



**Public
Participation
Network
Westmeath**

NEWSLETTER

JULY 2026

Nuachtlitir Lúil

Free copy

Welcome to our July newsletter!

We're excited to have you with us. Each edition is packed with insights, updates, and inspiration designed to keep you informed and engaged. Thank you for being part of our community!



**Public Participation
Network Westmeath**



PPN members from community groups and not for profit organisations meet at Kinnegad Library and online for one of the series of Induction and Information sessions.



*Edel & Lourdes
Westmeath PPN*



On behalf of WPPN, we would like to sincerely congratulate Cathryn Whelehan on winning the Social Inclusion and Equality Category at the Cathaoirleach Awards 2026.

Cathy has been consistently involved and active in PPN work, providing valuable support to both the community and her group.

We also extend our congratulations to all of the winners at the recent Cathaoirleach Awards 2026.

WELCOME
TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

1. Oakcrest Residents Association
2. Radharc an Mhuilinn Residents Association
3. Streete Tidy Towns



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

NATIONAL PLAY DAY

FREE EVENT

9th JULY 2026

Thursday



10am to 1pm



Mullingar Town Park

Free Activities and Music for all the Family
Pack your picnic and join us for fun and laughter!



REGISTER TO ATTEND

Westmeath Play Day 2026



Lá Náisiúnta Súcártha
National Play Day



Belvedere Garden Festival

Belvedere House, Gardens & Park
Sun 19th July 2026

10am to 5pm

Belvedere
House, Gardens & Park

Events Details: Exhibitors, Walled Garden Tour & Woodland walks, Education Talks, Food & Craft Stalls, BBQ, Kids Amusements/ Play area

Admission:
Adults €15 - Children FREE
www.belvedere-house.ie

Belvedere House, Gardens and Park will host the Belvedere Garden Festival - Food, Plant and Country Fair on **Sunday 19th July between 10am and 5pm**. The Garden Festival will play host to a variety of plant nurseries and garden centres as well as having food and craft stalls from local and national traders.

Attendees will be able to attend expert talks throughout the day from leading experts in the garden and environmental world. *

We will also have a Plant creche so when you purchase your plants you will be able to leave them at the Plant creche whilst you explore the site further.

With food trucks, music, family activities, and a buzzing marketplace of local makers, the festival is more than a garden show—it's a full outdoor experience. Come for the plants, stay for the atmosphere, and leave inspired to transform your own green spaces.

Another attraction to the day will be a kids play area with face painting, amusements * and the opportunity to pot your own sunflower and bring it home with you.

Speaking at the event launch, Liam Glynn, Marketing & Events Co-Ordinator at Belvedere House, Gardens & Park said "The Belvedere Garden Festival is all about bringing people together to celebrate the joy of being outdoors. From expert demos to hands-on workshops, food, music, and family fun, we want visitors to feel the full energy of what Belvedere has to offer."

He added "Belvedere is the perfect backdrop for a day like this. Nature does half the work for us, and we simply fill the estate with activities, flavours, and entertainment that make it impossible not to smile."

Pre Booking is advisable with full details available via www.belvedere-house.ie/event/belvedere-garden-festival

Children are Free with Adults priced at €15.

Notes

* Ticket price includes admission into the Belvedere Woodlands & Park Grounds

* All amusements will have a charge in place.

* Garden Festival Talks Schedule

12 o'clock – Aine Vanbeck - O'Meara's Garden Centre – "Houseplants for a Healthy Home"

1pm – Emma Noonan – Mullingar Gathers – Food, Community and sustainability.

2pm – Crann – Tree Species at Belvedere followed by Guided Walk of Belvedere Woodlands

3pm – Sarah, Slow Field Flowers – "Three Ways to Arrange Garden Flowers for the Table"

* Further information is available www.belvedere-house.ie/event/belvedere-garden-festival/



In County Westmeath, the Cathaoirleach Awards ceremony recognises individuals and organisations who have demonstrated outstanding service to their communities. These awards celebrate the valuable contributions made towards building a strong, vibrant, and connected county.

The Cathaoirleach Awards highlight the positive impact of community involvement and aim to inspire others to become actively engaged in their own local areas.

The 2026 ceremony took place in Belvedere House and Gardens, Mullingar, on Friday, 5th June.

Cathaoirleach Awards 2026- Winners

- Soroptimist Mullingar & District Overall Winner Cathaoirleach Awards 2026
- PJ Kennedy Cathaoirleach Awards Community Involvement Category Winner 2026
- Westmeath Community Games Cathaoirleach Awards Children & Youth Category Winner 2026
- Gaeltacht Átha Luain Cathaoirleach Awards Heritage & Environment Category Winner 2026
- Cathy Whelehan Cathaoirleach Awards Social Inclusion and Equality Category Winner 2026
- An Grianan Golden Years Cathaoirleach Awards Active Elderly Category Winner 2026
- Sean Galligan Cathaoirleach Awards Recreation & Sports Category Winner 2026

Age Friendly Recognition

- Marys Rochfortbridge GAA - Senior Fitness Group Age Friendly Recognition Award 2026
- Athlone Community Services Council - Older Persons Supports Age Friendly Recognition Award 2026
- St Dominics Community Council Age Friendly Recognition Award 2026
- Ballinafid Multyfarnham Bunbrosna (BMB) Active Retirement Age Friendly Recognition Award 2026

Pride of Place

- Esker House Domestic Abuse Support Service Pride of Place Award 2026
Community Wellbeing

Schools Film Award 2026

- St. Joseph's Secondary School,
Rochfortbridge Environmental Film
Award 2026



Cathaoirleach Awards 2026

Eco Schools Award

- Dean Kelly National School, Athlone Overall Winner ECO Schools Award 2026
- Loreto College, Mullingar Eco Secondary Schools Award 2026 1st Place
- St. Joseph's Secondary School, Rochfortbridge Eco Secondary Schools Award 2026 2nd Place
- Presentation Junior School, Mullingar Eco Primary Schools Award 2026 1st Place
- Greenpark Montessori Eco Preschool Award 2026 1st Place
- Ballymore Community Childcare Eco Preschool Award 2026 2nd Place

STEM Awards

- Mullingar Community College STEM Winner 2026 Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) GRANT
- Athlone Family Resource Centre STEM Winner 2026 Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) GRANT
- 1st/10th Westmeath Scout Group Mullingar STEM Winner 2026 Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) GRANT
- Dún na SíAmenity and Heritage Park STEM Winner 2026 Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) GRANT

Tidy Towns Awards

- Ballinahown Tidy Towns Westmeath Tidy Towns Award 2026 - Overall Winner
- Tyrrellspass Tidy Towns Westmeath Tidy Towns Award 2026 - Athlone Moate Municipal District 2nd Place
- Castledaly Tidy Towns Westmeath Tidy Towns Award 2026 - Athlone Moate Municipal District Endeavour Award
- Glasson Tidy Towns Westmeath Tidy Towns Award 2026 - Athlone Moate Municipal District Joint 2nd Endeavour Award
- Moate Tidy Town Westmeath Tidy Towns Award 2026 - Athlone Moate Municipal District Joint 2nd Endeavour Award
- Multyfarnham Tidy Towns Westmeath Tidy Towns Award 2026 - Winner of Mullingar Kinnegad Municipal District
- Castlepollard Tidy Towns Westmeath Tidy Towns Award 2026 - Mullingar Kinnegad Municipal District 2nd Place
- Milltownpass Tidy Towns Westmeath Tidy Towns Award 2026 - Mullingar Kinnegad Municipal District Endeavour Award
- Collinstown Tidy Towns Westmeath Tidy Towns Award 2026 - Mullingar Kinnegad Municipal District 2nd Endeavour Award

