

Laois Public Participation Network November 2020 Newsletter



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Laois PPN November Events

Funding Strategy for 2021 Online Workshop

Laois Public Participation Network recently conducted two online workshops for its member groups.

'Building your 2021 Fundraising Strategy' was facilitated by consultant Kevin Delaney of Academy Street Workshop. Kevin has more than 12 years professional fundraising and training experience working with non profit organisations.

The workshop covered a wide variety of fundraising strategies and ideas for community groups for 2021.

Commenting on the workshop, Laois PPN Resource Worker, Dan Bergin said:

"Laois PPN recognises the challenging year it has been for community groups in relation to fundraising. Many of them have traditionally relied on raffles, church gate collections, bag packing and local events to raise money, and many of these routes have been taken away.

" With this in mind, we provided a free online workshop via Zoom on October 21st, 2020 but the demand was so high from our PPN member groups that we ran a second free online workshop on November 11th, 2020. There were 42 community groups who registered to take part in both workshops.



**Kevin Delaney, Academy Street
Workshop**

Dan Bergin, Resource Worker, Laois PPN

Laois PPN November Events

Social Inclusion Week 2020

This is the first time ever that Laois PPN held a Social Inclusion Week. It was a week long series of events organised by Laois PPN in collaboration with Laois Partnership & Respond.

Event One - Social Inclusion Week -Disability Access of Services Workshop

As part of our Social Inclusion Week, Laois PPN were delighted to present a "Disability Access of Services Workshop". The workshop was facilitated by PJ Cleere of the Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI). PJ Cleere is the Development Manager with DFI and leads their Community Development Work team. PJ has extensive knowledge and experience having worked with the DFI since 2004.

We recognise the potential difficulty that people with disabilities can have in accessing services especially during this challenging time with COVID-19.

Dan Bergin, Laois PPN Resource Worker said:

" On the night, PJ gave a detailed presentation of the disability sector in County Laois and nationally. This was followed by a question and answer session. PJ used his extensive knowledge and expertise gathered over almost 20 years of working with DFI to assist and support attendees with their queries. The feedback from attendees was very positive.

Laois PPN wish to thank PJ Cleere and the Disability Federation of Ireland for providing the workshop to PPN member groups.

**PJ Cleere, Development
Manager with the Disability
Federation of Ireland**



Laois PPN November Events

Social Inclusion Week 2020

ALONE

Supporting older people
to age at home

Event Two - Social Inclusion Week -Disability Access of Services Workshop

During our Social Inclusion Week, ALONE ran a workshop via Zoom on Wednesday 25th November. Carol McGahon who is a Support Co-ordinator facilitated the workshop.

Dan Bergin, Laois PPN Resource Worker said:

" ALONE support anyone over the age of 60 through a range of different services. During the workshop, Carol informed participants of the range of services and supports available through ALONE including Support Co-Ordination, Telephone Support Calls, the ALONE Support Line & Befriending Visits."



Carol McGahon
Support Co-Ordinator
ALONE

**CORONAVIRUS HELPLINE FOR
OLDER PEOPLE:
0818 222 024**

If you have concerns or queries about COVID-19
call ALONE's dedicated support line, 8am-8pm

Laois PPN November Events

Social Inclusion Week 2020

Event Three - Social Inclusion Week - "Grow Your Own"

Dan Bergin, Laois PPN Resource Worker said " As part of our Social Inclusion Week, we were delighted to present a "Grow Your Own" Zoom workshop with Dee Sewell on Thursday, the 26th November at 7pm."

Dee created Greenside Up in 2009 to help promote the grow your own ethos and raise environmental awareness. With over ten years of experience behind her, Dee has worked with a wide range of social, community and therapeutic projects in Ireland.

Dee Sewell is a member of the Chartered Institute of Horticulture and a qualified horticulturist. She is a VOICE Ireland Recycling Ambassador, a GROW Observatory Community Champion in Ireland and a Stop Food Waste Master Composter.

