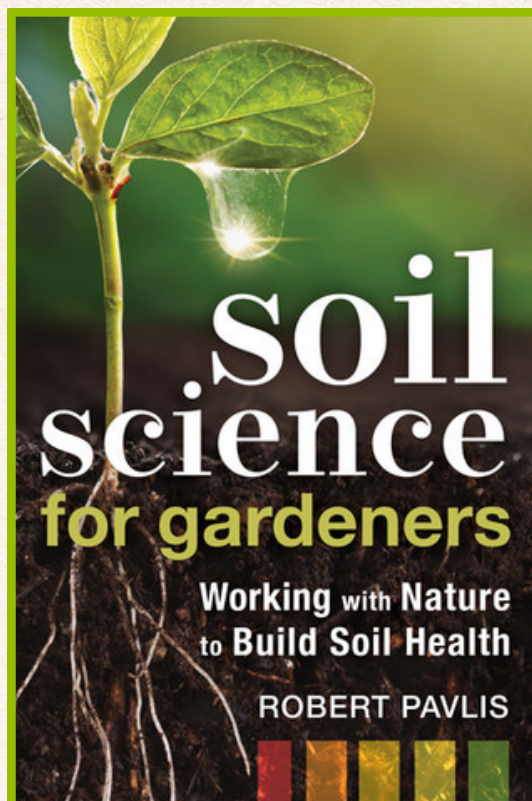


Why not call into Athlone Library on June 6th from 10.30 – 11.30 for **Cyanotype Printmaking**. A fun, hands-on creative workshop introducing children to cyanotype printmaking – an early photographic process that uses UV light to create vivid blue images. Booking is essential

Kinnegad Library have planned an event on **Soil health, No Dig and Composting** on 03 June from 1:30 -2:30pm.

Join Anna Browne where she explores the living ecosystem beneath our feet—how healthy soil structure, microbial life, and nutrient cycles support thriving plants—and introduces no-dig .methods as a way to protect and enhance that biology. Participants will then learn practical composting techniques to create their own fertility, closing the loop between kitchen scraps, garden waste, and nourished soil.

Spaces are limited and booking is essential.





Potter Jam workshop in Kinnegad

06 June from 10:00 – 11:00 for 8 to 12 years

06 June from 11:30 – 12:30 for 13 to 15 years

Celebrating Cruinniú na nÓg 2026 with ceramicist Stephanie McGuinness with a free ceramics workshop for kids aged 8-15. You will learn ceramics techniques and get to keep your own fired ceramic work!



There will be two hour-long workshops throughout the morning, session 1 from 10:00-11:00 for ages 8-12 years old. Session 2 from 11:30-12:30 for 13-15 years old. Please note: These pieces will be fired and glazed in Stephanie's studio. There will be a day allocated when the pieces will be available for pick up in the library 4 weeks after the workshop. Spaces are limited and booking is essential.



Film Screenings
Thursday June 18th
Mullingar Library

Film Screening - Refugee Week

18 Jun 2026 - 6:30 PM to 7:30 PM

The Refugee Week Film Festival is a curated programme of films from across the world that organisations and individuals can screen for free during Refugee Week. To mark Refugee Week 2026, Mullingar library will be hosting a film screening featuring 3 short films exploring themes of displacement, forced migration, and courage.

6:30pm-6:45pm: HAYAT (2019) dir. Rendah Haj.

6:50pm-7:15pm: TSKALTUBO (2023)(tskahll-TOO-boh) dir. Toby Andris.

7:20pm-7:30pm: MIGRANTS (2020) dir. Hugo Caby, Antoine Dupriez, Aubin Kubiak, Lucas Lermytte, Zoé Devise.

These film screenings are free to watch but booking is required. www.westmeathculture.ie



BYO Craft Night in Mullingar Library

Thursdays: June 4th & 18th, July 2nd & 16th. 6pm-8pm

Join Us for Craft Night – Every 2nd Thursday! Looking for a fun, creative night out? Come hang with fellow makers at our monthly BYO Craft Night! Whether you knit, sew, crochet, scrapbook, or dabble in drawing, this BYOC (Bring Your Own Craft) gathering is the perfect way to unwind, get inspired, and connect with a vibrant community of creators. It's the best craft night in town – relaxed, social, and full of creative energy. Don't miss it!

Booking required for each session. www.westmeathculture.ie

National Older People's Council Convention 2026



National Older People's Council Convention, hosted by Westmeath County Council held in Athlone on 7th May 2026 .
It brings together representatives from our 31 Older People's Councils under this year's theme,
“Thriving Together – Age Friendly Sustainable Communities.”

The event served as a powerful reminder of how vital your voices are in driving meaningful change across Ireland. A central focus of the convention was the critical need for stronger local coordination to support those most at risk during emergencies. This sparked an essential dialogue on the implementation of a unified vulnerable persons register, a tool designed to help local authorities and emergency responders act with greater precision during severe weather.

Beyond the keynote speeches, our interactive workshops and site visits brought the theme of “Sustainable Communities” to life. Attendees engaged in a variety of practical and cultural sessions, including:
Focused sessions on being Storm Ready, understanding Dementia, and conducting Public Realm Walkability audits to ensure our streets are accessible for all. A wonderful Library Tour featuring the Bosca Beo, a peaceful Dún na Sí Walk, and a scenic trip on the Viking Tour Boat, showcasing the rich history and amenities of the Athlone region.

These activities highlighted how integrated community services and heritage projects play a massive role in fostering independence and social connection.