Project of the Year Award

- Westmeath Archaeological and Historical Society Project of the Year 2026
- St Owens Graveyard and Church Restoration Group Project of the Year 2026
- Loughnavalley GAA Healthy Club Project of the Year 2026
- Athlone Canal Heritage Committee Project of the Year 2026
- Moate Railway Station Group Project of the Year 2026

Residents Association Award

- Westmeath Archaeological and Historical Society Project of the Year 2026
- St Owens Graveyard and Church Restoration Group Project of the Year 2026
- Loughnavalley GAA Healthy Club Project of the Year 2026
- Athlone Canal Heritage Committee Project of the Year 2026
- Moate Railway Station Group Project of the Year 2026

Well Westmeath Expo 2026

The Well Westmeath Expo took place on Saturday, 6th June 2026 at Belvedere House, Gardens and Park, attracting a record number of attendees. Organised by Healthy Communities and Healthy Westmeath, the free event celebrated health, wellbeing, and community spirit with a wide variety of activities for all ages, including music, dance, nature walks, games, and fitness sessions.

Key organisations such as Westmeath Sports Partnership, Youth Work Ireland Midlands, Leinster Rugby, and Westmeath GAA led engaging activities, while the Information Village featured 28 stands offering valuable resources. Entertainment was provided by the Emerald Lakes Academy of Dance and guests.

Thanks were extended to Lidl Mullingar for refreshments, as well as Belvedere House & Gardens and Westmeath Civil Defence for their support. The organisers look forward to hosting the event again in 2027.



Make Way Day



Is an annual campaign raising awareness about the needs of people with disabilities in shared public spaces. In 2026, Westmeath County Council and the Westmeath Disability Working Group are supporting the campaign, with groups walking routes in Mullingar, Athlone, and Kilbeggan.



The aim is to highlight how obstacles blocking footpaths impact accessibility and to promote more inclusive streets for everyone. The key message is: “Hey, this blocks my way!”

How to Investigate your Business Idea -21 July - LEO261005



This course is for individuals with a business idea who are exploring self-employment or starting a business for the first time. Participants will use the Lean Startup Canvas to test, analyse, and refine their idea, engage early with customers, and assess viability. By the end of the course, learners will have clear next steps and the confidence to move forward with their business idea.

Date: 21st July 2026

Time: 10:00am to 5:00pm

Venue: Kinnegad Library

[Book here:](#)



An Roinn Forbartha Tuaithe
agus Pobail agus Gaeltachta
Department of Rural and Community
Development and the Gaeltacht

Tionscadal Éireann
Project Ireland
2040

Ar dTodhchaí
Tuaithe
Our Rural
Future



Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) and Town & Village Renewal Scheme (TVRS)

Expressions of Interest (EOI) are being sought for the Rural Support Schemes for 2026.

Rural Support Schemes includes the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) and Town & Village Renewal Scheme (TVRS). This is an opportunity for community groups to bring forward ideas/ projects they feel would benefit their communities.

EOIs will be initially evaluated on the information submitted on this form; please ensure it is completed in full.

Suitable projects will be assessed against relevant criteria when schemes are announced by the Department of Rural & Community Development & the Gaeltacht.

Successful EOIs will be sent as Applications to the Department for final decision.

CLOSING DATE FOR RECEIPT OF EOIs - Monday 13th July 2026.

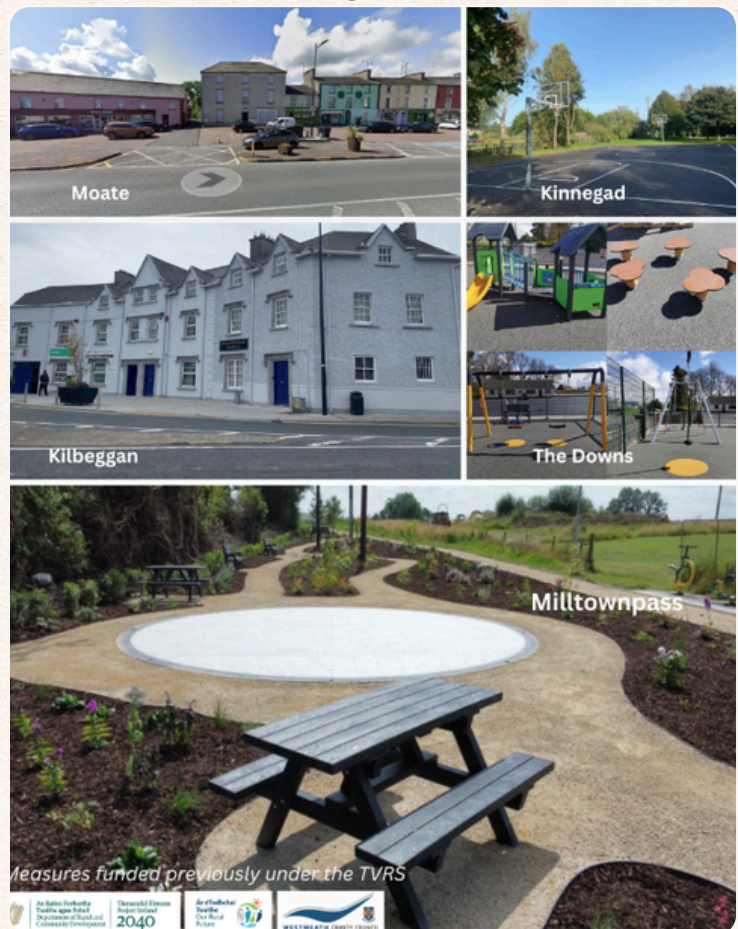
[Submit your Expression of Interest HERE](#)

If you are in need of any help with this form, please contact the office on 044 93 32196.

Measures previously funded under Outdoor and Recreation Infrastructure Scheme



Measures previously funded under Town & Village Renewal Scheme





Better Public Services Awards

We are delighted to have received the Driving Equality, Diversity and Inclusion award at the Better Public Services Awards last night.

It was a fantastic evening at the Royal Irish Academy of Music, celebrating the outstanding work taking place across the public sector. We are incredibly proud to be recognised for our commitment to creating a more inclusive and equitable workplace and to driving meaningful change.

A huge thank you to everyone whose dedication, passion and collaboration made this achievement possible.

Congratulations to all of the winners and finalists—it was an honour to celebrate alongside so many inspiring organisations and individuals.

Event Details

Date: Thursday, 24 September 2026

Venue: Croke Park Conference Centre, Dublin
(Access via St Joseph's Ave, Drumcondra, Dublin
D03 P6K7)

Time: Doors 9:00 am

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Introduction to Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Older Adults

An “Introduction to Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Older Adults” course ran over 18th, 24th and 25th June 2026 at the Listowel Family Resource Centre. The course was delivered by the Academy for Good at Maynooth University in partnership with Kerry PPN and Kerry Age Friendly.



Older people from across the county attended along with members of the Kerry Older People's Council (OPC) Executive. Over three mornings, the course explored what AI is, how it is already affecting everyday life and how to use technology in a more informed way.

Thanks to all that attended, for their active participation and engagement during the course.



Conversations about dying, death and bereavement affect all of us — our families, communities and healthcare services. As Ireland continues to change, these conversations are becoming more important than ever.

Registration is now open for Irish Hospice Foundation's Forum on End of Life 2026, the flagship event in our 40th anniversary year.

