

Laois Public Participation



Network



May 2021 Newsletter

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"5 Ways to Wellbeing to Enjoy your Summer"

Dan Bergin, Laois PPN Resource Worker said "Summer conjures up images of long summer days, weeks off school for the kids, sunshine and family holidays. It can also be a source of stress and anxiety for some. To help our members this summer, Laois PPN have organised an online workshop on **5 Ways to Wellbeing to Enjoy your Summer.**"



The workshop will explore:

- **What mental health and wellbeing is.**
- **What are the risk and protective factors to mental health and wellbeing during the summer months.**
- **How you can use the Five Ways to Wellbeing as a helpful and positive coping strategy during the summer months.**



Finola Colgan
Development Officer, Mental Health Ireland

The facilitator will be **Finola Colgan**, who is the **Development Officer with Mental Health Ireland**. The workshop will take place on **Monday 31st May from 7.00pm - 8.00pm via Zoom**.

The workshop is **fully booked**. Thanks to all those who registered their interest.





Laois Public Participation Network

Notice of Election

Laois Public Participation Network gives notice of its intention to conduct elections from amongst its membership for the following positions which will become vacant:

**LCDC (Local Community Development Committee)
Community Representative x 2 Seats**

LCDCs have oversight and responsibility for local development and community related funding in their county.

LCDC meetings take place on the 3rd Wednesday of each month (except August) at 11:30am. Any person put forward if successfully elected must be available to attend these meetings.

For further information on the LCDC, please see the link below:

<https://laois.ie/departments/community/lcdc/>



Laois Public Participation Network

Election Nomination Form

**Laois PPN are seeking 2 x Community Reps for the LCDC.
Each Laois PPN Community Pillar Member Group may only nominate
1 candidate.**

**The completion of this form nominates a candidate to stand
election as:**

- **Laois PPN Community Representative on the LCDC**

Notes:

- **The nominating group MUST be a registered member of Laois PPN under the Community Pillar.**
- **The nominee must be a registered member of the nominating group.**
- **Each Group may only nominate 1 Candidate.**
- **The elections will take place online.**

**An email confirmation for your nomination will be issued to the
proposer and to the nominee.**

**Deadline for receipt of nominations is 5.00pm, Sunday, 6th June
2021.**

Link for nomination form:

<https://forms.gle/38yLhqr8rEZpXTvf7>



Programme 2021



Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, and Minister of State with responsibility for Community Development and Charities, Joe O'Brien TD, announced €4.5 million to support community groups impacted by COVID-19.

The 2021 Community Enhancement Programme (CEP) will provide small grants designed to assist in the reopening of facilities such as community centres, men's and women's sheds, parish halls and youth centres.

This iteration of the CEP will provide:

- grants towards projects or equipment enhancing facilities (similar to previous years) and
- one-off grants towards costs associated with reopening of a facility or the sustainability of a facility.

Who is eligible to apply?

Any not-for-profit community or voluntary group can apply.

Commercial organisations and individuals are not eligible for funding.

What projects are eligible for funding?

The following provides a non-exhaustive list of projects that could receive funding under the programme:

- **Development / renovation of community centres**
- **Once off maintenance of premises**
- **Community amenities**
- **Development of youth clubs or facilities**
- **Development of sports / recreation facilities**
- **Improvements to town parks and common areas and spaces**
- **CCTV equipment**
- **Public realm improvements**

- **Streetscaping**
- **Development of play / recreation spaces**
- **Energy efficiency type projects**
- **Purchase of equipment**
- **Adaptations or equipment needed as a result of COVID-19**

Separately, for this iteration of the **CEP** grants are available for costs associated with reopening of a facility or the sustainability of the facility.

These include costs such as utility bills, etc... To ensure appropriate monitoring and governance, the Department is stating that only costs falling due for payment in 2021 are eligible.

Target Groups

This funding is targeted towards enhancing community facilities for individuals and communities that are impacted by disadvantage as identified in the LERP.

Application Forms and Guidelines can be downloaded at:

<https://laois.ie/wp-content/uploads/Community-Enhancement-Programme-2021-Application-Form.pdf>

<https://laois.ie/wp-content/uploads/Community-Enhancement-Programme-2021-Guidelines.pdf>

For further information, contact Rose Doolin, Community Development,
Telephone: **057 86 64206**
or email rdoolin@laoiscoco.ie

The closing date for receipt of applications is Friday 11th June 2022 at 4.00pm. Please ensure that all documentation required to complete the application is included, otherwise this may render your application invalid.