A superb couple of days were had by all and we are already in the planning for next years!

if you would like to get Involved please contact [Age Friendly Westmeath](#)

Energy Roadshow

📍 Golden Island
Athlone
N37 N8V0

Homeowners and local businesses can come along to avail of free advice and have the opportunity to ask any questions on retrofitting, solar panels, energy grants and more!

Drop into the Energy Roadshow NZEB rig from:

**MONDAY 8th JUNE to
THURSDAY 11th JUNE 2026**

2pm - 5pm on Monday

10am - 5pm on Tuesday to Thursday

Events Include

- Electric Vehicle Displays
- Representatives from all Sectors of Businesses in the Industry



Westmeath County Council are hosting an Energy Roadshow in Athlone.

This will be an amazing opportunity to drop by to the Near Zero Energy Building (NZEB) Rig and learn all there is to know about energy savings, retrofitting and refurbishments in your business or home 🏡💡🔌

We will be joined by a range of industry experts as well as experts on grants that are available to assist you on your journey to an energy efficient building 🇪🇺

You can find us and drop-in to:

📍 Golden Island Athlone N37 N8V0

🕒 From Monday 8th June to Thursday 11th June 2026

Hazardous Waste Disposal



Saturday 6 June 2026



Mullingar, Civic Amenity Site

This is a free drop-off, available for one day only



Householders, this is a great chance to safely dispose of that household hazardous waste that's been building up... and all for FREE!

We will only accept...

- Adhesives
- Aerosols
- Antifreeze
- Bleaches
- Cleaning agents
- Detergents
- Drain cleaners
- Empty oil containers
- Engine coolants
- Garden fertilizers
- Garden herbicides and pesticides
- Glues
- Household pesticides
- Inks
- Mixed fuels
- Motor oil (25 litre limit per customer)
- Oil filters
- Paint (10 can limit per customer)
- Paint thinners
- Paint strippers
- Resins
- Varnishes

ONE DAY ONLY to drop off your **HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE** ...for **FREE!**

SATURDAY 6TH JUNE 2026
9AM - 1PM*

MULLINGAR CIVIC AMENITY SITE, ZONE C, MULLINGAR BUSINESS PARK, MULLINGAR, CO. WESTMEATH, N91X768
*Opening hours subject to capacity limits

Householders, this is a great chance to safely dispose of that household hazardous waste that's been building up... and all for FREE!

Please note:

- No commercial or farm waste
- Strictly limited to householders
- Only products in original containers with original labels will be accepted
- There is limited capacity for some waste types
- Materials may not be left at the venue outside of the opening hours

☎ 044-9332166
✉ environment-wastemanagement@westmeathcoco.ie

Scan for tips on managing your household hazardous waste:




WE WILL ONLY ACCEPT...

- ADHESIVES
- AEROSOLS
- ANTIFREEZE
- BLEACHES
- CLEANING AGENTS
- DETERGENTS
- DRAIN CLEANERS
- EMPTY OIL CONTAINERS
- ENGINE COOLANTS
- GARDEN FERTILIZERS
- GARDEN HERBICIDES & PESTICIDES
- GLUES
- HOUSEHOLD PESTICIDES
- INKS
- MIXED FUELS
- MOTOR OIL - 25L limit per customer
- OIL FILTERS
- PAINT - limit 10 cans per customer
- PAINT THINNERS
- PAINT STRIPPERS
- RESINS
- VARNISHES



If an item's label contains any of these symbols, then it is classed as hazardous waste.





Creative Ireland



Research and evaluation

We are delighted to announce a new research partnership between Creative Ireland in the Department of Culture, Communications and Sport, the Department of Education and Youth, the Department of Children, Disability and Equality, and the ESRI. The focus is Children and Young People's Engagement in Creative and Cultural Activities, including the impact of Creative Youth initiatives. This is a 3-year research programme that commenced at the end of 2025, with a stakeholder meeting held in March.

More info [here](#)

Welcome to the latest Creative Youth Ezine.

[Teacher Artist Partnership \(TAP\)](#), open until **19th June**. There will be a focus on Irish speaking teachers and creative practitioners.

Recently closed grants included Creative Ireland's Nurture Fund, the Department of Children's capital grant for Play, Recreation and Arts, and the Arts Council's Early Learning and Childcare Scheme and Young Ensembles schemes. Recipients will be announced by the summer.

Upcoming Dates

6th of June

[Cruinniú na nÓg](#), Ireland's national day celebrating the creativity of children and young people will take place all over Ireland, with over 1000 free events happening all over.

[The Creative Youth Nurture Fund](#) pilot concluded in 2025, culminating in a celebratory showcase event in the National Concert Hall featuring all nine participating projects. These diverse projects engaged young people from the Travelling Community, from the refugee community and those seeking protection, young people with disabilities, in youth detention, in or transitioning from the care system, and those attending youth mental health services. [Evaluation of the pilot](#) demonstrated strong positive outcomes, including increased self-confidence and self-expression, the development of transferable skills, enhanced social connection and belonging, and positive shifts in attitudes and perceptions

[I am Creative](#) An online consultation with schools and school leaders was held in January which provided a great opportunity for peer learning.

The Local Creative Youth Partnerships based in Education and Training Boards (ETBs) go from strength to strength.

Their work focuses on the most disadvantaged seldom heard children. Learn more through [one of the projects from Cork](#).



Westmeath Biodiversity Action Plan 2025-2031

is available [online](#) and a limited number of hardcopies of the Plan are available.

If you would like a hardcopy email biodiversity@westmeathcoco.ie with your name and postal address.