This year's theme, Every Death Matters: Dying, Death and Bereavement in a Changing Ireland – Emerging Narratives, will bring together healthcare professionals, researchers, community organisations and members of the public to explore how we think and talk about end of life in Ireland today.

The Forum will feature:

- New research on public attitudes to dying, death and bereavement
- Keynote speakers exploring what we value at end of life
- Discussions on grief, diversity and multicultural experiences in modern Ireland
- Parallel sessions designed to challenge perspectives and encourage meaningful conversation

Healthy Age Friendly Homes Programme

The Healthy Age Friendly Homes Programme aims to support older people (aged 65 and over) to live in their own home with dignity and independence, for as long as possible. The programme's ambition is to enable everyone to live longer healthier lives by keeping care close to home and expanding the range of health and social care services in the community. It is about providing a range of alternatives for older people who may otherwise transition into long term residential care prematurely.

To do this, we have appointed a Local Healthy Age Friendly Homes Coordinator in all local authorities. Each Local Coordinator will case manage a support package for each person referred, linking the supports from the variety of public, voluntary, private and community agencies in the area.

The purpose of this referral is to identify an older person who could benefit from some extra help and support in order to continue living in their own home. The Local Coordinator will carry out a home-based assessment and, in partnership with the older person, will identify and design a range of supports to enable the older person to continue living independently. This will not affect any current home help, medical card, pension, or other services being received.

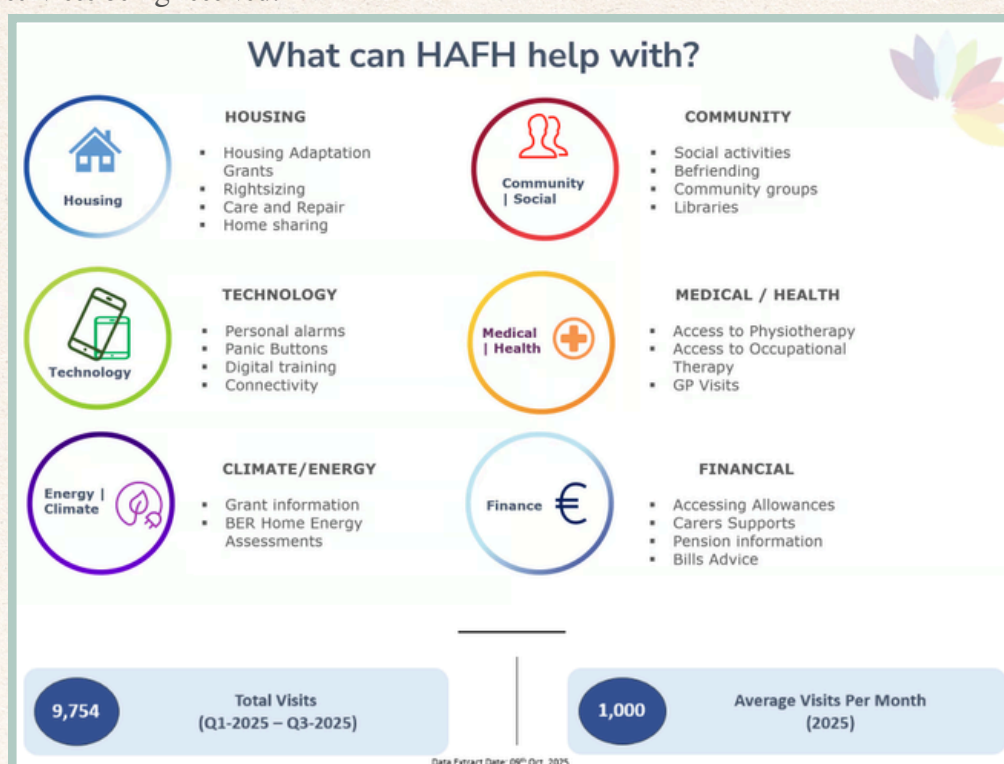
A short introduction to the Healthy Age Friendly Homes Programme | Phase 1 – A strategic Partnership between Slaintecare in the Department of Health and Local Government | Age Friendly Ireland. The approach taken in the Healthy Age Friendly Homes Programme is to support older people to live in their own home with dignity and independence, for as long as possible. The programme's ambition is to enable everyone to live longer healthier lives by keeping care close to home and expanding the range of health and social care services in the community.

To watch the video, please click the below link,

[Healthy Age Friendly Homes Programme](#)

For more information, please visit the Age Friendly website.

<https://agefriendlyireland.ie/>



Shape the Future of Kinnegad: Have Your Say Today!

Westmeath County Council is undertaking this survey to assess commuting patterns and demand for enterprise units, office space and remote working facilities in Kinnegad. The findings will inform the development of a proposed Enterprise and Co-working Hub to support local economic development. The proposed Hub would offer high-quality workspace, business training programmes and facilities for both businesses, commuters and the wider community. This survey will assist us in preparing an application for funding and your input will help ensure that the proposed facility meets the needs of people living and working in the area. All responses are confidential and will be used for research purposes only. For further information please contact the Local Enterprise Office on 044 9338945.

Link to Survey [Kinnegad Commuter Survey – Collaboration](#)



The poster features the Westmeath County Council logo at the top left, with the text 'WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL' and 'Comhairle Chontae na hIarmhí'. The main title 'KINNEGAD BUSINESS & COMMUTER SURVEY' is prominently displayed in large, bold letters. Below the title, it states: 'WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL IS UNDERTAKING SURVEYS TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW ENTERPRISE & CO-WORKING HUB IN KINNEGAD.' A section titled 'WE ARE ASSESSING:' lists four key areas: 'COMMUTING PATTERNS' (car icon), 'DEMAND FOR ENTERPRISE UNITS AND OFFICE SPACE' (building icon), 'NEED FOR REMOTE AND FLEXIBLE WORKING FACILITIES' (Wi-Fi icon), and 'INTEREST IN TRAINING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT' (graduation cap icon). The bottom section is divided into two main survey areas: 'BUSINESS SURVEY' for business owners, employers, and self-employed individuals, and 'COMMUTER SURVEY' for employees, remote workers, and daily commuters. Each survey area includes a QR code and a 'SCAN ME' button. At the bottom, it specifies the 'CLOSING DATE: FRIDAY 3RD JULY' with a calendar icon. The background of the poster shows a modern office environment with people working at desks.

WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL
Comhairle Chontae na hIarmhí

KINNEGAD BUSINESS & COMMUTER SURVEY

WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL IS
UNDERTAKING SURVEYS TO SUPPORT
THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW
ENTERPRISE & CO-WORKING HUB IN KINNEGAD.

WE ARE ASSESSING:

-  **COMMUTING PATTERNS**
-  **DEMAND FOR ENTERPRISE UNITS AND OFFICE SPACE**
-  **NEED FOR REMOTE AND FLEXIBLE WORKING FACILITIES**
-  **INTEREST IN TRAINING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**

 **BUSINESS SURVEY**
For business owners, employers, and self-employed individuals.

SCAN ME
SCAN QR CODE OR CLICK BELOW
Business Survey

 **COMMUTER SURVEY**
For employees, remote workers, and daily commuters.

SCAN ME
SCAN QR CODE OR CLICK BELOW
Commuter Survey

CLOSING DATE:
FRIDAY 3RD JULY

All responses are confidential and will be used for research purposes only.



Wednesday July 15th

Participants will learn how to make 3d greeting cards and Positivity bookmarks. Its on in Moate Library @2pm-3pm go to www.westmeathculture to book your place today.

