



Laois Public Participation Network

April 2023 Newsletter

Living Well Expo [Page 2-4](#)

National PPN Worker's Retreat [Page 5-7](#)

Portlaoise College Presentation [Page 8-9](#)

Funding Opportunities [Page 10-16](#)

**Portlaoise Tidy Towns Biodiversity
Action Plan 2023-2028 launch** [Page 17-18](#)

**Yarnbombing Mountmellick "End of Life Little
Hearts Initiative"** [Page 19](#)

Bealtaine Festival [Page 20](#)

Laois Intercultural Day [Page 21](#)

Laois Fleadh [Page 22](#)

Tidy Towns Awards [Page 23](#)

Contact Us [Page 24](#)



LIVING WELL EXPO



Dan Bergin (Laois PPN Resource Worker) and "chefs" Cllr John King, Cllr Paddy Bracken & Stephen Ring (Laois PPN Support Worker)

On Thursday 13th April, Laois PPN were one of 70 exhibitors at the Living Well Expo in Portlaoise College. The expo was run in conjunction with Healthy Laois and Age Friendly Laois.

The Expo was opened by Anna Mai McHugh, the Undisputed Queen of the National Ploughing Championship. Following the opening there was a wonderful performance by the Ukrainian Ladies Choir.

Attendees were then treated to a cooking demonstration by Cllrs John King and Paddy Bracken. Cllr King showed how to debone a chicken while Cllr Bracken made a delicious vegetable soup.



Guest Speaker Anna Mai McHugh and Dan Bergin (Laois PPN Resource Worker)



Laois PPN Resource Worker, Dan Bergin, said " Laois PPN were delighted to attend the Living Well Expo. With over 70 stalls, there was truly something for everybody!"

*Dan Bergin,
Laois PPN Resource Worker*



Photo Credit: Denis Byrne

*Dan Bergin (Laois PPN Resource Worker),
Emma O'Connor (Healthy Laois) & Cllr John King*

*Pictures by Pat Guilfoyle
& Denis Byrne*



NATIONAL PPN WORKER'S RETREAT



Representatives from the 31 PPNs across Ireland

On the 27th and 28th of April, Laois PPN joined Resource and Support Workers from PPNs across Ireland at the Hodson Bay in Athlone for the PPN Worker's Retreat. The 31 PPNs across Ireland represent 18,000 groups nationally.

Laois PPN's Dan Bergin and Stephen Ring were part of the sub-group that organised the retreat, which was a great success.



The National Retreat Sub Group, left to right:

Mags Whelan Kilkenny PPN Resource Worker, Muriel Tobin Waterford PPN Resource Worker, Ruth Smith Tipperary PPN Resource Worker, Bridie Costello Hynes Offaly PPN Resource Worker, Stephen Ring Laois PPN Support Worker, Alison dePaor Waterford PPN Support Worker, Dan Bergin Laois PPN Resource Worker, Mary McGirl Leitrim PPN Support Worker



Laois PPN Resource Worker, Dan Bergin, said " It was a pleasure for Stephen and I to be part of the organising group for this years PPN Workers Retreat. This was the first Retreat since pre-Covid. It was a great opportunity to share knowledge, ideas and best practice that benefits all PPNs. Laois PPN would like to thank the DRCD for their support for this event."



*Dan Bergin,
Laois PPN Resource Worker*

The retreat is an invaluable way for PPNs around the country to network and idea swap. Over the 2 days, there were talks by Michael Quirke, Brian Harvey and The Wheel's Tony Ward & Johnny Sheehan, as well as talks from individual PPNs.



Pictures by Jeff Harvey



PORTLAOISE COLLEGE PRESENTATION



On Thursday 20th April, Laois PPN's Dan Bergin attended a presentation to the students of Portlaoise College for the World of Work Programme.

During the programme, the students got to learn about the many departments of Laois County Council and the work of Laois PPN , which is the main link between Laois County Council and the hundreds of community groups in Laois.

At a thoroughly enjoyable concluding session held at the school on April 20, the students received Certificates of Achievement for completing the programme.