Tóchar Midlands Wetland Restoration

is inviting applications for wetland restoration plans and projects across Ireland's EU Just Transition Territory (Laois, Offaly, Westmeath, Longford, Roscommon, and parts of Galway, Tipperary and Kildare) funding is available for projects that enhance wetland conservation, biodiversity, climate resilience, restoration works hydrology, habitat mapping, and public access.

Application deadline 3 June 2026

Please visit the [WEBSITE](#) for more information



2026 Heritage Week Events

Now open for Submissions. Register your event [HERE:](#)

REGISTER NOW



Heritage and Biodiversity News and Events

 **Bring Out the Nature Champion in Your Community!** 

**Working with Nature Awards 2026
Nominations Open Until 11 June**



Powerscourt Estate is calling on communities across Ireland to celebrate the people and groups making a real difference for nature. The Working with Nature Awards 2026, recognise individuals, organisations, community groups and small businesses working to protect biodiversity, restore habitats and reconnect people with the natural world.

The awards are open across three inspiring categories:

- Biodiversity & Rewilding
- Nature Media
- Nature Education & Wellbeing

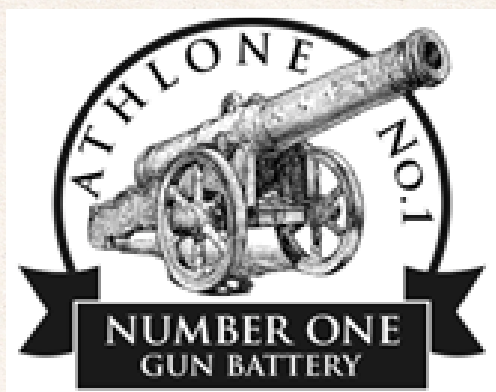
Category winners will receive a bespoke award crafted from hand-picked wood from Powerscourt Estate, along with a €500 bursary to support their work.

One Outstanding Nature Protector will be awarded the Ultimate Powerscourt Experience, including: a luxury stay at Powerscourt Hotel and a place on the Leaders for Nature leadership programme, developed by Common Purpose Ireland.

Nominate a local nature champion by

  Thursday 11 June 2026 at: www.powerscourt.com/workingwithnature

The Athlone Number One Gun Battery Heritage Group launched their Storymap at an event in the Shamrock Lodge Hotel on 25 May. Keep your eye out for the QR codes at the location of Athlone's Batteries or view the [Storymap here](#).



Applications are invited from groups, ensembles, theatre companies for a grant to develop and present a rehearsed reading of an excerpt of Brinsley MacNamara's Play Look at the Heffernans! The play was first produced by the Abbey Theatre on 12 April 1926. To mark the centenary of its premiere production, Westmeath County Council plan to host an event at Athlone Civic Centre. The deadline for completed applications is 22 June at 12 noon all details are available [here](#).



Mid-Shannon & Midlands Destination Experience Development Plan - Community Consultation

Fáilte Ireland invites you to take part in the Westmeath community engagement for the Mid-Shannon & Midlands Destination Experience Development Plan (DEDP) - a strategic plan that will guide the sustainable development of tourism across this part of Ireland's Hidden Heartlands.

Workshops were held around the county recently to encourage communities to share their views. If you were unable to attend any of the workshops, you still have an opportunity to input by completing the survey linked below:

[Mid-Shannon & Midlands Community & Business Survey](#)

If you have an interest in the future of their community and its relationship with tourism, your input is very welcome.

Farming for Nature Festival to Bring Farmers Together for a Day of Practical Learning

The inaugural Farming for Nature Festival (FFN) is taking place at Ballykilcavan Farm & Brewery, Stradbally, Co. Laois. The event is a farmer-led celebration of practical, nature-friendly farming.

 Ballykilcavan Farm & Brewery, Stradbally, Co. Laois

 22nd and 23rd June 2026

Lydia Lishman, event organizer with FFN, says “this farmer-led gathering aims to provide a space for farmers to learn, connect, share knowledge, and explore practical, nature-based approaches to farming. The focus will be on real stories from farmers - the successes and the challenges and show how good food begins with good farming. By involving a wide network of partners, we want to inspire change and grow the movement of farmers and producers working with nature.”

Further event details, including ticket information and accommodation, are all available on the website www.farmingfornaturefestival.ie

Disability Participation

Join us in June for our second News Hub Book Club session!

This month's read: "Contentious Spaces" by Rosaleen McDonagh.