Wednesday July 22nd

Participants will learn how to make papercraft flowers. Its happening at Moate library @2pm-3pm go to www.westmeathculture to book your place today.



Face-Painting, Origami & Storytime in Castlepollard Library

Join us in Castlepollard Library on **Tuesday 14th July** from 3.00pm to 4.30pm for a fun-filled afternoon! You'll have the chance to have your face painted and to try your hand at some simple origami! We'll be finishing the afternoon with a story or two.

No booking required.

Please note that all children under 12 must be accompanied and supervised by an adult at all times.





Lego Free-Play In Castlepollard Library

Calling all Master Builders! Join us in Castlepollard Library on **Saturday the 11th of July from 10.30am to 11.30am** for a fun morning of Lego building. Let your imaginations run wild! Open to everyone - no booking required. Please note that all children under 12 must be accompanied and supervised by an adult at all times.

July 10th and 24th 11am-12pm: Fortnightly meetings:

Join us in Mullingar Library from 11am to 12noon for a breastfeeding support group, led by a local Public Health Nurse. Contact the PHN on 0449353818 for more details.

Breastfeeding meet-up

Fortnightly meetings - Mullingar Library

Upcoming meetings:

Fridays 11am-12pm

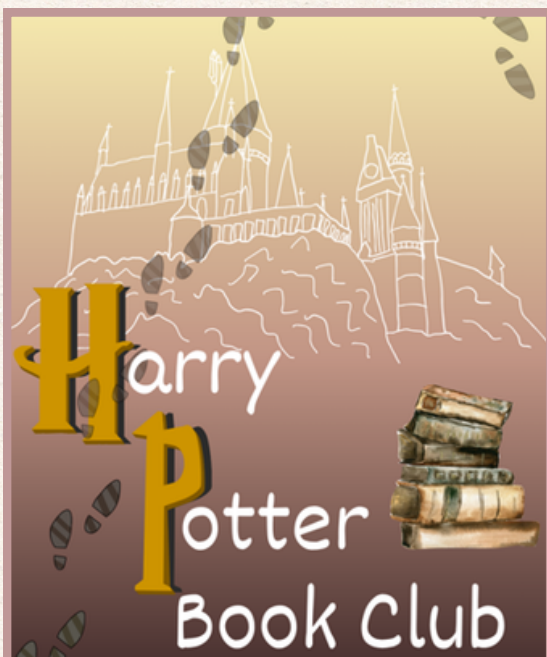
June 26th

July 10th

July 24th

For more info
contact 0449353818

No booking necessary.



Are you a Harry Potter fan or just interested in starting to read the books? Kilbeggan Library are hosting their very own Harry Potter reading club. Each week we will be getting cosy in the Snug and reading from the books. Whether you are a first time reader, or reading them for the 10th (or 100th) time, you are most welcome to come along and join in the magic with us! You don't need to bring anything or read anything before coming but if you want, you can bring your own copy of the book!

Starting Tuesday 7th July. Booking required. Suitable for age 7-13. All children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult.



Westmeath Libraries

To celebrate International Chess Day on **Monday 20th July**,

Kilbeggan Library are hosting a fun chess tournament for children aged 8-12 @ 2pm

All abilities welcome Booking required All children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult

This event is part of Westmeath Libraries programme of events for Summer Stars 2026.



Have you been inspired by Sherlock Holmes?
Is Jessica Fletcher your role-model?

Put on your thinking cap this **4th July** and solve the clues hidden in Kinnegad Library to reveal the murderer. Our Mystery in Mullingar Library is open to all ages, but best suited to teens and adults



Join us in Athlone Library **every Friday at 11.30am** for a Toddler Story Time session. No booking is required for this event and all are welcome.

Join us in Athlone Library on **Saturday July 11th and July 25th** for a lego blockbuster session. Suitable for ages 5+. No booking is required but children must be accompanied by an adult at all times.



Heritage and Biodiversity News and Events



NEWS & UPDATE

Share Your Bog Story

Milltownpass Tidy Towns is inviting photo submissions celebrating Milltownpass Bog – from wildlife and landscapes to community life and memories of turf cutting. Phone photos are welcome. Selected images will feature in an exhibition at the Bog Bothy later this month. Submit your photos [here](#).

Tender Opportunity

Managing Vegetation on Historic Masonry Guidance

The Heritage Council is seeking a provider to develop a new guidance document supporting conservation and maintenance projects on historic masonry structures.

Closing date: 3 July 2026 at 5pm. Learn more [here](#).

Heritage Week 2026. Theme: Heritage at Risk

Have an idea for an event? Heritage Week takes place from 15–23 August 2026 and event registration is now open. You may register events and digital projects up until the first week in August but to be included in the printed Westmeath guide, register on heritageweek.ie by 10 July.

For support or advice, contact Heritage@westmeathcoco.ie or call Melanie on 087 6074496.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Uncover the Past

NMS Annual Archaeology Conference 2026
Trinity College Dublin | 10 October 2026

Pastimes: The Archaeology of Recreation explores how people spent their leisure time through the ages. In-person and online attendance available. Find out more [here](#).

The National Built Heritage Service (NBHS) is hosting a series of traditional skills training events for owners of traditional buildings, contractors and professionals looking to upskill in conservation and retrofit best practice. The workshops are supported by NBHS as part of the National Vernacular Strategy. Refreshments, light lunch and snacks will be provided on the courses.

! Things to Note: Participants should dress for outdoor weather. Refreshments will be provided.

To join the mailing list for upcoming courses, email: vernacular@housing.gov.ie

Wildflower Webinar

Date: July 1st, 2026

Time: 19:30pm – 21:00pm |

Location: Online

Discover the magic of Ireland's native wildflowers from home with Aedín Ní Thiarnaigh's seasonal, interactive webinar. Explore their folklore, traditions, and timeless uses in a warm and engaging online experience.



[All Ireland Permaculture Gathering 2026 –](#)

[All Ireland Permaculture Association](#)

Date: 03 Jul 2026 - 05 Jul | Time: 10:00 am - 5:00 pm |

Location: Rathcam House near Mullingar



Introduction To Dry Stone Wall Construction Weekend



Date: Saturday 25th and 26th of July (Participants must be available to attend for both days) | Time: 9.30am to 4.30pm | Location: Clare | Price: €108.23

 Learn how to build sturdy and beautiful dry stone walls with hands-on training and expert guidance with the Drystone Wall Association of Ireland (DSWAI)

! Things to Note: Participants should wear suitable outdoor attire; hard toed work shoes/boots are essential.

To book your place click [here](#).

The Repair and Reuse of your Vacant Thatched Farmhouse

Date: Monday 13th of July | Time: 9.30am to 5pm | Location: Callan, Co. Kilkenny | Price: €60 (These workshops are being offered at a reduced rate with subsidized tickets of €30)

The aim of the day is to raise awareness of traditional skills, to promote the sensitive reuse of these buildings using appropriate approaches and materials, and to share knowledge and guidance with building owners.

! Things to Note: Participants should bring hi vis vest, safety footwear, hard hat, gloves and eye protection. Long sleeves recommended.

To book your place contact

heather@pollardconservationrestoration.ie



The Repair and Reuse of your Vacant Farm House - leath as béarla, agus leath as gaeilge



Date: Friday 31st of July & Saturday 1st of August | Time: 9.30am to 4.30pm | Location: An Spidéal, Gaillimh (exact location provided upon confirmation of place) | Price: €60

The aim of the day is to raise awareness of traditional skills, to promote the sensitive reuse of these buildings using appropriate approaches and materials, and to share knowledge and guidance with building owners.

