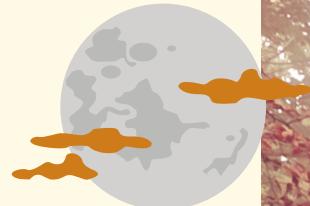


HALLOWEEN

Laois Public Participation Network October 2021 Newsletter



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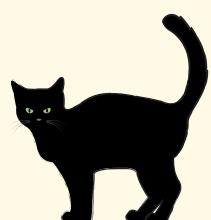
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Page 1

Heritage Walk at Ballyadams Castle

On a fresh Saturday morning, Laois PPN were delighted to hold a "Heritage Walk at Ballyadams Castle". The event took place on Saturday 2nd October.

The event was a walking tour to explore the history and sites at Ballyadams Castle, its associated Medieval Church and Holy Well.

The tour of the site was led by Laois Archaeologist and Chair of the Laois Heritage Society, Sean Murray. Sean told attendees of the history of Ballyadams Castle through the centuries, pointed out key defence features such as the double murder hole and told tales of the key characters who had occupied the castle through the years.



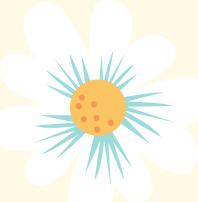
Dan Bergin, Resource Worker with Laois PPN, said "Ballyadams Castle near the village of Ballylinan in County Laois is a hidden gem of heritage as it is located on private land. Laois PPN were delighted to be able to give a tour to PPN member groups of this heritage site following permission from the owners - the Butler Family.

Attendees were delighted to be given access to this hidden gem and learn of its rich history. During the centuries, Ballyadams Castle has been an O' Moore Stronghold, an Anglo Norman Fortification, part of the Silken Thomas Rebellion and home to the brutal John Thomas Bowen, AKA John of the Pike. It is also one of the tallest man-made structures in Laois at six storeys high with views from the top all the way to Athy."

The day finished with tea and sweet treats for attendees at Stradbally Fayre.



Pictures on the day taken by local photographer Michael Scully.



Mick Dowling Memorial Walk



On a clear Autumn afternoon, Laois PPN held a memorial walk in remembrance of a dear friend and Laois PPN Secretariat Member Mick Dowling.



Mick who passed away in 2019, was a proud Laois man and a champion of the Slieve Bloom Mountains.



The memorial walk took place on Sunday 17th October and was lead by Mick's great nephew Shane Dowling. The memorial walk started at the Ridge of Capard. Along the way, Shane shared stories from Mick's rich life and knowledge and love of the Slieve Bloom that Mick had passed on to Shane.



Shane led the group across the Ridge of Capard with its spectacular views over Laois and the surrounding counties, across the boardwalk and down into "the cones", where at one time, eight families lived in the Lost Village.

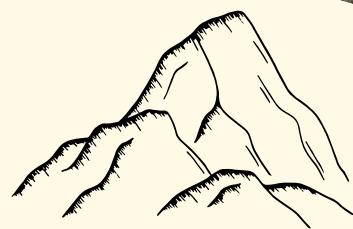
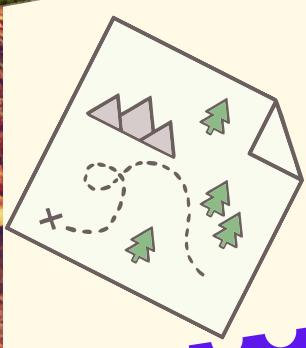


Maureen Culleton of the Maureen Culleton Dance Group treated attendees to a dance in honour of Mick, who was a great lover of dance and cheile. The walk meandered down into the wooded valley past the old mill and back to the carpark.



Dan Bergin, Laois PPN Resource Worker said "It was fantastic to honour the memory of the late great Mick Dowling today. Thanks to Shane Dowling for leading the walk. The Dowling family and friends were delighted to listen to Shane and share stories of Mick and his many passions - the Slieve Blooms, flora and fauna, history and heritage, dancing and hurling.

Photographs taken by local photographer Michael Scully.



Foraging Ramble at Roundwood House

On a bright and sunny Autumn afternoon, Laois PPN were delighted to hold a "Foraging Ramble at Roundwood House". The event took place on Sunday 24th October.



PPN Member Groups rambled through the grounds of Roundwood House, Mountrath and discovered the wild treasures Ireland has to offer in Autumn with wild food expert Mary Bulfin aka 'Wild Food Mary'.



Roundwood House is surrounded by native Irish woodland.