Teacher – Nicky Walsh, Rose Doolin (Community Section Laois Co Council), Jo Sayers (Business in the Community), Student – Nina Masiewicz, Anne Marie Kirrane (A/Administrative Officer, Community section) and Dan Bergin (Laois PPN)

Laois PPN Resource Worker, Dan Bergin, said "It was a pleasure to meet the Students of Portlaoise College and tell them of my varied career with the Council. I have been lucky enough to work within a number of different Departments within the Council, including Housing, Roads, Finance and finally my role within Laois PPN. Laois PPN is the main link between Laois County Council and the 100s of Community Groups in Laois. I have found my time with Laois PPN very fulfilling both from a work and personal perspective. Through my work with Laois PPN I have had the opportunity to be involved in supporting Community Groups through the unprecedented times that Covid brought and been lucky enough to see many of their projects come to life through funding opportunities they became aware of through Laois PPN. On behalf of Laois PPN I wish the Students of Portlaoise College all the best in their future studies and career paths."



*Dan Bergin,
Laois PPN Resource
Worker*

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Community Centres Investment Fund



€20 million available for the construction of new Community Centres

The new fund builds on the highly successful 2022 initiative, which delivered an investment of over €45 million to renovate and upgrade over 850 projects the length and breadth of the country.

The Community Centres Investment Fund - New Builds Measure is for new build community centres with grant funding of at least €1 million available per project.

The projects must have all the necessary permissions and consents in place (e.g. planning consent) and be located on a green/brown field site.

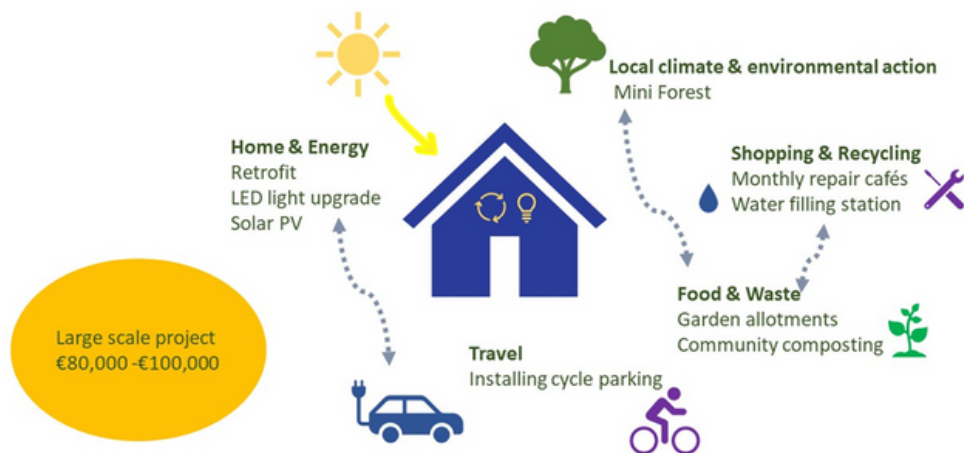
The fund will provide 90% of the total project value to a maximum of €6 million with at least 10% to be provided in matching contributions. A minimum of 5% of the matching contributions element must be in cash.

Closing date for the receipt of applications is 12 noon on 3 July 2023.

[To Request an Application Form](#)
[Click Here](#)

Community Climate Action Fund

Example: Community group building and grounds



Laois PPN are delighted to let our Member Groups know about the upcoming Community Climate Action Programme.

A fund of €465,000 from the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications is open to Laois community groups for climate projects that:

- show a reduction in Greenhouse Gas emission
- increase climate resilience
- assist transition to a low carbon economy

There is a timeframe of an 18-month completion date to draw down funding.

Eligibility for scheme:

- not-for-profit organisation
- registered with PPN

or

- connected with other collectives e.g. The Wheel, Tidy Towns and /or a community group i.e. have Articles of Association or a Constitution, hold an AGM, approved minutes available.

Projects can address ideally more than one of the 5 themes shown here.



For example, Local climate and environmental action theme projects will have a holistic approach to managing the local environment and taking climate action. Example projects under this theme include:

- Mini forests
- Forest schools
- Dispersed orchards
- Community gardens
- Roof gardens
- Pollinator projects
- Energy gardens

There are 3 project scales as shown below.

Project Scale

Small scale
Medium scale
Large scale

Project Value

Up to €20,000
€21,000 to €50,000
€51,000 to €100,000

For more information, please contact Laois Council's Community Climate Change Officer, Karen Moore, who will work with groups on project ideas and plans kmoore@laoiscoco.ie

Laois PPN Resource Worker, Dan Bergin, said, "Laois PPN will be hosting a Climate Action Fund Workshop with Karen Moore for PPN Member Groups in the coming weeks."