! Things to Note: Participants should bring suitable outdoor attire, hi vis vest, safety footwear, hard hat, gloves and eye protection. Long sleeves recommended.

To book your place contact heather@pollardconservationrestoration.ie

Vernacular Architecture:



Form & Function – Free Seminar **Date: Saturday, 4 July | Time: 9am – 4pm |**
Location: Ionad Cois Locha, Dún Lúiche / Dunlewey, County Donegal, F92 W265

Leading experts, conservation professionals and skilled craftspeople come together to explore the significance of Donegal's traditional buildings and provide practical advice on their conservation.

Speakers include: Dr. Barry O'Reilly, National Built Heritage Service, Dr. Marion McGarry, Atlantic Technological University, Clodagh Doyle, National Museum of Ireland, Duncan McLaren, Dedalus Architecture, Manus Derry, Historic Environment Division – Northern Ireland, Dermot Nolan, Dermot Nolan & Associates, Collette Beattie, Donegal County Council. Live demonstrations of rope thatching (Brian Lafferty), slate roof repair (Pat Harkin), lime mortar (Damien Condon) and sash window repair (David McFerran) and tour the Weaver's Cottage, a traditional Donegal farmhouse. Funded by Donegal County Council and The Heritage Council under the County Donegal Heritage Plan, lunch and refreshments will be provided. Bookings: (074) 916 3824 oidhreacht@donegalcoco.ie

Heritage Week 2026. Theme: Heritage at Risk

Managing Vegetation on Historic Masonry Guidance

The Heritage Council is seeking a provider to develop a new guidance document supporting conservation and maintenance projects on historic masonry structures.

Closing date: **3 July 2026 at 5pm.** Learn more [here](#).

Managing Vegetation on Historic Masonry Guidance **Tender Opportunity**

Managing Vegetation on Historic Masonry Guidance

The Heritage Council is seeking a provider to develop a new guidance document supporting conservation and maintenance projects on historic masonry structures.

Closing date: **3 July 2026 at 5pm.** Learn more [here](#).



LAWPRO Heritage Week Funding 2026 is now open for applications.

Water Heritage Day will be celebrated on Sunday 23rd August and LAWPRO grant for community groups to apply for small scale initiatives and events with awards typically ranging from €100 to €400. Closing date for applications is Monday, 20th July: [LAWPRO Water Heritage Day Grants Scheme 2026 | Online Consultation Portal of the Waters and Communities Office](#)



The Heritage Council is recruiting specialists for the Heritage in Schools Post-Primary Programme. The programme supports funded visits to schools by specialists working across Ireland's natural, built and cultural heritage. Specialists are sought from a wide range of fields. **Application deadline is noon on 6 July.**

[Learn more about applying.](#)

Photography Competition

Photography competition [Wiki Loves: A Future for Thatch](#), as part of CITBNI project [Future for Thatch](#) which is supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The goal is to document and celebrate thatched and vernacular buildings on the island of Ireland, preserving their history for generations to come. Capture thatched and vernacular buildings along with their stories on film, video, or audio. Make a free account and upload entries directly to [Wiki Commons](#). **Deadline for entries is 31st July 2026.**

Pollinator Guide for Community Gardens

On Saturday 20th June, Community Gardens Ireland launched our pollinator guide for community gardens with the National Biodiversity Data Centre in Greystones & Kilcoole Community Garden in Wicklow.

Details of the guide and launch are [HERE](#). This is a project that started 3 years ago at a Community Gardens Ireland gathering, when a discussion was held about pesticide use at community gardens and allotments. Following this, contact was made with the excellent team at National Biodiversity Data Centre who quickly came on board.

Over the last 3 years, the two groups then worked together to produce this guide with inputs from members of the Community Gardens Ireland committee.



This guide highlights best practice for community gardens in order to make them pollinator friendly, along with advice for providing space for wildlife, including ponds, bird and bat boxes, and eliminating pesticide use.

Our hope is that this will inspire more pollinator-friendly community gardens throughout the island of Ireland.

Some additional details are [HERE](#)

NTF Carmichael Webinar: Governance and responsible organisational AI adoption

Free Webinar: Governance & Responsible Organisational AI Adoption

As part of the National Training Fund (NTF) 2026 Programme, Carmichael is hosting a free webinar on '[Governance & Responsible Organisational AI Adoption](#)'.

Often, AI usage in organisations is discussed in terms of adoption: its utility, speed, and productivity. A more significant issue is that, in many organisations, policies are not keeping up with experimentation and usage. AI is already being used in most organisations, often informally and without clear guidelines. If AI is already being used in your organisation, formally or informally, governance needs to catch up. A simple, usable policy is the place to start.

To register for this webinar, click [here](#).



Cycle to Work Scheme

This scheme encourages cycling to and from work. Under the scheme, your employer can buy a bicycle and safety equipment for you. This benefit will not be taxable. There are three limits, depending on the type of bicycle purchased:

- €3,000 on cargo and ecargo bikes.
- €1,500 on pedelecs and ebikes.
- €1,250 for other bikes.

The above limits include related safety equipment. The purchase can be made in any cycle shop. If you are a civil or public servant, the cycle shop must be on the [suppliers list](#).

[For more information click here](#)



FREE Sustainability and Biodiversity Workshop

Where: Ballinahown Community Hall

When: Saturday July 11th from 9:30 to 1pm.

Registration is required: [HERE](#)



FREE WORKSHOP ON

SUSTAINABILITY AND BIODIVERSITY

Join us for an inspiring workshop dedicated to empowering communities through sustainable action and the celebration of local biodiversity!

- **Who should attend?** Members of Tidy Towns, Sustainable Energy Communities, or anyone interested in Biodiversity & Sustainability topics.
- **What to expect:** Engaging sessions led by experts, and practical knowledge you can take back to your group with a focus on implementing Sustainability and Biodiversity projects. Includes tour of Ballinahown village by Tidy Town members.

Where: Ballinahown Community Hall, Ballinahown, Co Westmeath N37D768

When: Saturday July 11th
9:30am - 1pm

To attend and for further details register here:
<https://forms.microsoft.com/r/CkTbvV0KeP> or Scan the QR code:







THE THREE PHASES

The People's Transition: Uíbh Ráthach Gaeltacht

The People's Transition is a participative decision-making model for climate action. It views climate action as an enabler of local development, giving people and communities ownership of the transition to zero-carbon societies. The People's Transition seeks to deliver a bottom-up approach to transition that builds local wealth, enables local ownership of climate action and empowers local people.

The People's Transition in the Uíbh Ráthach Gaeltacht began in February 2024. The intention of the project was to listen to and learn from the community's needs and abilities and then design climate solutions that would benefit the community while addressing key local development priorities. The project had three phases: a mapping phase, a community engagement phase, and a solutions phase. Through research, stakeholder engagement, and participatory arts residencies developed in partnership with Cumas Ceantar Uíbh Ráthach, the project identified the rural housing crisis as a central challenge facing the Gaeltacht.



1. MAPPING

The mapping phase built a picture of the Uíbh Ráthach Gaeltacht, outlining the project's geographical scope and the communities living there. It examined the area's demographic, social, economic, and cultural context, along with key local institutions, services, and organisations. Through research and stakeholder engagement, the project identified major challenges and opportunities, with the shortage of accessible and affordable long term housing emerging as a key priority.

2. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The community engagement phase built on the mapping process in partnership with Cumas Ceantar Uíbh Ráthach. TASC engaged with local residents, community groups, development workers, students, and other stakeholders to understand lived experiences and future priorities.