Attendees followed the meandering path of the Perimeter Walk around the grounds and enjoyed their little patch of this unique ecosystem while foraging with Wild Food Mary.



Attendees were delighted to learn from Mary about hedgerow

herbals, fungi forays, wild edibles and natural remedies that are

there to be foraged and enjoyed.

Dan Bergin, Laois PPN Resource Worker said, "Thanks to Mary for showing our PPN members how they could pick a hedgerow, a field or a wood in their locality and enjoy the bounty that nature has to offer."

The day finished with a packed lunch of locally sourced goodies supplied by Mary.



Pictures on the day taken by local photographer Denis Byrne.

Continued on Page 7

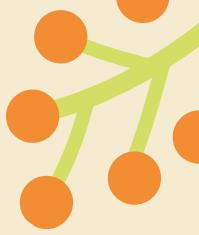


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National Digital Skills Training Programme for Older People



Active Retirement Ireland has partnered with Vodafone Ireland Foundation and ALONE to deliver a free, nationwide digital skills training programme over five years to more than 230,000 older people, with a total investment of €2 million.

The partnership initiative is aimed at bridging the worsening digital divide experienced by older people in Ireland - an issue that has been further exacerbated by the pandemic.

Research shows that one in four people in Ireland aged 60-74 and more than half of people aged 75 and older are not online. When looked at alongside the numbers of those older people who are online but lack basic digital skills, a staggering 65% of older people in Ireland face significant exclusions as more and more services and opportunities move online (Age Action, Digital Inclusion and an Ageing Population, October 2021).

A first of its kind in Ireland, the programme will see thousands of older people learning essential IT skills either through independent self-learning online, or a blend of in-person and online learning in their communities, empowering them to embrace the digital world with confidence.

The Vodafone Ireland Foundation's Hi Digital free online learning resource (www.hidigital.ie) makes it easy for people to start their digital skills journey today, with self-guided courses available in both English and Irish. The courses are designed to help older people enhance their daily life and include topics such as understanding smartphone features, keeping in touch through WhatsApp and social media, planning trips, researching interests and hobbies, shopping, entertainment and banking and online safety.



Continued on Page 9



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In early 2022, Active Retirement Ireland, in partnership with ALONE, will lead on a comprehensive programme of in-person classroom learning across the country through a network of community partners who will offer face to face mentoring and training so older people can develop their digital skills in a relaxed and supportive environment.

With 25,000 members, Active Retirement Ireland is engaging with older people themselves to champion and deliver the Hi Digital training at community level. Some 50 volunteer digital ambassadors will be trained by Vodafone digital trainers to deliver the Hi Digital training to their peers.

In addition, Active Retirement Ireland will link in with the nationwide network of public Vodafone broadband connection points throughout the country to provide group training and devices to users and ensure everyone has the opportunity to access the internet to learn online skills, even in the most remote locations.

Visit www.hidigital.ie and get started with Hi Digital online today, or register for group classes or one to one mentoring being rolled

**out in 2022 by emailing
hidigital@activeirl.ie
or by calling
1800 203 030**



Older people with existing digital skills who would like to become a volunteer digital ambassador and support others in their community are invited to please contact Active Retirement Ireland using the details above.

**For more information, please see
<https://activeirel.ie/hidigital/>**



Community & Voluntary Awards

2021 - Deadline Extended

Application Closing Date extended to Friday 19th

November 2021 at 4.00pm



NOMINATIONS CAN BE MADE
UNDER THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES

ARTS, CULTURE & HERITAGE

HEALTHY & ACTIVE COMMUNITY

CHILDREN & YOUTH

ENVIRONMENT

SOCIAL INCLUSION

AGE FRIENDLY

VOLUNTEER LAOIS COVID19 COMMUNITY RESPONSE AWARD

UNSUNG HERO

Applications are available on-line
or in paper format via Laois County Council,
Laois Public Participation Network or Laois Volunteer Centre.

For more information contact 057 86 64078
or email awards@laoiscoco.ie



volunteer centre
Ionad d'Obair Dheinreach Laois
LAOIS





YOU
CAN!

Healing Whispers

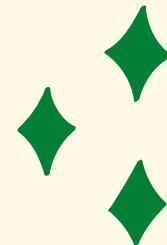
The launch of 'Healing Whispers' book and calendar took place on Sunday 3rd October at Bloom HQ in Mountrath.

The book was created by Liz Phelan, Lisa Doyle and Niamh Ryan and is dedicated to their dear friend Aine Purcell who unfortunately passed away earlier this year. The book contains affirmations and positive quotes along with photography.