Dan continued "that the workshop covered:

- **Garden choices: raised beds, into the soil, container gardening**
- **Organic vs Non Organic**
- **Sourcing seeds**
- **Easy Herbs**
- **Easy Vegetables**
- **When to Start**
- **Q & A**



Dee Sewell, Greenside Up

As this event was part of our Social Inclusion Week, preference was given to participants in the 55+ age group.

There was a lot of interest in the Grow Your Own Workshop and there was a large variety of groups represented on the night. The feedback from participants was very positive and participants are looking forward to getting back out into their gardens."

Laois PPN November Events

Social Inclusion Week 2020

Event Four - Social Inclusion Week - Celebration of the Migrant Communities in Laois

As the finale to our Social Inclusion Week, we hosted an online celebration of the Migrant Communities of Laois. This event featured a series of short videos submitted by our PPN Member Groups celebrating the Migrant Communities in Laois.

Dan Bergin, Laois PPN Resource Worker said: " This was a wonderful finale to our Social Inclusion Week. Laois PPN posted videos submitted by our Member Groups celebrating the Migrant Communities in Laois with everything from music, dance, personal stories, art, sport and food tasting covered in the short videos. Thanks to all the PPN member groups who submitted videos."

A special thanks to Laois PPN Secretariat Member, Bolaji Adeyanju and Laois PPN JPC Representative, Sara Geraldine Rasool for their support in organising these videos.



**Bolaji Adeyanju,
Laois PPN Secretariat Member**



**Sara Geraldine Rasool,
Laois PPN, JPC Representative**



Laois County Council Community Response Support Helpline

The Council phone line **057 86 64000** is open **Monday to Friday** between the hours of **9am - 5pm** for the Laois County Council Community Response Support Helpline and deal with normal Council queries.

On **Saturdays**, the Laois County Council Community Response Support Helpline is available on **1800 832 010** from **10am - 1pm** and from **2pm - 4pm** to facilitate the most appropriate community response to the needs of vulnerable people living in the community where their usual sources of support have become unavailable due to **COVID-19**.





Minister Humphreys announces over €4.1 million in CLAR funding for rural schools and communities

Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, announced details of over €4.1 million in funding to support 115 projects in rural communities under Measure 1 and Measure 2 of the 2020 CLAR programme.

This funding will support the provision of safety measures around schools and community facilities, as well as the development of community recreation areas.

CLAR provides funding for small scale projects in designated rural areas that have experienced significant levels of population decline.

The programme is one element of the Department of Rural and Community Development's Rural Development Investment Programme, which provides a package of co-ordinated and complementary supports for rural areas.

The 2020 CLAR programme places a particular focus on supporting CLAR communities to deal with the impact of COVID-19 and meeting the needs of communities in these challenging times.

Under the funding announced today, almost €3 million will be provided to projects in 84 communities to provide and improve safety infrastructure such as footpaths, public lighting, pedestrian crossings, speed safety signs and car parking facilities, and to help adapt the environs around schools and community facilities to meet the public health requirements arising from COVID-19 (Measure 1).



A further €1.8 million is being provided to 31* projects for community recreation areas where people can socialise safely outdoors in line with COVID-19 public health guidelines (Measure 2).

Successful Projects in Laois:

Measure 2	Grand Canal, Vicarstown	Development of the grassy bank of the Grand Canal and recreation area.	€49,500
Measure 2	Woodenbridge Amenity Area	Provision of amenity area, trailhead, seating, picnic, BBQ and play area	€21,940
Measure 1	Gaelscoil an tSli Dala and Ballaghmore Muintir na Tire	Provision of pedestrian crossing and digital speed safety signs	€45,000





Laois Gift Card

KEEP YOUR SPEND LOCAL WITH THE LAOIS GIFT CARD

To help our local businesses through these incredibly challenging months in the run up to Christmas we are urging everyone to **KEEP YOUR SPEND LOCAL.**

Laois Chamber have recently launched the new **LAOIS GIFT CARD** in collaboration with the Local Enterprise Office and Laois Tourism.