A key part of this phase was the TOCHAIL socially engaged arts residencies, which used workshops and creative methods to explore the housing crisis through the lens of climate justice and generate community-led ideas for a fairer, more sustainable future.

3. CO-CREATION OF SOLUTIONS

Building on the mapping and community engagement phases, TASC worked with local experts and community members to co create climate solutions that respond to local needs. Through collective reflection, three strategic pathways were identified: a community led housing pilot, supportive affordable housing policies, and a community led housing network across the Gaeltacht. Together, these pathways present a shared vision for climate action that strengthens housing, culture, local livelihoods, and long term resilience.



The poster features a central graphic of a hand with fingers spread, resembling a sunburst, with the text "Taking Action For Whole Health & Wellbeing" and "Mental Health Ireland" below it. The background is a mix of blue and purple wavy shapes.

Taking Action For Whole Health & Wellbeing

Mental Health Ireland

What is the Taking Action Programme?

Taking Action for Whole Health and Wellbeing is an opportunity to build practical tools to support your mental health, build resilience, confidence, and improve overall wellbeing and also to work on a personalised mental health & wellbeing plan.

This 2-day evidence-based programme, developed by the Copeland Centre, is led by two accredited facilitators and delivered in person in a welcoming and supportive environment.

The programme is open to anyone who wants to improve their mental health & wellbeing, or support their mental health recovery journey.

You'll learn alongside a small group of 8–16 people — no previous group experience needed.

Programme Options:

- + Letterkenny, Co. Donegal
June 30th & July 7th
- + Monkstown, Co. Dublin
July 2nd & 9th
- + Athy, Co. Kildare
July 14th & 21st
- + Galway City
July 28th & 29th

Registration:



Scan this QR code or email us at training@mentalhealthireland.ie for more info.

Cost: €30 - includes all course materials, refreshments and a light lunch on both days.

(We want the programme to be accessible to everyone, so if cost would prevent you from attending, please feel free to contact us in confidence at; training@mentalhealthireland.ie)

Training in Mental Health Peer-Support with Cycle Against Suicide

Our peer-support programme sets out to educate senior personnel and team leads on how stress and mental health problems can affect their employees. It is designed for companies to not only prevent mental ill health but to integrate mental health and wellbeing into all parts of the workplace. Participants are trained in the use of a structured interview schedule to ascertain whether individuals might be experiencing significant levels of distress and on how to practically managed distressed individuals. Furthermore, participants will be trained to mentor individuals to take positive resilience enhancing actions, such as positive coping. They will be trained on how to recognise more complex symptoms requiring professional interventions. They will develop skills based on the principal of motivational interviewing to encourage individuals to speak with a health care professional where necessary.

This training is delivered over two full days 9.30am to 5pm and accredits 13.5 CPD points. FREE of charge
We currently have 2-full day, 9.30am-5pm, live online training taking place on the following dates:

Mon 21 & Tues 22 September

Wed 21 & Thurs 22 October

Wed 18 & Thurs 19 November

Please follow this link to register and choose the date that suits best: [Mental Health Peer Support- Proigramme](#)

Family Carers Ireland

Are you caring for a family member and wondering how to feel more confident in your role? Our Caring with Confidence – QQI Level 4 Introduction to Healthcare course is designed especially for family carers like you, giving you the practical skills, guidance and support you need to care safely and effectively. By joining, you will learn essential everyday care skills, gain confidence in handling health needs and emergencies, strengthen your communication and understanding of care, and discover ways to protect your own wellbeing and avoid burnout.

You will also have the opportunity to connect with other carers in a welcoming, supportive environment while working towards a recognised QQI Level 4 qualification.

This Level 4 course is designed to be accessible and manageable, making it an ideal way to ease back into education without pressure—something especially important when you already have the demands and stress of caring. It builds your confidence step by step, supports you at a comfortable pace, and can open doors to further education or employment if you choose, all while fitting around your caring role.

CARING WITH CONFIDENCE

Join our QQI L4 Introduction to Healthcare free course for family carers.

ARE YOU CARING FOR A LOVED ONE AT HOME?

Our free certified Longford course provides guidance, support and skills in a welcoming environment.



Wednesday 10am-1pm

Starts: 16th Sept 2026 for 12 weeks

Phone: 061 517627 Email: training@familycarers.ie

Location: Connolly Campus Church St. Longford Town
Co. Longford N39HR68



The course runs on Wednesdays from 10:00am–1:00pm, starting 16th September 2026 for 12 weeks at Connolly Campus, Church St., Longford Town, and is completely free (places are limited). To find out more or secure your place, contact us on 061 517627 or email training@familycarers.ie. Take this step for yourself—because no one should have to care alone.

Cycle of Hope-Mizen to Malin Challenge - September 6th to 11th

Cycle of Hope-Mizen to Malin Challenge - September 6th to 11th

World Suicide Prevention Day, September 10th, is a global reminder that suicide prevention is everyone's business. It is a day to raise awareness, challenge stigma and encourage conversations that can save lives.

This year's theme, "Changing the Narrative on Suicide," calls on all of us to replace silence with understanding, stigma with compassion, and isolation with connection. By creating a culture where people feel safe to talk and seek help, we can give hope to those who may be struggling.

To mark World Suicide Prevention Day, Cycle Against Suicide invites you to join our Cycle of Hope: Mizen to Malin Challenge, taking place from 6th-11th September. (Travel days Saturday 5th & 12th).

Whether you ride for a day, a few days or the full journey, you will be part of a powerful movement bringing communities together, supporting those impacted by suicide and promoting help seeking behaviour.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

**2026 Cycle of Hope
Mizen to Malin Challenge**

5th -12th September 2026

**Hop on your bike & join us for
World Suicide Prevention Day**

Register Now

WWW.CYCLEAGAINSTSUICIDE.COM

HSE Injury Unit

HSE injury Unit Campaign



You do not need an appointment and the wait time is usually quicker than an Emergency Department (ED). Regional Hospital Mullingar Injury Unit treats patients over 16 years of age and is open 7 days a week. Located in Charter Medical Private Hospital, Mullingar.

For more information visit:

HSE [Find urgent and emergency care](#)

Injury units treat recent injuries (less than 6 weeks old) that are not life-threatening and unlikely to need admission to hospital.

Injury units can treat:

- broken bones, sprains and strains, from knees to toes
- broken bones, sprains and strains, from collarbone to fingertips
- minor facial injuries (including oral, dental and nasal injuries)
- minor scalds and burns
- wounds, bites, cuts, grazes and scalp lacerations (cuts)
- small abscesses and boils
- splinters and fish hooks
- objects stuck in eyes, ears or nose
-

minor head injuries (fully-conscious patients, who did not have loss of consciousness or vomit after the head injury)

National Economic and Social Council Workshop Athlone-7th July

The National Economic and Social Council (NESC) wants to hear from you about Ireland's sustainable future.

NESC is currently undertaking research on Ireland's approach to climate action and sustainability.

On July 7th NESC is holding a workshop in the Radisson Hotel Athlone from 10.30am to 4.30pm. We want to hear from you about your views on a sustainable future, what matters to you and what is important to make it happen. A report of the workshop will be published on NESC's website and outcomes of this workshop will inform NESC's research and advice to government on Ireland's sustainable future.

What do we need from YOU?

During the workshop, you will be asked what you think are the important features of a sustainable and fair future through the perspective of different people's lived experiences.