All proceeds from the sale of the books and calendars will go to the Irish Motor Neurone Disease Association.

The books and calendars are available to purchase from:

- Crafts by Edwina - Mountrath
 - Nook & Cranny - Portlaoise
 - Allbooks & News - Portlaoise
- and online at
www.healingwhispers.ie



Photographs on the day by Alf Harvey



Creators: Liz Phelan,
Niamh Ryan
& Lisa Doyle



Continued on Page 12





Arts and Creative Charter for Older People



Age &
Opportunity

Have Your Say

Arts & Creative Charter
for Older People Survey

Contribute to the creation of Ireland's first Arts Charter
for the greater inclusion of older people in the arts.

The Charter will set out the arts sector's commitment to promoting the values and contributions of older people. We are committed to the participation of older people in the arts as artists, audiences, creators, critics, teachers and learners.

Join this important opportunity to have a say in what you think is vital to include in the Charter going forward, including

- Accessibility
- Employment
- Participation
- Policy
- Programming

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

You can pick up a copy of the survey at your local library or online here:

ageandopportunity.ie/arts-charter-survey/

To do the survey over the phone please call **085 822 1869** during office hours on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

The deadline for submitting the survey is **Monday 8th November**.

If you know of any participants that may not be able to access the survey online, please take a hard copy and share.



Independent Living Movement Ireland (ILMI)

Realising Article 29



Realising Article 29: Disabled Politicians and the Political System

ZOOM, Thursday 11th November 2021

3 - 4pm

Article 29 (a) of the UNCRPD calls on State parties to ensure that disabled people have "political rights and the opportunity to enjoy them on an equal basis with others" including the right to vote and be elected.

ILMI has some members who have been elected to office but why are there so few disabled politicians. What are the barriers that prevent disabled people from participating in political parties or seeking nominations to seek election? What could be done to bring about change so that disabled people are selected to run as candidates for political parties, elected and take on key political roles?

ILMI would like to bring together disabled activists to create a space to explore, discuss and develop a position paper to bring models of change to political parties in Ireland to realise Article 29 of the UNCRPD.

We are interested in hearing from all disabled people, including disabled people who are actively involved in politics or have sought election and what learning that they can bring into a collective discussion on making politics more inclusive.

To register, [email info@ilmi.ie](mailto:info@ilmi.ie)

Healthy Ireland Talks



Mindful Eating



Healthy Ireland
at your Library

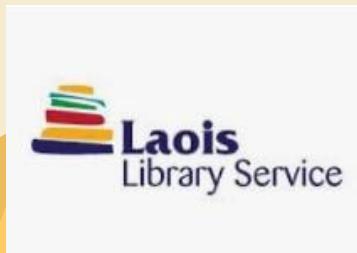
Have you ever eaten something you know you shouldn't be eating when you are
not even hungry?

If so this is the talk for you!

- This talk delves into when, how much and why we eat and the impact of these decisions on our health and eating habits.
- The talk will help you to understand your dietary habits and how to adjust them to keep you as healthy as possible.

Join Lorna from Glenville Nutrition on Tuesday 9th November at 6.30pm on zoom for this wonderful talk that will have us all thinking twice before we eat that cake!

Email mountmellicklibrary@laoiscoco.ie
or ring 057 8644572 to register



The Community Platform



COMMUNITY PLATFORM
CHALLENGING POVERTY & INEQUALITY



The Community Platform invites you to the online launch of

Principles for delivering a high quality, inclusive and accessible Public Childcare Model

Thursday 11th November @ 11:30

Register at:

www.eventbrite.ie

The Community Platform believes that the progressive delivery of a high quality, inclusive and accessible public childcare model is urgently needed. Lessons from the past, and reinforced by the Covid-19 pandemic, show the important role of the state in providing key public services and in ensuring universal access. A properly designed and delivered public childcare model can play an important role in addressing poverty and disadvantage. The Six Principles for a Public Childcare Model are:

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| 1. Child centred | 3. Investment | 5. Equality |
| 2. State responsibility | 4. Quality, inclusion and accessibility | 6. Decent working conditions |

Following the presentation of the Platform's Principles the launch will have speakers outlining their support for a public model of childcare from their perspective as parents, childcare providers and professionals. This includes:

- Community childcare provider - TBC
- Mick Kenny, Association of Childcare Professionals
- Vicky Wall, Waterford Women's Centre Childcare

A panel of speakers, including representatives from the community sector, trade unions and political parties will respond to these proposals and perspectives. The panel includes:

- Orla O'Connor - National Women's Council
- Dr Laura Bambrick - Irish Congress of Trade Unions
- Ivana Bacik TD - Labour
- Richard Boyd Barrett TD - People Before Profit
- Kathleen Funchion TD – Sinn Féin
- Jennifer Whitmore TD – Social Democrats

Anyone requiring Irish Sign Language contact communityplatform@eapn.ie

The event is online by zoom: A link will be sent to those who register closer to date of the launch.