Date: Saturday, 27th June

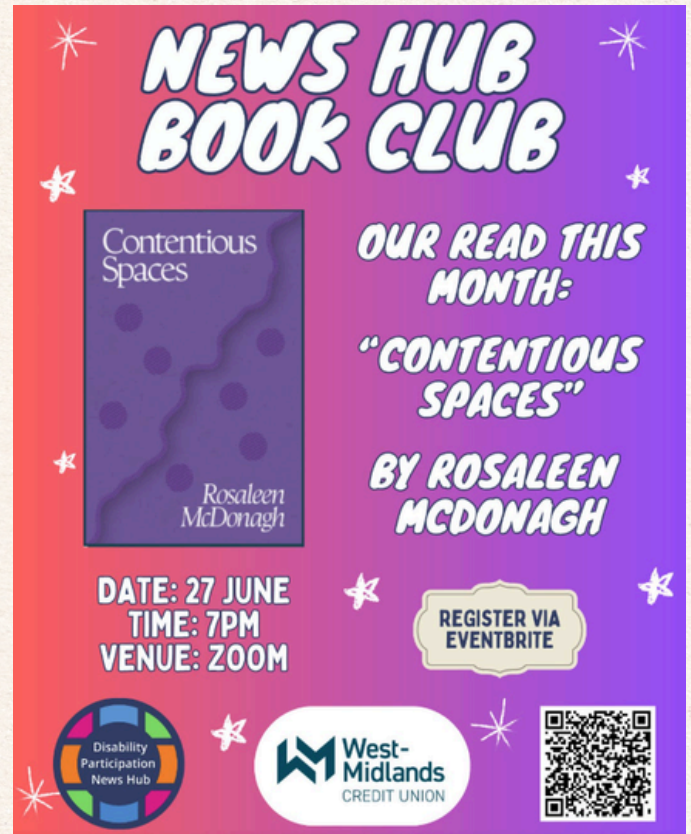
Time: 7pm -8pm

Venue: via Zoom

Cost: Free (Donation optional)

Registration: [Register through our Eventbrite page](#) or email info@disabilityparticipation.ie

[More details over on our website.](#)



NEWS HUB BOOK CLUB

Contentious Spaces
Rosaleen McDonagh


**OUR READ THIS MONTH:
"CONTENTIOUS SPACES"
BY ROSALEEN MCDONAGH**

**DATE: 27 JUNE
TIME: 7PM
VENUE: ZOOM**

REGISTER VIA EVENTBRITE

Disability Participation News Hub

West-Midlands CREDIT UNION



AsIAM National Autism Conference 2026

Join AsIAM for their 2026 National Autism Conference, a landmark event bringing together Autistic people, families, professionals, policymakers and allies to shape a more inclusive future.

Building on their commitment to a society where every Autistic person is accepted "as they are" – equal, valued and respected – this year's conference will explore what it truly means to create an Autistic affirming society in Ireland today.

Date: Saturday, 12th September 2026 at 9am to 5pm

Where: The Grand Hotel Malahide, Dublin

[More information and register your place here.](#)



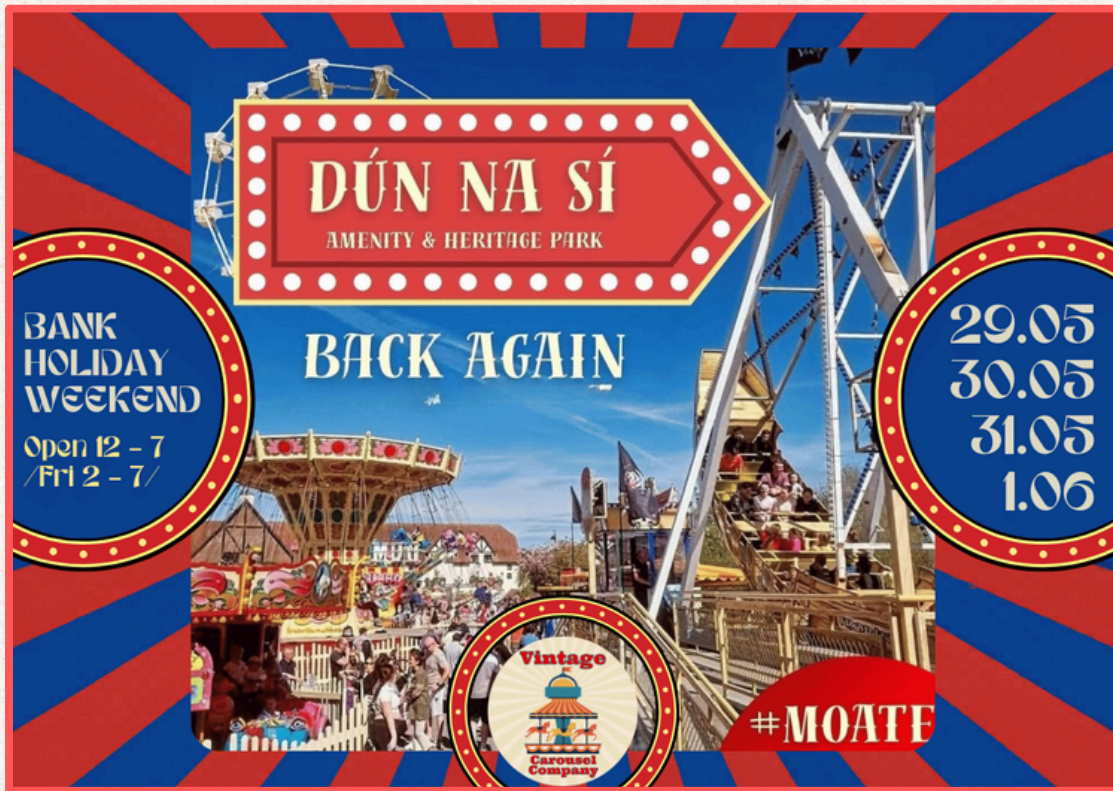
SAVE THE DATE

AsIAM First National Autistic Youth Congress

AsIAM have announced that they will be hosting the inaugural national Autistic Youth Congress on **June 27th 2026.**

Hosted in College Green Hotel in the heart of Dublin city, this will be a day for our Autistic teenagers (aged 14-17 years old) to hear from other Autistic young people leading the way in self advocacy, and to work together to agree shared priorities for transforming life for Autistic teenagers in Ireland.

Dún na Sí Amenity and Heritage Park



Vintage Carousel Weekend & Free K-pop Experience – 29 May to 1 June

The Vintage Carousel Company returns to Dún na Sí over the June Bank Holiday Weekend for four days of family fun and nostalgia from 29 May to 1 June.