Dan Bergin,
Laois PPN Resource
Worker

The 'Children's Promise' Grants Programme



CHILDREN'S PROMISE

GRANTS PROGRAMME

The 'Children's Promise' Grants Programme is a new programme within the Katharine Howard Foundation, in collaboration with Community Foundation Ireland (CFI), and aims to support organisations working with young children and their families in disadvantaged areas, who may not reach their potential due to the corrosive impact of poverty.

The 'Children's Promise' Grants Programme provides financial and other supports to selected organisations, to support and develop the potential of the children engaged with the organisations. The Programme aims to build on the powerful work taking place at community-level to address child poverty with a grants programme of €1,000,000 in financial and non-financial supports over the duration of the programme 2023-27.

[For Full Details](#)
[Click Here](#)

CLÁR Programme for 2023



CLÁR (Ceantair Laga Árd-Riachtanais) is a targeted investment programme for rural areas that aims to provide funding for small infrastructural projects in rural areas that have experienced significant levels of de-population. The funding works in conjunction with local/Agency and other Departmental funding programmes and on the basis of locally identified priorities.

The 2023 CLÁR programme will be delivered through three separate Measures as follows:

- Measure 1: Developing Community Facilities & Amenities
- Measure 2: Mobility, Cancer Care and Community First Responders Transport
- Measure 3: 'Our Islands'

[For Full Breakdown](#)
[Click Here](#)

Measure 1 Developing Community Facilities and Amenities

Measure 1 is administered by Local Authorities in consultation with local communities and applications will only be accepted directly from Local Authorities.

Up to 90% funding available. Grant Range €5,000 up to €50,000

Please contact Ann Marie Maher, Sport & Leisure Officer, Laois County Council to discuss potential projects for submission to this scheme as early as possible:

Email: sports@laoiscoco.ie

Phone: 057 8664058 or 087 6184404

Completed Expression of Interest Applications for Measure 1 must be submitted directly to Laois County Council by email in a word version only, to sports@laoiscoco.ie

Closing date for receipt of Expressions of Interest applications to Laois County Council is 5.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 17th May 2023.

[For Clár Measure One Scheme Outline Click Here](#)

[For EOI Form Click Here](#)

Measure 3 'Our Islands'

Island Community Transport – community bus/vehicle with an electric charging point which is powered by solar PV panels. ii) Outdoor Community Recreation Amenities – benches, picnic tables/areas, toilets.

Between 80% and 90% funding available

Completed applications for Measures 3 should be emailed directly to the Department of Rural & Community Development at clar@drccd.gov.ie by Friday 6th June 2023.

[For Clár Measure Two
Scheme Outline Click Here](#)

[For EOI Form
Click Here](#)

Measure 3 'Our Islands'

Island Community Transport – community bus/vehicle with an electric charging point which is powered by solar PV panels. ii) Outdoor Community Recreation Amenities – benches, picnic tables/areas, toilets.

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[For Clár Measure Three
Scheme Outline Click Here](#)

[For EOI Form
Click Here](#)

PORTLAOISE TIDY TOWNS BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN 2023-2028 LAUNCH



Portlaoise Tidy Towns Members

On Thursday 27th April, Portlaoise Tidy Towns launched their Portlaoise Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2028 at The Cube, in Portlaoise.

The 100 page document sets out clear aims to achieve by 2028, to protect and restore local nature, in every area from housing estates, to main roads, parks and busy streets.

Portlaoise Tidy Town Secretary and Laois PPN Secretariat Member, Vincent Booth said, "Portlaoise Tidy Towns launched our Biodiversity Action plan 2023/2028 in the magnificent Cube building on the 27/04/23 . The in depth comprehensive plan was completed by Brian Gaynor and Dr Fiona Magowan. We now have a biodiversity master plan to guide us through the next five years. These are exciting times for the entire Portlaoise community. We would like to thank everyone who gave of their time to attend the launch."



*Vincent Booth,
Laois PPN
Secretariat*

Portlaoise Tidy Towns commissioned Brian Gaynor, of Trees on the Land, and ecologist Dr Fiona McGowan to undertake the Action Plan.



Vincent Booth (Secretary Portlaoise Tidy Towns), Gerry Browne (Chairperson Portlaoise Tidy Towns), Cathaoirleach Cllr Thomasina Connell, John Mulholland (Chief Executive of Laois County Council)

With the help of this Action Plan, Portlaoise is on track to be the first Carbon Neutral town in Ireland.