The Community Platform

The Community Platform is an alliance of 32 national networks and organisations in the community and voluntary sector working to address poverty, social exclusion and inequality. The members of the Community Platform members are:

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| • Age Action Ireland | • Focus Ireland | • Migrant Rights Centre Ireland | • Safe Ireland |
| • All Together in Dignity (ATD) Ireland | • Immigrant Council of Ireland | • National Adult Literacy Agency | • Sign Language Interpreting Service |
| • Community Action Network | • Independent Living Movement Ireland | • National Collective of Community-based Women's Networks | • Simon Communities of Ireland |
| • Community Work Ireland | • Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed | • National Traveller Women's Forum | • TASC |
| • Cairde | • Irish Penal Reform Trust | • National Women's Council of Ireland | • Threshold |
| • Debt and Development Coalition | • Irish Refugee Council | • One Family | • Treoir |
| • European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) Ireland | • Irish Rural Link | • Pavee Point | • Vincentian Partnership for Justice |
| • Family Resource Centre National Forum | • Irish Traveller Movement | • Rape Crisis Network Ireland | • Women's Aid |

c/o EAPN Ireland, 100 North King Street, Smithfield, Dublin 7, Ireland

Email: communityplatform@eapn.ie Website: www.communityplatform.ie Twitter: @CommunityP_IRL

Midlands Louth Meath CHO Recovery Education

Wellbeing Workshops November 2021 Timetable

Free Online Modules Wellbeing Workshops

Midlands Louth Meath CHO8 Recovery Education



November Timetable



Workshop Title

Date & Time

Wells for Wellness and Other Tools	Monday 1st Nov, 2 pm to 4 pm
What is Co-production	Monday 8th Nov, 2 pm to 4 pm
Let's Talk Stigma in Mental Health	Monday 15th Nov, 2 pm to 4 pm
Let's Talk Recovery in About Mental Health	Monday 22nd Nov, 2 pm to 4 pm
Lets Talk About Pets and Wellbeing	Monday 29th Nov, 2 pm to 4 pm

- It is free to attend our courses
- Our courses are open to anyone (aged 18 and over) with an interest in mental health and wellbeing



Book your place at one of our online modules:
<http://mlmrecoveryed.eventbrite.com>

or

Contact [with any queries or to book a place:](#)



Email: Mary@mentalhealthireland.ie
Derek@mentalhealthireland.ie



Phone: 086 464 3562
087 284 0901

Midlands Louth Meath
Community Healthcare
Organisation



Follow us online:



Midlands Louth Meath CHO
Recovery Education



Seirbhís Sláinte
Níos Fearr
á Forbairt
Building a
Better Health
Service



Mental Health
Ireland



Rethink Ireland: Rural Recovery Fund

This one year fund was created with support from Google.org and The Department of Rural and Community Development under the Dormant Accounts Fund. The fund aims to support innovative not-for-profit organisations that are working to increase their impact in supporting rural communities to recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and build resilience for future challenges. The fund will support services and groups to build capacity and knowledge as well as increasing their impact in their communities and across rural Ireland.

The fund will focus on projects which rise to the challenge of;

- Re-skilling / Upskilling/ diversifying the labour force,**
- Economic and social inclusion of marginalised communities**
- Job creation in rural areas (including supporting social enterprises to grow their operations)**
- Equal access to education for rural communities**
- Digital inclusion for all, (closing the digital divide)**

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**RETHINK
IRELAND**

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Up to 5 awardees will receive a package of supports worth a maximum of €90,000 each in total. This will include:

- **Cash Grants of up to a maximum of €80,000**
- **A place on a 6-month Rethink Ireland Accelerator Programme**
- **Non-financial supports worth €10,000 tailored to the specific needs of each project.**

Who can Apply?