The application process for the CEP is administered by Laois Local Community Development Committee (LCDC).

The Town & Village Renewal Scheme

2021

The **Town & Village Renewal Scheme 2021** funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development, is part of a package of national and local support measures to rejuvenate rural towns and villages throughout Ireland. The **2021 Scheme** will place particular emphasis on projects supporting remote working and enhancing town centre living as outlined in "**Our Rural Future - Ireland's Rural Development Policy 2021-2025.**" The **Town and Village Scheme** will support these objectives and will encourage more people to return confidently to town and village centres to work, shop and socialise. The maximum grant available in 2021 will increase to €500,000 to permit projects of additional scale to be funded. Projects that support the economic and social recovery of our town and villages in response to COVID-19 will continue to be supported.

The **2021 Scheme** will be targeted at two categories of Towns / Villages as follows:

Category 1: Towns and Villages with a population of up to 5,000

Category 2: Towns with a population of 5,001 to 10,000

Larger towns with a population of up to 15,000 people may be eligible where the application is of a high quality and outlines a strong need for the investment, good value for money and positive outcomes that will have a substantial impact on the town. The inclusion of these towns is being introduced on a trial basis in 2021 and will be reviewed.

Grant Levels

For the **2021 Scheme**, the minimum grant which is available is €20,000. The maximum level of grant funding available is being raised to €500,000 in respect of one application from each Local Authority. A maximum of €250,000 will apply in respect of 2 applications and €100,000 in respect of 4 applications.

In light of the ongoing challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, the maximum grant level has been set at 90% of the total cost of a project under **the Town and Village Renewal Scheme**. The remaining 10% match funding must be contributed by the Local Authority and /or the Community and / or Philanthropic contributions - this can take the form of 5% cash contribution (minimum level) and 5% in-kind contribution (maximum level).

Project Development Measure:

A new Project Development Measure (up to €50,000) is being introduced this year. This Measure is being introduced on a trial basis in response to requests from Local Authorities for such an intervention. The new Project Development Measure is similar in nature to the **Category 2** projects under the **Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF)**. The purpose of this measure is to assist Local Authorities to contribute to a pipeline of significant, well, developed projects which might be subsequently progressed to construction stage, subject to the availability of further funding.

The approval of funding under this category does not automatically guarantee future support under **the Town & Village Renewal Scheme** for delivery of the emerging project - the resulting projects need to be submitted as normal under the competitive **Town & Village Renewal Process**.

See the link below for Town & Village Renewal Scheme Outline and Town & Village Renewal Scheme Expression of Interest Application Form:

<https://laois.ie/departments/community/2020-town-and-village-renewal-scheme/>

Closing date - All Expression of Interest should be received no later than **4pm on Friday 4th June 2021**, by post or email

to

emoore@laoiscoco.ie

Competition

The Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, has announced the return of the **SuperValu TidyTowns Competition**.

The iconic competition was cancelled in 2020, for -the first time in over 60 years - due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

But special arrangements have now been put in place to ensure the return of the competition this year, with the overall winners due to be announced before the end of the year.

The **2021 SuperValu TidyTowns Competition** will take place in the same format as previous years, albeit with a specific emphasis on electronic entry and remote adjudication of each town's entry.

Groups should continue to adhere to public health guidelines as they have done so remarkably well since the onset of the Pandemic.

The health and safety of volunteers continues to be paramount.

It is acknowledged that volunteers have not been able to deliver on all of the plans that they may have had for their towns, and the competition adjudicators will be mindful of this fact when assessing entries.

At the same time, many groups have still been very active and the standard of competition is expected to be high again this year amongst the almost 1,000 TidyTowns groups around the country.

Above all, staging the competition this year is a recognition of the extraordinary contribution volunteers continue to make to their communities, even during the Pandemic itself.

For this reason, Minister Humphreys has introduced a new award category aimed at groups that have continued to serve and look after their communities despite the difficulties posed by COVID-19.

The Minister has also introduced a special prize for young people, which was committed to under Our Rural Future - the Government's ambitious new strategy for Rural Ireland.

Minister Humphreys announced a €1 million fund in December 2020 to further support the TidyTowns groups across the country.

Further details on the competition and access to supporting resources are available at:

www.tidytowns.ie

Create and The Model Artist Residency Award: Open Call



Create and The Model invite expressions of interest for an Artist Residency Award from **collaborative socially engaged artists who have first-hand experience of displacement and / or are shaped by histories of intergenerational migration.** For this residency, candidates may or may not self-identify as refugee, migrant or otherwise through lived experience and / or second generational memories.