This is a prepaid Me 2 You Gift Card that can be spent in over 100 businesses across the county including Hairdressers, Jewellers, Hotels and Restaurants both in-store and online.

If you are an employer and planning to reward your employees this year, please consider the **LAOIS GIFT CARD**. Your employees will see you care about their local economies and communities.

You will be supporting **KEEP YOUR SPEND LOCAL.**

You will **SAVE JOBS AND LIVELIHOODS.**

(Each employee can receive up to €500 tax free as voucher)

For details on how to purchase the **LAOIS GIFT CARD**, see www.laoisgiftcard.ie or contact bernie@laoischamber.ie





Laois Gift Card

Where you can use the LAOIS GIFT CARD

**Alo Donegan - Adrian Dunne Pharmacy - AJ Flynn - Allbooks Ltd
- Andrew Fyffe and Sons - Anthem Music - Apoena Artisan
Chocolates - Applegreen - Argos
Ballykilcavan Farm Brewery - Bankz Hair - Bergin's Jewellers -
Blackhill Woods - Bloom HQ - Blossom Time Boutique -
Bookmark Portlaoise - Boots - Boutique Ladybelle
Carphone Warehouse - Carraig Donn - CaToCa Fine Food and
Giftware - CJ Sheeran - Clelands - Copa Jewellery - Conroys
Mountrath - Cosy Cafe - Creative Interiors - Croft Alley
Deirdre Fitzpatrick Beauty - Des Hughes Motors - Dowling's
Bar - Dunamaise Arts Centre
Eamonn Bracken Menswear - EcoBoost - Elverys Inter-Sport -
Expert Laois
Fifty Seven Boutique and Gifts - Finline Furniture - Frankies'
Hairdressing - Freesoul Menswear - Fruit n Nut Place Health
Store
Gerry Browne Jewellers - Glamping under the Stars -
Goodwins Footwear - Grape and Bean - G's Gourmet Jams
Halfords Portlaoise - Harrington Hats - Heritage Hotel and Spa
- Homestore & More - Hughes Pharmacy
Inch House - Infocus Opticians Portlaoise - Inspiring Interiors -
Irishtown Garden Centre
Killeshin Hotel and Leisure Club - Kilminchy Pharmacy**



Laois Gift Card

Where you can use the LAOIS GIFT CARD continued:

**Laois Nationalist - Leonard Carpets - Life Style Sports
Portlaoise - Lillys Bar - Lloyds Pharmacy
Maldron Hotel and Grain & Grill Restaurant - Manor Stone -
Marian Carton Opticians - McElwee Pharmacies - Midlands
Park Hotel / Kellys Steakhouse - Millers Home and Garden - Mr
Price Stores - Mulhall's SuperValu - Mulhall's Restaurant -
Muller O'Connell Bakery
Nook and Cranny
O'Briens Sandwich Bar - O'Farrell Opticians
Pennys Portlaoise - Pet World - Petmania - Portland Barbers -
Portlaoise Plaza
Recharge - Revive Clinic - Robert Redmond Studios -
Roundwood House
Shaws Department Store - Specsavers Portlaoise - Sports
Direct & Brand Max - Stradbally Fayre - Studio Twenty Six -
Supermacs
T K Maxx - Telfords - Tesco - The Bay Tree - The Clubhouse
Portlaoise - The Gandon Inn Hotel and Restaurant - The
Leather Shop - The Office Centre - The Pantry Cafe - Town
Hotel - Treacy's Bar and Restaurant - Treasures Gift Shop -
Zen Beauty Clinic.**



Minister Heather Humphreys confirms 2021 SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition will proceed

The Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, has given a firm commitment that the SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition will proceed in 2021.

The SuperValu Tidy Towns competition has been in existence since 1958 and has become an integral part of our culture over the intervening years. The competition continues to grow in popularity and in 2019, a record 924 entries were received.