We invite applications from:

- **Organisations that have a not-for-profit legal form, eg: A company limited by guarantee / A co-operative/ Charity/ other not-for-profit legal forms**
- **Projects must be based in a rural setting or aim to significantly improve their impact in rural areas**
- **The applicant must not be a public body. Collaborations with public bodies, where the main applicants(s) are community or third sector projects, can be considered for funding.**

Applications are open from Thursday 21st 2021 until 5pm Friday 19th November 2021

**All queries relating to the fund should be sent to
ruralrecovery@rethinkireland.ie**

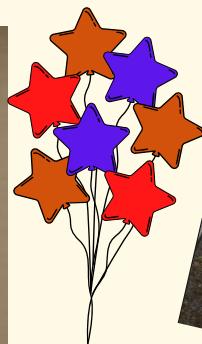
CONGRATS



Congratulations!

Congratulations to Laois PPN Secretariat Member and Secretary of Portlaoise Tidy Towns Vincent Booth and his colleagues on the Portlaoise Tidy Towns Committee for helping Portlaoise to be awarded first place in the National IBAL League.

Well done to all involved!



**Vincent Booth
Laois PPN Secretariat Member &
Secretary of Portlaoise Tidy Towns**





We are delighted to welcome all borrowers back into our libraries, with PC usage and study spaces now available in most branches. In order to comply with social distancing requirements, we will have a reduced capacity so please check with your local library or visit:

**<https://www.laois.ie/departments/libraries/>
for more details.**



Laois Libraries has a very active social media presence on Facebook, Instagram, Youtube and Twitter. Follow along for updates on all library events, watch videos of our storytimes, baby book clubs, crafts and book reviews and much more.

We have lots of free online events coming up over the next month, with details below:

Online Library Events November 2021			
	Event	When	Description
	Spanish Classes with Aurelie	Saturdays in November at 10:30am on Zoom	As part of the Europe Direct Centre in Portlaoise Library, tutor Aurelie will deliver free Spanish Classes. Whether you're planning that holiday to Spain or just want to embrace the challenge of learning a new language, this is the perfect opportunity for beginners to start their Spanish language journey. To register contact Portlaoise Library on 057 8622333 or email at portlaoise.library@laoisco.ie .
	Baby Sign Classes with Clever Little Handies	Weds, 3 rd , 10 th , 17 th & 24 th Nov at 10:00am on Zoom	As part of Laois & Offaly Libraries Parenting Support series, Clever Little Handies will deliver this 4-week online baby sign class for parents with babies from newborn upwards. The course will include nursery rhymes, songs and poems with ISL signs. Click the link to register: https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/baby-sign-classes-with-clever-little-handies
	The Benefits of Music Therapy with Cliona McGarrigle, Music Therapist	Weds, 3 rd Nov at 7:30pm on Zoom	As part of Laois & Offaly Libraries Parenting Support series, Cliona will explain what Music Therapy is, its uses and benefits, answer any questions and give a practical demonstration of music therapy in action. Click the link to register: https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/the-benefits-of-music-therapy or call Portlaoise Library on 057 8622333.





Raising Resilient Children with Dr. Mary O'Kane, Parenting & Early Childhood Education Expert

Thurs, 4th Nov at 7:30pm on Zoom

As part of Laois & Offaly Libraries Parenting Support series, Dr. Mary O'Kane offers practical advice on how we can best support our children in becoming more resilient and having greater confidence in their own abilities. Click the link to register: <https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/raising-resilient-children> or call Portlaoise Library on 057 8622333.

Kids Science Workshop with the Nutty Scientist

Sat, 6th Nov at 11:00am and 12:00pm

Join the Nutty Scientist for some fabulous experiments online to celebrate Science Week. Pick up your free science kit from Portarlington Library. Suitable for ages 6-12. Book your place before 3rd Nov by emailing portarlingtonlibrary@laoiscoco.ie or call 057 8643751.

Hunger Games – How mindful eating can help your health and waistline

Tues, 9th Nov at 6:30pm on Zoom

Ever eat something you know you shouldn't be eating when you are not even hungry? Or wonder if your portion sizes are too big? This webinar delves into when, how much and why we eat and the impact of these decisions on our health and eating habits. The talk will help you to understand your dietary habits and how to adjust them to keep you as healthy as possible. To book your place, email mountmellicklibrary@laoiscoco.ie or call 057 8644572.