Visitors can also enjoy a free live K-pop experience featuring Rumi

on Sunday, 31 May, and Monday, 1 June, with performances, meet-and-greets, and photo opportunities at 2pm, 4pm, and 6pm daily.

A promotional poster for a K-pop performance by Rumi. The background is dark with purple and pink lights. At the top, it says '*DÚN NA SÍ* AMENITY & HERITAGE PARK' and 'VINTAGE CAROUSEL COMPANY are coming to town!'. Below that, it says 'AND WE HAVE EXCITING NEWS!' and 'RUMI FROM K-POP'. The text continues: 'Will be joining us on SUNDAY 31ST MAY & MONDAY 1ST JUNE for a special K-POP PERFORMANCE, MEET & GREET, and PHOTO OPPORTUNITY!'. A large pink heart is next to 'RUMI'. Below this, it says 'THIS IS SOMETHING YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS!' and 'CALLING ALL K-POP FANS!'. At the bottom, there are four icons: a carousel horse, a family, a camera, and a heart, with the text 'ALL YOUR FAVOURITE RIDES', 'FUN FOR ALL THE FAMILY', 'UNFORGETTABLE MEMORIES', and 'GOOD TIMES GUARANTEED'. At the very bottom, it says 'VISIT WWW.VINTAGEFUNFAIR.IE FOR MORE INFO'. On the right side of the poster, there are two rounded rectangular boxes with purple borders. The first box says 'SUNDAY 31ST MAY' and '★ SHOWTIMES ★ 2PM, 4PM & 6PM'. The second box says 'MONDAY 1ST JUNE' and '★ SHOWTIMES ★ 2PM, 4PM & 6PM'. At the bottom right, a large pink starburst shape contains the text 'COMPLETELY FREE!'.

Dún na Sí Amenity and Heritage Park



Cruinniú na nÓg – Our Wall, Our Story

6 June

Dún na Sí will host a special Cruinniú na nÓg community art workshop on 6 June. Led by artist Patsy Preston, children will help create a new mosaic feature wall while exploring creativity and community spirit. The workshop is free, supported by Creative Ireland, but advance booking is required as places are limited.

Festival Mná – Summer Solstice Gathering

20th June 2026

Festival Mná returns to Dún na Sí on 20 June with a special Summer Solstice celebration dedicated to sisterhood, connection, and wellbeing. This uplifting outdoor event will feature holistic wellness activities, community circles, inspirational workshops, and moments of reflection in a supportive and empowering atmosphere.

Known as Ireland's only women-focused wellness festival, Festival Mná welcomes women of all ages and backgrounds to connect, recharge, and celebrate together.

Tickets available here: [Book Tickets](#)



Minister Jerry Buttimer launches new national campaign to highlight the role of Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs)

- LCDCs connect community groups with public bodies
- Clubs and Voluntary Groups encouraged to engage with their LCDCs

Minister of State with responsibility for Community Development and Charities, Jerry Buttimer TD, has today (Friday, 1 May 2026) launched a new national awareness campaign to highlight how Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) connect public bodies and communities across Ireland.

Local Community Development Committees are established in each local authority area to help implement community development initiatives and support community programmes such as the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP), Healthy Cities, the Empowering Communities Programme and the Local Enhancement Programme.

Speaking at an event in Cork City to launch the campaign, Minister Buttimer said:

“It gives me great pleasure, as Minister of State with responsibility for Community Development and Charities, to be able to support and highlight LCDCs across Ireland and to raise awareness of the vital role LCDCs play in supporting communities, coordinating services, and improving quality of life across the country. “Local Community Development Committees bring public bodies and community organisations around the same table so that services are better planned, better coordinated, and more responsive to local needs. Through this campaign, we want every community group and local resident to know that there is a structure in place - the LCDC - that is there to help them work with public bodies, access supports and shape the future of their area”.

LCDCs contribute to the development of local communities, through economic and community actions contained in each Local Economic and Community Plan.

Local Economic and Community Plans set out, for a six-year period, the objectives and actions needed to promote and support the economic, and community, development of the relevant local authority area.

This new campaign to highlight the role of LCDCs encourages anyone who is involved in a club, a voluntary group, or who simply wants better community services in their area to learn more about how their local LCDC can help.

Colín O'Reilly, Chair of the County and City Management Association's Rural, Community, Culture and Heritage Committee and Chief Executive of Carlow County Council said:

“Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) are a key part of local government and play an important role in supporting the social, cultural, and economic development of communities. By bringing together local authorities, public bodies and community interests, LCDCs promote a joined-up approach to planning and delivering programmes at local level, helping to strengthen local democracy. The CCMA welcomes this campaign as an important step in raising awareness of LCDCs as a vital community service and of the role they play in supporting communities across the country.”

Rebecca Loughry, Director of Services, Corporate, Community & Cultural Affairs, Cork City Council added:

“On behalf of Cork City LCDC, I would like to welcome the launch of this important campaign. This is a great opportunity to highlight the important work done by LCDCs around the country. As chief officer of the Cork City LCDC I am particularly delighted that Minister Buttimer has chosen Cork City as the location to launch the LCDC national and local communication communications campaign of awareness.”

The campaign entitled - “Our LCDCs - Building better communities together - le chéile” - will run from 1 May 2026 for three weeks across radio, podcasts, print and online media.

Visit gov.ie/lcdc to find out more.