The residency takes place at The Model in Sligo (The award offers accommodation at The Model, which is a key part of the award) and provides opportunities for research, exchange, networking and learning and is aimed at a professional artist who is interested in developing or consolidating their collaborative / socially engaged arts practice. The residency runs over four weeks in September 2021.

The residency is funded through the Arts Council of Ireland's Artist in the Community Scheme, which is managed by Create. It is supported by Sligo Arts Office and is offered through a partnership between Create and The Model. Artists must be based in the Republic of Ireland to be eligible for this opportunity.

Expressions of Interest are due before 28th June at 5pm.

<https://www.create-ireland.ie/projects/subpage/residencies/create-and-the-model-artist-residency/>

Volunteers from a range of organisations in Laois gathered to help launch the new Laois Volunteer Centre. Award-winning volunteers were among those who gathered at Fitzmaurice Plaza in Portlaoise's Old Fort Quarter with Laois County Council Cathaoirleach Catherine Fitzgerald to help get the new service off the ground.

Laois PPN represented by Resource Worker, Dan Bergin were delighted to be part of the launch of the Laois Volunteer Centre.

The launch of the independent service took place during what is National Volunteering Week, which runs from May 18th to 23rd.

The Laois Volunteering Centre, fronted by Laois woman, Caitriona Ryan from Ballyfin, will help people who want to volunteer in their community to find suitable volunteer roles and will help local non-profit organisations to recruit volunteers. Ms Ryan was recently appointed as the new manager of Laois Volunteer Centre and is looking forward to the centre becoming a 'one-stop-shop' for volunteerism in Laois. "I am so delighted to be the manager of this new Laois Volunteer Centre," commented Ms Ryan. "This is a very exciting time for Laois and I greatly look forward to working with people and organisations who want to volunteer in Laois and connecting them for volunteering opportunities for the benefit of the individual and their communities".



The aims of Laois Volunteer Centre are:

- to promote the value of volunteering and civic responsibility and to increase the range and quality of volunteering; and
- to increase access to volunteering by offering a support service to the public and volunteering involving organisations (VIOs);
- and to carry on these charitable purposes for the benefit of the inhabitants of Co Laois and its environs.

Conor Ganly is the chairperson of the new Laois Volunteer Centre Board and commented that it's great to see the months of work preparing for the set-up of this centre coming to fruition. "Great work has been done in relation to volunteering in Laois. This was in no small way thanks to the late Anne Goodwin and the work done by Laois Partnership and local volunteer organisations such as Tidy Towns. "However, with this new dedicated volunteer service, headed up by manager Catriona Ryan, we will have a dedicated space with staff resources to focus on making volunteerism a success here in Laois. Having a dedicated centre will help to develop an environment and set of support structures that facilitates the highest standards in Laois", said Mr Ganly.



Mr Ganly said the new centre has been made possible with thanks to the invaluable funding from the Department of Rural and Community Development under an initiative spearheaded by Minister of State at the Department of Rural and Community Development, Joe O'Brien.

He also paid tribute to the vital contribution of Volunteer Ireland for their assistance. Mr Ganly also thanked the Board Members for their work. They are: Allen Boyle (Secretary), Catherine Corbett (Treasurer), Pauline Flanagan (Director) and Georgina Ireland (Director).

For local organisations that involve volunteers, Laois Volunteer Centre will advertise their volunteering vacancies and provide free volunteer referral service. If you are a volunteer or are an organisation who would like to register with Laois Volunteer Centre, please either download the 'I-Vol' app on your phone or visit

www.volunteerlaois.ie

or check out 'Volunteer Laois' on Facebook and Instagram to sign up today.

**For further information contact Caitriona Ryan, Manager, Laois Volunteer Centre at 087 249 9659
Email: caitriona@volunteerlaois.ie**





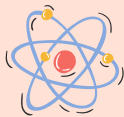
Active Parks 2021

Laos County Council is co-ordinating the continuation of the Active Parks Programme for 2021 in partnership with local exercise instructors to provide a varied programme of fun outdoor physical activity sessions, midweek for adults of all ages and weekend sessions for families.