Social Anxiety: Helping teenagers navigate the post-pandemic world with Helen Vaughan

Weds, 10th Nov at 7:30pm on Zoom

As part of Laois & Offaly Libraries Parenting Support series, Helen's workshop will provide support for parents who are dealing with teenagers that are feeling anxious after living through a pandemic. Click the link to register: <https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/social-anxiety>



		anxiety-helping-teenagers-navigate-the-post-pandemic-world or call Portlaoise Library on 057 8622333.
	Physical Activities in Teenagers and Keeping them Involved with Keith Begley, Sports Psychologist	Thurs, 11 th Nov at 7:30pm on Zoom As part of Laois & Offaly Libraries Parenting Support series, this webinar will provide tips and strategies for keeping teenagers engaged in sport and how we can prevent them from opting out. Click the link to register: https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/physical-activity-in-teenagers-and-how-to-keep-them-engaged or call Portlaoise Library on 057 8622333.
	Managing Fussy Eating for your School-Aged Child with Caroline O'Connor, Solid Start	Weds, 17 th Nov at 7:30pm on Zoom As part of Laois & Offaly Libraries Parenting Support series, dietitian Caroline will give advice and guidance on how to improve your feeding situation if you struggle with what and how to feed your child. Click the link to register: https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/managing-fussy-eating-for-your-school-aged-child or call Portlaoise Library on 057 8622333.
	First Aid for Parents with Parent First Aid	Thurs, 18 th Nov at 7:30pm on Zoom As part of Laois & Offaly Libraries Parenting Support series, Parent First Aid will cover and demonstrate the two main lifesaving topics: Infant & Child CPR and How to Deal with a Choking Infant/Child. Other medical emergencies will also be discussed along with a Q&A session. Click the link to register: https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/first-aid-for-parents or call Portlaoise Library on 057 8622333.

	Everyday Life in Ireland in the 1920s with Michael Moylan, Irish History Live	Thurs, 18 th Nov at 8:00pm on Zoom	Join historian Michael Moylan from Irish History Live as he speaks about Everyday Life in Ireland in the 1920s. Email wlawler@laoiscoco.ie to register your place.
	Future Proofing Our Brains	Tues, 23 rd Nov at 6:30pm on Zoom	Alzheimers and dementia impact most people in some shape or form in today's world. Early prevention is key and Catherine reviews in detail the importance of brain health at all life stages. Practical daily tips are covered to help you enhance your cognitive function. Catherine talks through why brain health is so important and the essential practical steps you can take to enhance your cognitive function now and future proof your health. To book your place, email mountmellicklibrary@laoiscoco.ie or call 057 8644572.
	The Life & Works of Patrick Kavanagh with John MacKenna	Tues, 23 rd Nov at 7:00pm on Zoom	Join author and lecturer John MacKenna in a discussion on the life and works of the poet Patrick Kavanagh. To book a place, email mountmellicklibrary@laoiscoco.ie or call 057 8644572.
	Bully Proof Kids: Developing Resilience & Social Skills with Stella	Thurs, 25 th Nov at 7:30pm on Zoom	As part of Laois & Offaly Libraries Parenting Support programme, this talk will focus on how we can help children tap into their inner strength so they feel able to deflect any negative attention. Covering



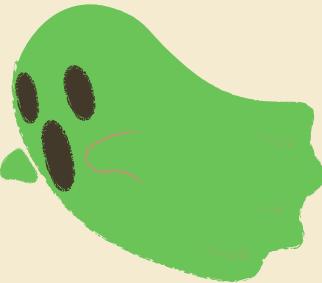
O'Malley, Psychotherapist

all aspects of cyberbullying and bullying, parents who attend will feel more informed about the way bullies work and so more able to anticipate and influence future behavior. Click the link to register: <https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/bully-proof-kids-developing-resilience-social-skills> or call Portlaoise Library on 057 8622333.



**The team at Laois PPN would like to
wish all our Member Groups, our
colleagues and your families a spooky
and safe halloween.**

**TRICK
or
TREAT**





CONTACT US

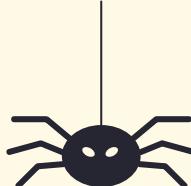
The Laois Public Participation Network (PPN) office has reopened, Monday to Friday by appointment only.

We are also contactable by email and phone.

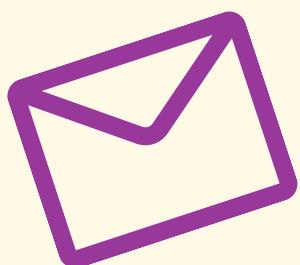
Email: ppn@laoiscoco.ie



Phone: **057 86 65661 (Office)**
086 035 2107 (Dan)



Postal Address: Laois Public Participation Network
JFL Avenue, Lyster Square
Portlaoise, Co. Laois



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