ENDS



2026 Census of Social Enterprise Is now open!

- Minister Buttimer calls on every social enterprise to complete the survey
- Don't miss out on this opportunity for your social enterprise to be included and heard
- Important opportunity for social enterprises to influence future policy decisions, funding priorities, and support programme development

The Census is open until 28th June and can be accessed: [HERE](#)

Action 51 of [Trading for Impact](#) the National Social Enterprise policy includes a commitment to periodically hold a Census of Social Enterprise.

Growing, strengthening, and realising the impact of social enterprises within communities are key goals of the Government's Social Enterprise Policy, and the information collected during the Census is key to the continued targeted delivery of this policy, and how the sector will be supported into the future.

Minister for Community Development and Charities, Jerry Buttimer TD said:

“This Census will help us understand where social enterprises are growing and where they need additional support to ensure decisions

made about the sector are informed by the voices and experiences of those delivering real impact on the ground.

“For the first time, we will be able to conduct a comparative analysis between the data from 2023 and 2026, which will provide a strong evidence base to Government, along with those stakeholders we work in partnership with, to target our work to support the sector.”

Following a competitive tendering process, that included a social clause, the Consortium of Social Enterprise Republic of Ireland and Amárach Research were awarded the contract to deliver this project on behalf of the Department of rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht.

The Census can be accessed: [HERE](#)

Please provide only one response from each social enterprise



Minister Calleary announces increase in payment to Gaeltacht households providing accommodation for students

- Hostels/Residential Colleges also to receive increase under the scheme

The Minister for Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht, Dara Calleary TD, has today announced an increase in the subsidy payable to recognised households providing accommodation for students under the Irish Language Learners Scheme.

The subsidy, paid under the Department's Irish Language Learners Scheme to recognised households, will increase by €1.50 per student, per night. An additional €1.50 per student, per night will also be paid to hostels/residential colleges recognised to provide accommodation under the scheme.

The announcement by Minister Calleary will increase the subsidy for eligible households from €14.50 to €16 per night and from €10.50 to €12 in the case of Gaeltacht hostels/residential colleges recognised under the scheme.

Minister Calleary said:

"I am delighted to announce this increase to the oldest scheme administered by my Department, the Irish Language Learners Scheme. Following on from the €1.50 increase that I awarded last year, and knowing the value of the service provided by the households and hostel providers, I was very happy to approve the same increase again this year."

This is the fifth increase in the scheme's subsidy since the beginning of 2022 resulting in a 60% increase paid to scheme households (from €10 to €16) and a 140% increase for hostels/residential colleges (€5 to €12).

This increase will come into effect from 30 May 2026 and over 530 households from across the Gaeltacht who are registered with the Department under the scheme will benefit from this increase.

As well as the increase in the regular courses, Minister Calleary has approved an increase in the subsidy paid under the other schemes that fall under the auspices of the Irish Language Learners Scheme. In addition, there are the Gaeltacht Island Scheme (ÁRAINN) and Gaeltacht ERASMUS as set out in the table below.

The overall objective of this announced policy is to support the Irish language and the Gaeltacht in line with the objectives of the 20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030.

The table below provides a breakdown of the increases approved

Subsidy	2025 Rate	2026 Rate
Regular courses	€14.50	€16
Hostel / residential college	€10.50	€12
ERASMUS Gaeltachta	€23.50	€25
Gaeltacht Island Scheme (ÁRAINN)	€35.50	€37

Concluding, Minister Calleary said:

"The households who provide accommodation, as well as the colleges, deserve recognition for the valuable resource they provide to those attending Irish language courses. I am confident that the increase in my department's support will help to cover the cost of providing accommodation and to attract more households to this important sector that will grow and develop in the coming years."

ENDS

Contact:

The Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht Press Office 01-773 6843 / 086 4618285

Press.office@drcdg.gov.ie



Minister Calleary announces over €485,000 to upgrade walking and hiking trails across rural Ireland

- Investment to improve 52 trails listed on Department's Walks Scheme
- Funding to resurface, re-route and improve trails in rural communities
- Department working with over 2,900 landholders to open the countryside to hikers, tourists and families alike

Minister for Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht, Dara Calleary TD, has today (Thursday, 21 May 2026) announced further investment of over €485,000 for 52 small capital projects on Walks Scheme trails across the country.

Focused specifically on trails that are part of the Department's Walks Scheme, this funding is being provided to resurface, re-route and enhance these walking trails. In keeping with Embracing Ireland's Outdoors, the national outdoor recreation strategy, the investment is designed to ensure that these trails are maintained to a high standard, benefitting local communities and alike.

Making the announcement, Minister Calleary said:

“Walking in Ireland's beautiful countryside has wide-ranging benefits for the walker and local communities. There are a wide variety of trails across the country, from coastal trails to forest and mountain walks, making it easier for walkers to be immersed in nature.

“I am delighted to announce this funding to support the further enhancement of these Walks Scheme trails, so that they can continue to be enjoyed by all.

“This funding demonstrates my Department's commitment to working in partnership with the Local Development Companies, landowners, trail management organisations and community groups in the development and enhancement of walking trails throughout the country. I want to again thank the landowners for making their land available and the local community groups that work tirelessly to develop and manage these trails.”

Under the Walks Scheme, modest funding is provided to farmers and other landholders to maintain the walking trails that cross their land. Additional funding for small-scale capital works on these trails is being announced today.

Among the successful projects include:

Slí Chonamara, Co Galway - Trail Upgrade and Repair - €10,000

Croagh Patrick Heritage Trail, Co Mayo – Path and fencing improvements - €10,000.