Unfortunately, like many other events, the competition did not proceed in 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Speaking about the cancellation of the competition, Minister Humphreys said:

" The decision to cancel the competition this year was taken in line with public health advice and in collaboration with the competition sponsor SuperValu. This decision was made in April during the first period of severe restrictions when essentially the advice to everybody was to stay at home.

" Many of our Tidy Towns volunteers and adjudicators were very limited in what they could do earlier in the year. As we have moved through different stages of living alongside the pandemic, the Tidy Towns volunteers have demonstrated that they can continue to do some of their activities while still following all of the necessary public health precautions."





The Department of Rural and Community Development is in regular contact with the close to 1,000 Tidy Towns groups around the country through social media and through the monthly Tidy Towns newsletter. It is clear that some wonderful projects and community-wide initiatives have been delivered in recent months. Many of the Tidy Towns Groups have also been instrumental in assisting with the community response to COVID-19.

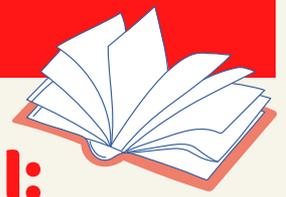
Looking ahead to next year, the Minister said;

" As we look forward to next year, I want to assure all of the Tidy Towns groups and their volunteers, that there will be a SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition in 2021. We may need to alter and adapt our approach to delivering the competition next year, given the on-going constraints posed by COVID, but we can retain the ethos of the competition that has stood the test of time so well.

" My Department is currently considering the format the competition could take next year, having regard to restrictions on gatherings at each of the five levels of the Government's Plan for Living with COVID-19, and the paramount need to protect the health and wellbeing of volunteers and adjudicators.

" The details of any changes in the competition will be shared with Tidy Towns groups well in advance. I also want to assure them, that my Department, our sponsor SuperValu and the Government is absolutely committed to the SuperValu Tidy Towns competition and we look forward to encouraging more and more towns and villages to join us in future years".





The Power of Words Festival: Short Story Writing Competition

Writers are invited to submit a short story of up to 5,000 words on any theme. The competition is open to everyone over the age of 18 and resident in Ireland. Entries will be accepted up to Friday, December 4th, 2020. The winning writers will be invited to attend the Power of Words Festival 2021, where they will be given the opportunity to read their work to an invited audience. As well as five free copies of the Winners Anthology, a small locally crafted memento of the festival will be presented to each winning writer. Full details on how to enter can be found on The Power of Words Festival's Website: powerofwords.ie

The Power of Words Festival, Abbeyleix, in association with Hilliard Press, is delighted to announce that renowned author, Andrea Carter will be judging their recently announced Short Story Writing Competition. Andrea Carter grew up in Ballyfin, Co. Laois and studied law at Trinity College Dublin before moving to the Inishowen peninsula in Co. Donegal where she ran the most northerly solicitors' practice in Ireland. In 2006 she returned to Dublin to work as a barrister. She is the author of the Inishowen Mysteries which will shortly be adapted for television. Her short story The Lamb which was part of the Counterparts anthology published by The Stinging Fly and edited by Dannielle McLaughlin was shortlisted for Short Story of the Year at the Irish Book Awards 2019.



The Power of Words Festival - a festival celebrating Words - written, acted, spoken or sung; had its hugely successful inaugural festival in Abbeyleix, Co. Laois, in August of 2019. It featured a host of well-known authors in addition to events and workshops for new and emerging writers. The festival team was supported by Heritage House, Abbeyleix, who provided an array of heritage walks and talks to complement the packed literary itinerary. Spink Comhaltas and Mountrath Youth Theatre, were amongst others who also lent their considerable talents to the festival. The festival was also generously supported by the business community in Abbeyleix, as well as Creative Ireland (Laois) and Laois Arts Office. The weekend in August 2019 was attended by large crowds from both inside and outside the county of Laois. Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 festival weekend, like lots of other events, was postponed until 2021.

To bridge the gap between the 2019 and the 2021 festivals, Hilliard Press, based in Tennessee, USA, extended their generosity to the Festival in offering to publish an Anthology of ten winning short stories, which will be launched at the 2021 Power of Words Festival. All profits from the sale of the anthology will go towards funding the festival.