- **Active Parks Programme starting Wednesday 9th June 2021 - 4 week programme in Portlaoise.**
- **Midweek sessions offered on Monday's and Wednesday's for adults of all ages and abilities. Location is the Public Plaza adjacent to Laois County Council.**
- **Weekend sessions offered on Saturday's and Sunday's for families with children over 5 years of age. Location is Pairc an Phobail, Portlaoise.**
- **Activities are FREE for participants.**
- **Places are limited and participants must register in advance for the 4 week programme. Please email sports@laoiscoco.ie or telephone 057 86 64058**

Midlands Science



This is an exciting new initiative that Midlands Science is running this year called Science Communities. This project aims to create dialogue and discussion between members of the community in the Midlands and those involved in science and public policy.

We are looking for members of the public to get involved. You do not need to have a science background or have any interaction with STEM in your day-to-day life to take part. We are looking for a broad range of people from the Midlands.

Participants will be invited to attend four public forums (online). These forums will run during August, September, October and November (one per month) and will cover a range of topics such as:

- **Understanding science and evidence**
- **Food and alcohol**
- **Health and Medicines**
- **Viruses and Vaccines**



For more information email:
outreach@midlandscience.ie

Portlaoise Community and Family Resource Centre



*Portlaoise Community And Family
Resource Centre are hosting a FREE
online event for parents and caregivers*



**Aisling Murray - Owner
and founder of Laois
Play Therapy**

Healthy Boundaries And Emotional Regulation

***Tuesday 15th June At 7:30pm.**

***To Book a place contact 0876425949 or email
eburke@portlaoisefrc.ie**

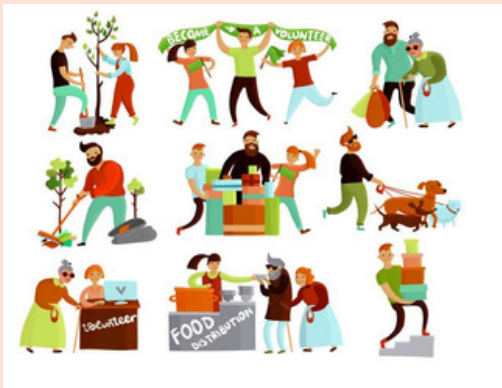
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National Volunteering Week 2021

National Volunteering Week 2021 took place from Monday 17th May to Sunday 23rd May.

Thanks to all the Volunteers in Laois who gave their time, effort and skill to help their local community groups.




Happy Africa Day

2021



Africa Day which falls on 25th May is the annual commemoration of the foundation of the African Union, which took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 25th May, 1963.



The Laois African Support Group shared celebrations from previous years on their social media.

Laois African Support Group will be celebrating virtually **Laois Africa Day** from 14th - 19th June 2021. Laois African Support Group welcome videos / images of your culture and heritage in any form through dance, music and art.



Email: laoisafrika@gmail.com



Laois spot in Lonely Planet Top Irish undiscovered gems



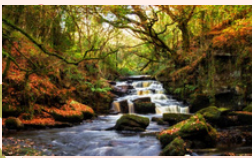
Laois has made it to the Lonely Planet list of the top eight hidden treasures in Ireland for visitors.

The beautiful Slieve Bloom Mountains has been chosen as part of a prestigious list for people to visit now that staycationing is the way forward for 2021.

Sony Mobile teamed up with travel experts, Lonely Planet, to reveal the top 8 unfrequented hidden gems across Ireland for 2021 travel inspiration.



Slieve Bloom Mountains, Co. Laois



Glenbarrow Waterfall



Ridge of Capard

Tom Hall from Lonely Planet, said "The pandemic caused us all to pause and re-evaluate how we travel, and now is the perfect time to update that bucket list with some of these under-the-radar places you might have overlooked in the past."

They will publish a photo series revealing the top less-frequented destinations in Ireland for 2021 so travellers can escape the mundane of lockdown once measures have been lifted and reignite the sense of wonder and discovery - including the beautiful Slieve Bloom Mountains.

The list is as follows:

- **Mizen Head Cliffs, Co. Cork, Ireland**
- **Lackan Strand, Co. Mayo, Ireland**
- **Sky Garden, Russagh, Co. Cork, Ireland**
- **Birr Castle, Co. Offaly, Ireland**
- **Garnish Island, Bantry Bay, Ireland**
- **Slieve Bloom Mountains, Co. Laois, Ireland**
- **Sliabh Liag (Slieve League) Cliffs, Co. Donegal**
- **Cobh, Co. Cork, Ireland**



Contact Us



In line with the current Government restrictions, the Public Participation Network (PPN) Office is closed. We are continuing to work remotely and are contactable during office hours.



Email: ppn@laoiscoco.ie

Phone: 086 035 2107 (Dan)



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Portlaoise, Co. Laois**

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