Dr Fiona McGowan giving her talk to attendees

Pictures by Alf Harvey

YARNBOMBING MOUNTMELICK "END OF LIFE LITTLE HEARTS INITIATIVE"



During COVID-19, Yarnbombing Mountmellick came across a project set up by Richmond ITU in Beaumont Hospital called "End of Life Little Hearts". In essence, they give families knitted/crocheted hearts to place in the hand of their loved one who is nearing the end.

Yarnbombing felt compelled to get involved in this Beaumont project. So, they gave themselves a 2-week window to make as many as we could. Three Yarnbombing members (Trish, Doris, and Wilma) made the trip to deliver the 404 hearts they managed to make.

Yarnbombing Mountmellick and Laois PPN Secretariat Member Nina Horan said, "we were so proud and honoured that Mountmellick had contributed! We wish there was no need for the hearts- of course we do. Unfortunately, the circle of life is sometimes cut short for people. So, we hope our little Yarny hearts bring tangible comfort, and a sense of connection, to families involved."



*Nina Horan,
Laois PPN
Secretariat*

BEALTAINE FESTIVAL



Come and join in the celebrations!

For the month of May the Arts Office, Laois County Council invite people of an older age to join in some of the wonderful events that are happening in Laois for the Bealtaine Festival 2023. In celebration of Creativity the theme for 2023 is 'In(ter)dependence'

A memoir writing workshop will be taking place at Laois Arthouse. There will also be a large amount of events at the Dunamaise Arts Centre.

A wide-ranging programme of events will also be taking place at Laois Libraries; Abbeyleix, Durrow, Mountmellick, Mountrath, Portarlinton, Portlaoise, Rathdowney & Stradbally. There are many Lifestyle and Wellbeing events run by Laois Sports Partnership as well in various locations around the county from wellness walks to dancing.

[For Full Details](#)
[Click Here](#)

LAOIS INTERCULTURAL DAY



The many cultures of Laois were celebrated on Saturday 22nd April at Laois Intercultural Day. There was a day full of activities and food at St Francis School Portlaoise.



Food from countries like Brazil, west Africa, Greece, Pakistan, Ukraine, Latvia, South Africa, Poland was available to taste for all in attendance.



The day also included dance and musical acts from all over the world.

Laois PPN Secretariat Member, Bolaji Adeyanju was one of the main organisers of the event.



LAOIS FLEADH 2023



The Laois County Fleadh 2023 will take place in Scoil Mhuire Abbeyleix, Ballyroan Road, ABBEYLEIX from Friday 2nd to Sunday 4th of June, hosted by Spink Comhaltas.

The detailed timetable of competitions will be issued by 15th May and will be on our website, but the guideline timetable for planning is:

Friday 2nd June, 6.30 pm – Dancing competitions

Saturday 3rd June, 10 am – 6pm – Grupa Cheoil & Céilí Band Competitions

Sunday 4th June, 1pm – 6pm, Individual, Duet, Trio Competitions

All of these competitions are open to the general public to attend and watch, and we would particularly recommend attending the group competitions on Saturday.

TIDY TOWNS AWARDS



Abbeyleix Tidy Towns celebrating their win for Tidiest Small Town at the 2021 Tidy Towns Awards

Laois PPN would like to remind all Tidy Towns groups across Laois that the Tidy Town Awards applications are closing on Wednesday 10th May.

19 Tidy Towns groups from Laois competed at the 2022 Awards, with Portlaoise winning a silver medal in the highest population Category G, Portarlinton, in Category F, were given an Endeavour Award in Laois (which acknowledges the highest percentage increase on the previous year).

Abbeyleix was named the tidiest town in Laois in 2022 with a score of 362. Ballacolla, with 342, but in Category A for the smaller population bases under 200, was second in Laois, with Durrow in Category B (population of 201-1,000) recording a score of 340 and finishing third. Durrow were also highly commended in the national 'Young Persons' category.

Best of luck to all Tidy Towns Groups in Laois for 2023!

STAR WARS DAY
**MAY THE 4TH
BE WITH YOU**



CONTACT US

The Laois Public Participation Network (PPN) Office is open Monday to Friday by appointment only.

You can also contact us by:



Email: ppn@laoiscoco.ie

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



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