"We are humbled by this very generous gesture by Dr. Mark Hilliard and all at Hilliard Press. The writing competition gives the opportunity to ten writers of previously unpublished stories, to have their stories published in this very special anthology", said Festival founder, Amanda Kelly.



You can also follow the festival on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter



Minister O'Brien publishes the Dormant Accounts Action Plan 2021

Joe O'Brien, TD, Minister of State at the Department of Rural and Community Development, announced funding of over €51 million from the Dormant Accounts Fund to address disadvantage right across the country.

Money in the Dormant Accounts Fund can be used to fund measures that address economic, social, or educational disadvantage and to support people with a disability. The 2021 Action Plan allocates funding of €51 million to 46 measures to be delivered across 10 Government Departments.

Some examples of measures approved for funding include:

- €6.4 million for investment in sports in disadvantaged communities and for persons with disabilities.**
- €6 million for youth and community justice services aimed at countering the influence and impacts of crime on young people and in communities.**
- €2.3 million to support social enterprises to address social and economic disadvantage.**
- €1 million for a youth initiative to provide young people with the soft skills needed to improve employability.**

Launching the Action Plan today, Minister O'Brien said:

" I am delighted to launch the Dormant Accounts Action Plan 2021 which provides funding of over €51 million to help address disadvantage right across Ireland.



The 46 measures approved for funding in 2021 will be implemented across Government and will help to address a diverse range of issues such as long term unemployment, youth disadvantage, migrant integration and probation supports to prevent re-offending."

The Minister continued:

" Dormant Accounts funding makes a real difference to individuals and communities right across the country. The Navan Travellers Workshop, It's Good to Talk Counselling Service in Wexford and the Lucan Disability Action Group are examples of two organisations that recently received support from the Dormant Accounts Fund through the COVID-19 Stability Fund.

Dormant Accounts Funding is helping vulnerable individuals, supporting social inclusion, and strengthening our communities. The 2021 Action Plan being published today will help ensure that we can continue to support those who need it most during these challenging times.

The Dormant Accounts Fund Action Plan 2021 is available to download at:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/769773-dormant-accounts-fund-annual-actions-plans-and-reports/>

IPB Pride of Place Awards 2020



IPB Pride of Place Awards is an all-island competition that acknowledges and celebrates the work that communities are doing all over the island of Ireland. In September, a trio of Mountmellick organisations came together to formulate a coordinated trinity to illustrate the creativity that runs through the people of Mountmellick. While each group has a different and unique remit, purpose and membership, the combined efforts of all have enhanced and contributed to the creative sphere of activity and sense of place for all those who live and work in our town.

Mountmellick Development Association houses the Mountmellick Embroidery Museum, Webmill Mountmellick, and the cutting-edge kitchens. Mountmellick Community Arts Centre is a state-of-the-art facility for artistic expression and appreciation. We at Yarn Bombing Mountmellick harness our textiles heritage in a 21st century manner. There is no doubt that our town is creatively unique.

The 3 groups spent hours together, working on a wonderful 100 page presentation, rich in visuals for the entry.



Paddy Buggy
Laois Secretariat Member &
Manager of MDA, Mountmellick





This culminated in a meeting with several judges who had reflected on the entry, questioning representatives from the 3 groups in a very detailed manner

What made this trifold submission so compelling is that the 3 initiatives fulfil and reflect the continuing cultural development of Mountmellick. They synergy of our 3 initiatives is so progressive. It was clear that our attachment to our town translates to the community feeling a sense of always having a place where you can express yourself and belong.

The 2020 IPB Pride of Place Awards Ceremony took place on Saturday 21st of November at 7p,m, hosted by Marty Morrissey.

While Mountmellick's entry was not in the winners circle on the night, you can be assured that the 3 groups put their utmost into portraying our town as the creative, innovative, resilient town it is.

Thanks to Laois County Council for all their help and encouragement with the entry.