In the morning, we will work in breakout groups to develop those shared perspectives, so in the afternoon we can work on the story of how Ireland achieves a transformation to a sustainable and fair future.

A hot lunch and refreshments will be provided.

Spaces are limited, please make sure to register at this [link](#) to secure your place.

You can find out more about NESC on our website www.nesc.ie

Disability Participation

Public consultation on the updated National Standards for Residential Services for Disabled People

The Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) has launched a six-week public consultation on its updated National Standards for Residential Services for Disabled People.

The National Standards for Residential Services for Children and Adults with Disabilities were first published in 2013, following approval by the Minister. The aim of the updated standards is to reflect changes in policy and to drive further improvements in the provision of residential services for disabled people, so that people living in or using residential services have the best outcomes possible.

In addition to the detailed evidence review published by HIQA to inform these standards, the standards are also informed by engagement and consultation with people living in or using residential services for disabled people, staff working in these residential services, Disabled Persons' Organisations, advocates, researchers and policymakers. To support participation, HIQA has developed accessible information videos, including a Lámh interpreted video and an Irish Sign Language interpreted video, available below.

The consultation period will close at 5pm on Friday 17 July 2026.

[Complete the consultation HERE](#)

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.](#)



Irish Deaf Society (IDS): Level 6 Advocacy Course for Family Carers

The Irish Deaf Society have a new course starting in September, the Advocacy Certificate Level 6, for Family Carers — A free Course for the Deaf Community.

Who Is This Course For?

Deaf people who are caring for a family member or loved one.

Course Information

Start Date: September 2026 (Exact date TBC),
online course

Duration: 12 weeks

Fees: Free

This course is fully funded through the Supporting Family Carers Across Ireland project.

International Diaspora Forum

Panel Discussion and Community Dialogue 2.0

Radisson Blu Hotel, Athlone, Westmeath
Saturday 11 July • 2 PM - 5 PM

Join Us for Panel Discussion and Community Dialogue 2.0!
Come be part of an engaging in-person event where voices come together to share ideas, debate, and connect. This is your chance to dive into meaningful conversations, hear diverse perspectives, and build community spirit. Don't miss out on the fun and dynamic dialogue—let's make some noise and spark change!

Free Admission

RESERVE A SPOT HERE

PRESENT:

- Employment & Skills Recognition
- Social Inclusion & Belonging
- Health & Wellbeing
- Mental Health
- Civic Participation & Voice
- Family & Childcare Challenges

THEME:
Overcoming integration challenges

SATURDAY 11TH JULY, 2026 2PM

PANEL DISCUSSION & COMMUNITY DIALOGUE 2.0

Explore engaging sessions on:

- ECB: Economic Power, Community and Opportunities
- Beyond Policy and Integration: Fresh Perspectives, Real Impact
- The Mental Health of Belonging: Identity, Migration & Healing
- Community Health Promotion: Know Your Numbers, Own Your Health

Supported by:

- An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt, Gréidhail Baille agus Institiúid
- Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration

www.i-diasporaforum.org



The International Diaspora Forum is a welcoming and inclusive association created by and for people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Our goal is to bring people together to share stories, celebrate cultures, and build strong, supportive connections. We are committed to making sure every voice matters and every contribution counts.

Our Mission is to empower diverse communities by promoting social inclusion, celebrating cultures, and creating opportunities for all to belong, thrive, and lead positive change.

The aims and objectives are to:

- ✓ **Celebrate Cultural Diversity**
Provide platforms for migrants to interact integrate and collaborate.
- ✓ **Foster Social Inclusion and Participation**
Promote mutual understanding, cultural exchange, and active engagement in community life for all members.
- ✓ **Promote family-friendly initiatives**
Organize inclusive outings that support the socio-cultural and emotional well-being of children and families.
- ✓ **Amplify Voices**
Ensure that individuals diverse background or status are able to express their views
- ✓ **Support Sustainable Development**
Share and apply best practices that build resilient communities.



🎉 THE WAIT IS OVER! 🎉

 **17** The official Athlone River Festival 2026 Schedule of Events has now been released!

Get ready for an unforgettable August Bank Holiday weekend packed with something for everyone – from Viking experiences, river cruises, dragon boat racing, live music, markets, family activities, sporting events, water safety demonstrations, carnival attractions and so much more!

Whether you're from Athlone or visiting for the weekend, we invite you to come along, soak up the atmosphere, support local businesses and celebrate everything that makes our town so special.

This festival is made possible by an incredible team of volunteers, community groups, sponsors and supporters who work together to showcase the very best of Athlone. Our Gofundme and fundraising is almost over the line and with a final push in the coming weeks we are confident that our schedule of events will be a massive success.

❤️ Bring your family, invite your friends, and be part of one of the Midlands' biggest and most exciting festivals!

 **Athlone River Festival 2026**
 **Friday 31st July – Monday 3rd August**

We can't wait to welcome you to Athlone for a fantastic weekend of community, culture and fun on the River Shannon!



St. Mary's Hall
Tuesdays 8-9.30pm
Begins 20th January

'Best Foot Forward'

Free 8 week Motivational
Programme for Men

Physical activities & guest speakers to
kickstart your motivation

For more information & to book your place

0906472174



reception@acsc.ie



www.athlonecommunityservicescouncil.com

ATHLONE COMMUNITY SERVICES COUNCIL

HEALTHY AGEING LIFESTYLE PROGRAMME



EMBRACE HEALTH, WELLNESS AND COMMUNITY

Structured Exercise Classes - Nutrition Workshops -
Meditation and Wellness - Social Activities

Takes place in St Mary's Hall, Northgate St, Athlone
Every Wednesday @ 3:45pm

BOOK YOUR PLACE TODAY!

Starting September 2025

090 6472174 or 085 2198180

reception@acsc.ie

www.athlonecommunityservicescouncil.com

ATHLONE COMMUNITY SERVICES COUNCIL

DIGITAL SKILLS WORKSHOP

Build confidence using your smartphone

Join us for friendly, supportive learning sessions

BOOK YOUR PLACE TODAY!



STARTING SEPTEMBER 2025

090 6472174

reception@acsc.ie

www.athlonecommunityservicescouncil.com



ATHLONE COMMUNITY
SERVICES COUNCIL



JOIN US FOR JOYFUL SINGING!



SING ALONG SESSIONS

COMMUNITY SINGING GROUP

BOOK YOUR PLACE TODAY!

Starting September 2025

090 6472174

reception@acsc.ie

www.athlonecommunityservicescouncil.com



Summer Tea Party on the Laneway

Sunday, 12th July 2026 at 4pm

Hear ye, hear ye fellow residents of St Mary's Place and St Mary's Terrace – You are hereby invited to a summer get together (weather permitting). This year out get-together will take place on the gated laneway, Little Theatre side of the street. Come along, enjoy a cup of tea, a slice of cake or maybe even a glass of wine or two. Embrace the opportunity to meet up for a chat with neighbours new and old. Hope you can make it, look forward to your company.

A reminder will be dropped in your letter box nearer the date to confirm the date, we'll keep an eye on the weather.

St Mary's Residents Group Athlone





Ministers Buttimer and Calleary announce funding of €27.8 million for the community and voluntary sector

- The Scheme to Support National Organisations 2026-2029 provides multi-annual core funding
- 92 national community and voluntary organisations will be funded under the Scheme
- €27.8 million will be awarded over three and a half years

Minister of State with responsibility for Community Development and Charities Jerry Buttimer, and Minister for Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht, Dara Calleary, today announced funding of €27.8 million over the coming 3 and a half years to 92 national community and voluntary organisations.