Duhallow Way, Co Cork – Walking bridge replacement, fencing replacement, crossing stile and information lectern installation - €10,000.

Kilmacoliver Woodland Loop, Co Kilkenny– Surface upgrades and improving accessibility - €10,000.

Rerrin Loop Bere Island, Bere Island, Co Cork – Surface improvements with installation of new signage and waymarkers - €10,000.

Waterford Estuary Coastal Path, Co Waterford – Installation of location identification signage, replacement of information board - €10,000.

The full list of approved projects can be found [here](#).

ENDS



Community Centres Investment Fund

Community Centres Investment Fund 2026 - Refurbishment Grant

This capital fund of €25 million is providing funding for the improvement and refurbishment of existing community centres in both urban and rural areas.

Funding is being made available under 2 Categories, with grants of between €10,000 and €100,000 available:

- Category 1: Small scale projects and improvements to facilities - €10,000 to €25,000
- Category 2: Larger scale projects - €25,001 to €100,000

The Portal for online application will open on May 29th, 2026, and will remain open until July 13th, 2026.

Potential applicants are encouraged to register on the application portal in advance of this date.

For more information please visit Community Centre Investment Fund through this [LINK](#)
or email CCIF@drcdg.gov.ie

Registering a def AED on national register

Community groups across are being encouraged to register their Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) to help ensure they can be located quickly in an emergency.

An AED can save a life during a cardiac arrest, but its impact depends on people knowing where it is. By registering AEDs on the national database, emergency services and bystanders can be directed to the nearest device when every second counts.

PPN is calling on all community organisations, sports clubs, and local groups to take a few minutes to register their AEDs and help make their communities more emergency-ready.

Registration is simple, quick, and could make a life-saving difference.

Call to Action: "Register your AED today at [AED REGISTRATION FORM](#)



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Would you be interested in volunteering to visit or call older people in your area?

ALONE's Support & Befriending Service matches older people who would like additional social contact with volunteers who provide companionship, support and social activity.

If you would like to find out more about the Support & Befriending volunteer role, contact us on the details below.

To start your application [visit alone.ie/get-involved/volunteer/](http://alone.ie/get-involved/volunteer/)



YOU'RE NOT ALONE

volunteer@alone.ie ■ 0818 222 024 from 8am - 8pm, seven days a week ■ alone.ie



Contact Information

website: www.alone.ie

Email: volunteer@alone.ie

Phone: 0818 222 024

Heartlands Pride Athlone

Summer Pride

30th May - 7th June 2026

30th May - 9pm PRIDEMANIA - Heartlands Pride Athlone's Fundraiser Brazen Monkey Athlone	3rd June - 6pm Flower Crown Workshop with Ciara Lawless Monksland Community Centre
31st May - 3pm Make Up Workshop with Sheena Bermingham Venue 4 Athlone	4th June - 5:30 - 7:30pm Free Pop up HIV & Syphilis testing with Sexual Health West St Kieran's Community Centre
31st May - 7pm - late 7pm: Gayli with August Kirwan 9pm: Deach agus Caint Venue 4 Athlone & The Snug Bar	4th June - 7pm Candle Making Workshop with Blackthorn Candles Dead Centre Mezzanine
1st June - 1pm Pride & Prose in collaboration with Creatives Roscommon Collective Monksland Community Park	5th June - 8pm Kwen's Pride Bash featuring Bonnie Ann Clyde The Piano Bar
1st June - 7pm Trivia Night hosted by Carolina Isabel Gertie Brownes	6th June - 10am - late 10am - Free Pride Breakfast - Gertie Brownes 12pm - Pride Parade meet @ Dooley's Flowers 2pm - Outdoor Festival/Family Fun Day - Burgess Park 8pm - Bród - a Queer Club Night - The Dark Horse
2nd June - 5:30pm HIV Panel Discussion in collaboration with Athlone Community Radio Abbey Road Studio	7th June - 12pm - 7pm 12pm - Spoken Word Open Mic - Athlone Book Store 5pm - Pride Cruise with Viking Mike

Scan

Westmeath County Council

Iarrnád Éireann Irish Rail

Medtronic

An Bótharthaí Leathas agus Párlaimint na hÉireann

Creative Ireland

Creative Roscommon

Creative Westmeath

Creative Athlone

Creative Roscommon

Creative Athlone

Creative Roscommon

An Roinn Leasraí, Michaela agus Comhábairtí, Department of Children, Disability and Equality

ARCA DLA

CISTE SPREAGHTHA

Conradh na Gaeilge

Creative na hOIG

Creative Athlone

Creative Roscommon

Creative Athlone

Creative Roscommon

Creative Athlone

Creative Roscommon

Fáilte Ireland

The Heartlands Pride Athlone Committee have been working hard over the last couple of months to deliver the 1st Summer Pride and Pride Parade in Athlone, which has received support from all over the town and the Athlone Diaspora.

While widely advertised as being from the 3rd to the 7th of June, a few added dates have been added including a fundraiser on the 30th of May in The Brazen Monkey. **The festival will now take place from the 30th of May to the 7th of June.** There will also be events in Monksland, Co Roscommon - with the event being supported by both Westmeath County Council and Roscommon County Council.

Heartlands Pride Athlone are looking for groups to sign up to march in the very 1st Pride Parade on the 6th of June at 1pm marching from Connaught Street to Burgess Park. The group is also looking for stewards. This march is in memory of the Late Michael Woods, a trailblazer who attempted to organise the 1st Pride Parade in Athlone in 2021, however Covid19 put a halt to those plans. Michael Woods unfortunately passed away in 2023, a couple months before Heartlands Pride Athlone was officially set up as a volunteer organisation.