Minister O'Brien launches Public Participation Network 2019 Annual Report

The Minister of State with responsibility for Community Development and Charities, Mr. Joe O'Brien TD, launched the 2019 Annual Report of the Public Participation Networks.

This is the fourth Annual Report on the Public Participation Networks (PPNs), which were established to facilitate active citizen participation in policymaking at local authority level. The report provides a positive reflection of the variety of work done as well as showing continued growth throughout the country.

Speaking about the launch of the annual report Minister O'Brien said:

" This report shows that PPNs are having the desired impact and have achieved a huge amount in the short space of time since they were founded in 2014. The report also shows that there were 15,599 voluntary groups registered with the Network in 2019. At a national level, 928 PPN representatives gave volunteer-led groups a voice on 424 local authority boards or committees. This clearly demonstrates that PPNs are growing in strength."

Regarding the increase in membership, Minister O'Brien added:

" These figures are a great indicator of the vibrancy and energy of the community and voluntary sector in Ireland, especially at a local level, and the role played by PPNs in local policy making and networking."



PPNs are continuing to have a positive relationship with local authorities and are collaborating on a number of projects. For example, they are raising awareness of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and influencing policy to assist in achieving them at a local level.

Other PPNs are using their member groups' experience to help local authorities improve accessibility for people with disabilities and dementia and to help people from marginalised communities to sit on local authority boards. The 2019 Annual Report highlights further examples of PPN activities and impacts.

Minister O'Brien said:

" These examples demonstrate the initiative and drive of PPN members, with activities ranging from contributing to local Strategic Policy Committees to holding events on matters such as community safety, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and rural policy. Several PPNs consulted with and welcomed asylum seekers, while others focussed on making public spaces accessible to people with disabilities. And this is only a small sample of the important ways in which they contribute to their localities."

PPNs thrive on the principle of community engagement. They regularly hold workshops and public consultations to facilitate this engagement which is making a tangible difference and strengthening communities around the country.



The commitment displayed by the PPN resource workers, support workers, secretariat members and the member groups is visible throughout the report and their value can be seen in the increased level of citizen participation.

In conclusion, the Minister also acknowledged the work that PPNs carried out during the COVID-19 outbreak:

" PPNs have been pivotal in organising the community response and ensuring that the needs of vulnerable people were met during this period of uncertainty. I am grateful for their work in this area and I am committed to make sure that the Public Participation Network in this country goes from strength to strength."

The report can be downloaded at:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/2c4a7a-public-participation-network-annual-reports/>

Launch of the Public Participation Networks Handbook



On November 19th, 2020, the Department of Rural and Community Development launched the Public Participation Networks Handbook.

The PPN Handbook was written following consultations to review the original PPN User Guide, which was last updated in May 2017. It gives guidance, support and, where necessary, clarity, for everyone involved with, or interested in PPNs. It also sets out the best practice now in place across PPNs in all 31 Local Authority areas.

As the PPNs continue to grow and change with the needs of their Member Groups and communities, the Handbook will also change with those needs. And so, the Handbook will be reviewed and updated regularly.

The PPN Handbook can be viewed on:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/9db5e3-ppn-handbook/>





Healthy Ireland
at your Library



Chair yoga with Daisy



Join Daisy on Zoom for a taster session on
Friday December 4th at 11am

Contact mountmellicklibrary@laoiscoco.ie to register your interest.
Places limited





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VENUE: PORTLAOISE RUGBY CLUB, R32 YY89

STARTS: TUESDAY NIGHT NOV 17TH 6.45 PM

NO COSTS INVOLVED

TO BOOK A PLACE OR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CALL Philip 087 2043703



Contact Us

In accordance with official Government guidelines and restrictions, the Laois PPN Office is closed to the public. The team here continue to work hard behind the scenes.



You can contact Dan or Ailish by:

Email

ppn@laoiscoco.ie



Phone

057 86 65661 (Office)

Monday - Friday, 9am - 1.30pm

086 035 2107 (Dan)



Post

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