The funding is under a new round of the Scheme to Support National Organisations (SSNO) and will run until the end of 2029.

At almost €8 million per year, the funding has increased by almost €1 million annually compared to the previous SSNO iteration.

This new round also sees an increase in organisations funded with, 92 organisations announced today, in comparison to 82 organisations awarded under the 2022-2026 Scheme.

Announcing the funding, Minister Buttimer said:

“I am delighted to announce the successful 92 national Community and Voluntary Organisations who will be receiving nearly €28 million in funding. This funding is over a 3 and a half year period to allow organisations to plan for a more sustainable timeframe.”

Applications were invited from community and voluntary organisations that operate at a national level. The Ministers noted the very high quality of applications for the scheme.

Minister Buttimer added:

“This was a highly competitive process with over 200 applications received from organisations who provide services nationally. This funding will benefit organisations who operate across a wide variety of areas in the community and voluntary sector, including health, disability, homelessness, children and young persons, older persons, equality and social inclusion sectors, amongst others.”

Minister Calleary said:

“I am glad to announce today this substantial funding to 92 national Community & Voluntary Organisations. This Government recognises the value of the work carried out by these national voluntary organisations. The work of these national organisations is vital to communities throughout the country.

“The Government will invest almost €28 million over the next three and a half years under this initiative, and I am confident that the communities who benefit from the work carried out by these groups will see the benefit of this investment”.

ENDS

Contact: Press.office@drcdg.gov.ie



Ministers Buttimer and Calleary announce €3 million in funding for targeted small-scale capital investment for public libraries

- This funding will support our public libraries through four key measures: sensory equipment and facilities; accessibility upgrades; ICT and broadband speed enhancements; and upgrade of furniture and equipment
- These enhancements will ensure our public libraries remain vibrant, modern and accessible spaces where every member of the community can connect, learn and thrive

Minister of State with special responsibility for Community Development and Charities, Jerry Buttimer TD, and Minister for Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht, Dara Calleary TD, have today (Friday, 26 June 2026) announced funding of just over €3 million for the provision of equipment and facilities for public libraries across the country.

These include sensory equipment, accessibility infrastructure, ICT hardware upgrades to increase broadband speed, and modern furniture and operational equipment. Delivered under the Libraries Capital Programme, this investment will ensure our public libraries become even more inclusive and accessible and develop further as digitally connected hubs.

Making the announcement, Minister of State Buttimer said:

“Having visited many libraries across Ireland, I know first-hand that they are a true cornerstone of our local communities. I am delighted that this targeted funding will assist them in advancing their accessibility, sensory spaces and broadband speeds, ensuring they can continue to deliver a vital, modern service to everyone in their communities.”

Minister Calleary added:

“Libraries are the vibrant heart of our communities, serving as trusted spaces where people of all ages and backgrounds can connect, learn, and grow together. I am delighted to announce this funding, which fulfils our Programme for Government Commitment to deliver inclusive, sensory spaces in our libraries. By boosting digital inclusion and community connection, this investment also drives our national library strategy, ‘The Library is the Place’.”

Minister of State Buttimer concluded:

“Having visited many libraries across Ireland, I know first-hand that they are a true cornerstone of our local communities. I am delighted that this targeted funding will assist them in advancing their accessibility, sensory spaces and broadband speeds, ensuring they can continue to deliver a vital, modern service to everyone in their communities.”

This targeted investment will help to transform Irish libraries into world-class, inclusive hubs by removing physical, sensory and digital barriers to learning. In addition, the Libraries Capital Programme 2023-2027 is investing €22.6million in 11 state-of-the-art infrastructure projects and a further €2.6million in 12 next-generation mobile library vehicles.

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 funding of over €5.3m for Gaeltacht Initiatives

- €4m approved to administer the Language Assistants' Scheme from 2026 to 2028
- €1.3m approved to deliver Summer Camps Scheme from 2026 to 2028

The Minister for Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht, Dara Calleary TD, was in Na Forbacha in the Galway Gaeltacht today to officially launch the new Muintearas Strategy for 2026-2029. He also took the opportunity to announce significant funding for two long-standing Departmental schemes.

Language Assistants' Scheme

The Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht has been providing funding to run the Language Assistants' Scheme for over twenty years now, as an additional support for the language planning process. It is available within the Gaeltacht to every school which participates in the Department of Education and Youth's Gaeltacht Schools Recognition Scheme (GSRS). Outside of the Gaeltacht, the scheme is available to Gaelscoileanna and Gaelcholáistí located in the areas recognised as Gaeltacht Service Towns or Irish Language Networks. Grants totalling up to €4.02m have now been approved for the three managing organisations over a two-year period to run the scheme.

Oidhreacht Chorca Dhuibhne and Muintearas Teo. are responsible for administering the scheme on the Department's behalf within the Gaeltacht and Glór na nGael are managing the scheme outside of the Gaeltacht. 161 schools in total benefit from the scheme – 104 under the auspices of Muintearas, 28 schools under Oidhreacht Chorca Dhuibhne and 29 schools under Glór na nGael. Approximately 135 language assistants provide up to 1,563 hours of tuition per week in those schools.

Summer Camps Scheme

This long-standing scheme supports community committees to run Irish-language camps for young people within the Gaeltacht. This scheme serves young people in all Gaeltacht areas, and around 165 camps are provided every summer to around 6,500 young people. Muintearas Teo administer the scheme and this announcement includes a grant increase for the first time in many years. A 3-year grant worth up to €1,308,039 or €436,013 per year has now been approved, and as part of that improved grant, an increase of €10 has been approved for the subsidy rate paid to committees for every participant, from €45 to €55 per participant for a weeklong camp.

Notes

The Department has been funding the Language Assistants Scheme since 1999 as a support measure for Irish in the education system in the Gaeltacht. The objective is that the Irish language will progress fruitfully from generation to generation and be strengthened as a family and community language in the Gaeltacht in accordance with the 20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030.

In addition to the measure now announced, the following steps have been taken in recent years to strengthen the Language Assistants Scheme as a result of the review of the scheme carried out in 2019 – Review of the Language Assistants Scheme:

- Additional teaching hours were approved under the Scheme for Gaeltacht primary schools with an attendance of more than 100 pupils.
- The Role of the Language Assistant booklet has been officially launched and will serve as a source of reference, information and support for language assistants, scheme administrators and management and teaching staff in Gaeltacht schools.
- The scheme has been extended to all schools in the Gaeltacht that are participating in the Gaeltacht Schools Recognition Scheme.
- The funding period available under the Language Assistants Scheme has been extended by 6 weeks from 26 weeks to 32 weeks in primary schools.
- The Language Assistants' pay has been increased from €21.12 to €23.20 for the 2022/23 school year and again to €25.52 for the 2025/26 school year.
- The scheme has been extended to Gaelscoileanna and Gaelcholáistí located in the Gaeltacht Service Towns and in the Irish Language Networks recognised by the Department outside the Gaeltacht.

This funding has been approved under the Department's Community and Language Supports Programme. More information about this programme is available at gov.ie - Community and Language Support Programme (www.gov.ie)



Public Participation Network Westmeath

Public Participation Network (PPN) are county-based networks that allow local authorities to connect with community groups around the country.

Westmeath Public Participation Network (WPPN) is a network of more than 1,000 community, voluntary, social inclusion and environmental organisations in Co Westmeath.

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



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



☀️ We've launched a NEW Facebook page! ☀️
Follow us for all the latest news, events,
workshops, and grant opportunities.
Don't miss out—join us today! 🙌