Sign up form [HERE](#)

The group are also working hard with Community based Artist Aoife Doolan to create a Síle na Gig float to be displayed during the Pride Parade, supported by Creative Ireland (Creative Westmeath).

Vendors can sign up to be part of the outdoor festival, however they must have their own insurance and marquees, vendors can email: heartlandspride.athlone@gmail.com

On the 5th of June - Heartlands Pride Athlone in collaboration with The Haus of Kwen, will welcome special guest Bonnie Ann Clyde from Ru Paul Drag Race UK Season 7 - tickets available here: [Kwen's Pride Bash](#)

Heartlands Pride Athlone's main sponsors include: The Department of Children, Disability and Equality (as part of the LGBTIQ+ Community Services Fund 2025), Irish Rail, Westmeath County Council, The Outing Festival, Euro Pride 2028 and Creative Ireland (Creative Westmeath & Creative Roscommon).

Heartlands Pride Athlone is also delighted to have been nominated for the Westmeath County Council Cathaoirleach Awards 2026 taking place on the 5th of June

If people would like to donate, the group has a [Crowdfunder](#)



St. Mary's Hall
Tuesdays 8-9.30pm
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www.athlonecommunityservicescouncil.com

ATHLONE COMMUNITY SERVICES COUNCIL

HEALTHY AGEING LIFESTYLE PROGRAMME



EMBRACE HEALTH, WELLNESS AND COMMUNITY

Structured Exercise Classes - Nutrition Workshops -
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Takes place in St Mary's Hall, Northgate St, Athlone
Every Wednesday @ 3:45pm

BOOK YOUR PLACE TODAY!

Starting September 2025

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COMMUNITY SINGING GROUP

BOOK YOUR PLACE TODAY!

Starting September 2025

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ATHLONE COMMUNITY SERVICES COUNCIL



CREATIVE ART PROGRAMME



FOR ADULTS AGED 65+

MONDAY'S 11AM-1PM

ABBAY ROAD ARTIST STUDIOS, ABBAY ROAD, ATHLONE

LOOKING TO GET CREATIVE, MEET NEW PEOPLE AND HAVE FUN?

JOIN OUR RELAXED AND WELCOMING ART PROGRAMME- NO EXPERIENCE NEEDED!

ALL MATERIALS PROVIDED- FRIENDLY, SUPPORTIVE ATMOSPHERE

€5 PER CLASS

SPACES ARE LIMITED SO BOOK YOUR PLACE TODAY!

CALL: 090 6472174 OR EMAIL: RECEPTION@ACSC.IE





The Athlone River Festival returns bigger and better than ever from July 31st to August 2nd, 2026, in the scenic town of Athlone, set along the peaceful shores of Lough Ree and the flowing River Shannon.

With its historic bridges, charming canals, and vibrant riverside atmosphere, Athlone provides the perfect backdrop for a weekend that celebrates heritage, community, and adventure. Last year was a major success and we would like to thank each and every person, business and sponsor who backed us.

This year's festival promises even greater excitement, with longboat racing and kayak battles returning to the Shannon, delivered by Bay Sports. These thrilling events will see teams from across the town—representing local businesses, community groups, and volunteers—take to the water and battle it out in a spectacular display of teamwork, determination, and fun, creating an electric atmosphere along the riverbanks.

On land and water alike, there's something for everyone. MADCAPS will host their two-day national coarse angling competition at Big Meadow, drawing competitors from far and wide. Meanwhile, Athlone Triathlon Club will bring their national event back to Athlone on Sunday, August 2nd, adding to a packed schedule of activity on the river and through the town.

Beyond the sporting action, Athlone will come alive with a vibrant programme of family-friendly entertainment. Markets, street performances, and cultural experiences will create a welcoming and lively atmosphere for all ages, while the town's renowned hospitality and diverse food offering will turn the weekend into a true celebration of community and culture—where a genuine C ad M ile F ilte awaits at every corner.

The festival is proudly led by Viking Tours Ireland as main sponsor, supported by Specturm Signs. The committee also looks forward to welcoming back the Boyle Valley Vikings, bringing the Viking spirit to life, and we are delighted to once again collaborate with F ile na Sionainne, whose programme of music and entertainment will add even more energy across the weekend as they hold their festival here in Athlone. Everyone at the River Festival wishes them the very best with planning.

Importantly, a percentage of funds raised for this year's River Festival will go to St. Hilda's Special School & Esker House —two outstanding local organisations making a real difference in the community.

With the town open for business and ready to welcome visitors from across Ireland and the four corners of the globe, this year's festival promises an unforgettable experience for all. With more events and programs to announce in the coming months it's sure to be a weekend not to be missed.

If you would like to be part of this exciting adventure please do reach out to us, we are seeking support from local businesses, volunteers and our great community here in Athlone. Email us at riverfestivalathlone@gmail.com



Westmeath Public Participation Network

c/o Community Development Section

Westmeath County Council

Áras an Chontae, Mullingar Co. Westmeath

Email: ppn@westmeathcoco.ie

Contact number: 044-933-8903 / 044-933-8939

Website: Westmeathppn.ie

to join PPN please [CLICK HERE](#) or scan the QR code



☀️ We've launched a NEW Facebook page! ☀️
Follow us for all the latest news, events,
workshops, and grant opportunities.
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