



## Laois Public Participation Network

### June 2023 Newsletter

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# BIODIVERSITY WALK IN PORTLAOISE



**On a warm Tuesday evening, Laois PPN in collaboration with Portlaoise Tidy Towns, held a Biodiversity Walk in Portlaoise. The walk was led by Ecologist Dr Fiona MacGowan.**

Fiona MacGowan along with Brian Gaynor, of Green Pine Consultants, were commissioned by Portlaoise Tidy Towns to undertake their recently launched new Biodiversity Action Plan 2023 - 2028.

The Biodiversity Walk highlighted the many positive steps taken to enhance biodiversity in Portlaoise started at the Top Square rambled around the many biodiversity areas in Portlaoise finishing up in Fitzmaurice Place.

**Vincent Booth, the Secretary of Portlaoise Tidy Towns and Laois PPN Secretariat said of the tour, "It was great to see such a good turnout for our biodiversity walk. I'd like to thank Dr. Fiona MacGowan for giving of her time and giving such an informative talk. It's so nice to know we have such a variety of biodiversity on our doorstep. I suppose the main message that people can take away from the evening is that everyone can do their bit for the environment no matter how small the action."**



*Vincent Booth, Laois PPN Secretariat & Portlaoise Tidy Towns*



Dr Fiona MacGowan said, "My associate Brian Gaynor of Green Pine Consultants and myself would like to thank the wonderful community champions Portlaoise TidyTowns who commissioned the Portlaoise Biodiversity Action Plan. The BAP was funded by Community Foundation Ireland who are supporting community volunteers all over Ireland. Also, many thanks to Laois PPN and Laois County Council for enthusiastically supporting the BAP. The Biodiversity Crisis is daunting and we can feel powerless but so much can be achieved when we work together as evidenced by the changes made across Portlaoise town for the benefit of biodiversity e.g. changed grass-mowing regimes resulting in natural wildflower meadows such as that in the People's Park; biodiversity awareness-raising signs along the outer ring road; greening the grey with pollinator-friendly planting at many roundabouts; pollinator-friendly crocus bulb planting along several access roads to the town, thousands of native trees planted across the town and many more! The BAP can be viewed at [www.portlaoisetidytowns.ie](http://www.portlaoisetidytowns.ie)



*Dr Fiona MacGowan*



We had a great wander around Portlaoise town on Tuesday evening catching the highlights of the many biodiversity actions of Portlaoise TidyTowns. We got to watch the aerial acrobatics of some of the town's avian residents - swifts, swallows, and house martins and to hear some of the amazing facts about their lives. We studied the beautiful native Irish wildflowers that grow on the esker that is the town's historic Ridge graveyard such as the gorgeous Greater knapweed, the delicate wild carrot, the beautiful mauve Field scabious and the hay scented Lady's bedstraw. We also discussed how much more sustainable it is to use perennial, pollinator-friendly plants in the planting schemes compared to the pollinator-unfriendly annuals of old planting plans - less time and less costs involved for all. We chatted about the great help and ideas available at [www.pollinators.ie](http://www.pollinators.ie) and all went home with some terrific nature swatches from the national Biodiversity Data Centre courtesy of Laois PPN.



Dan Bergin,  
Laois PPN Resource  
Worker

Dan Bergin, Laois PPN Resource Worker said "I wish to thank Dr. Fiona MacGowan for sharing her wealth of knowledge and expertise with Community Groups from across Laois during our Biodiversity Walk. This event was part of Laois

PPN's Climate Action Project 2023 which is a yearlong calendar of events which aims to share knowledge, educate and Inspire Climate Action in our Community. Laois PPN wish to commend the volunteers of Portlaoise Tidy Towns Laois who with the support of Laois County Council have enhanced biodiversity in Portlaoise making it a great place to live, work and visit.





Pictures by Denis Byrne



# MRPPN



**Laois PPN was delighted to attend the recent Midlands Regional PPN Meeting in Enfield, Co. Meath on Wednesday 28th of June. Laois PPN Secretariat, Paddy Buggy, Laois PPN Resource Worker, Dan Bergin, and Support Worker, Stephen Ring, made the journey to the scenic Johnstown Estate in Enfield.**

The MRPPN meets quarterly and consists of Laois, Kildare, Longford, Meath, Offaly and Westmeath. It is a great way for PPNs to share knowledge, information and best practice, that benefit all PPNs in the midlands.

Dan Bergin and Paddy Buggy gave a detailed talk on Public Consultations on behalf of Laois PPN. The Laois PPN presentation was positively received by other PPNs who are going to incorporate concepts used by Laois PPN in their own Public Consultations.





Paddy Buggy, Laois PPN Secretariat said, "It was great to present to the other PPN groups the process we operate in Laois PPN for facilitating community consultation with Laois County Council on matters which will enhance our daily lives over the coming years. It is vitally important that our communities have a significant input into these plans and Laois PPN facilitates this process through it's network of 672 groups whose membership equates to almost 48,000 people throughout every corner of the county."



*Paddy Buggy,  
Laois PPN Secretariat*





# NATIONAL PPN WORKER'S MEETING



**Laois PPN's Dan Bergin and Stephen Ring attended the recent National PPN Worker's Meeting at Trinity Point, Dublin on Thursday 29th of June. PPNs from around the country were in attendance both in person and online.**

The meeting was also attended by representatives from the Department of Rural and Community Development.

Topics spoken about on the day were a list of the different sub-groups each PPN were on, updates on the 2023 National PPN Conference which will be held in Wicklow. Following the success of Laois hosting the National PPN Conference in 2022, Laois PPN's Dan Bergin has been invited onto the PPN Conference Sub-Group for 2023 to support Wicklow PPN. Laois PPN wish Wicklow PPN every success in hosting the National PPN Conference for 2023.



# COMMUNITY & VOLUNTARY AWARDS



*Patricia O'Rourke (Laois County Council), Anne Marie Kirrane (Laois County Council), Carol Murphy (People First Credit Union), Dan Bergin (Laois PPN Resource Worker), Cathaoirleach Cllr Thomasina Connell, Conor Ganley (Leinster Express) John Mulholland (Chief Executive of Laois County Council), Billy Fitzpatrick (People First Credit Union)*

**Nominations for the 2023 Community & Voluntary Awards have been well underway, with the closing date of entries Friday 14th July.**

The Categories this year are:

- Arts, Culture & Heritage Award
- Sports Award
- Climate Action Award (Brand New for 2023)
- Best Kept Residential Area Award
- Social Inclusion Awards
- Health & Wellbeing Award
- Junior Volunteer of the Year Award
- Unsung Hero Award

The Community & Voluntary Awards celebrate the extraordinary work of Community Groups and Volunteers in Laois.

[Click Here to Submit Nominations](#)

Picture by Michael Scully

# LAOIS PPN RE-REGISTRATION



**Laois PPN are currently conducting our Re-registration process. It has been sent out as an email to all our Member Groups throughout the County.**

The re-registration process is a vital piece of information gathering by all PPNs across the country. As volunteers move on-and emails and phone numbers change, we need to make sure that we have the correct contact details for our member groups and to also make sure we are complying with GDPR.

The primary contact in each organisation is sent an email asking them to click on the link to update their membership to Laois PPN. The link brings them to a form which shows them all of the organisations for which they are the Primary Contact, including the Last Confirmed Membership Year. For each organisation, there is a link to re-register or change details we are holding for that organisation.

There has been a brilliant response to this so far and we would really appreciate it if you haven't responded yet, would you kindly do so when you get a chance.

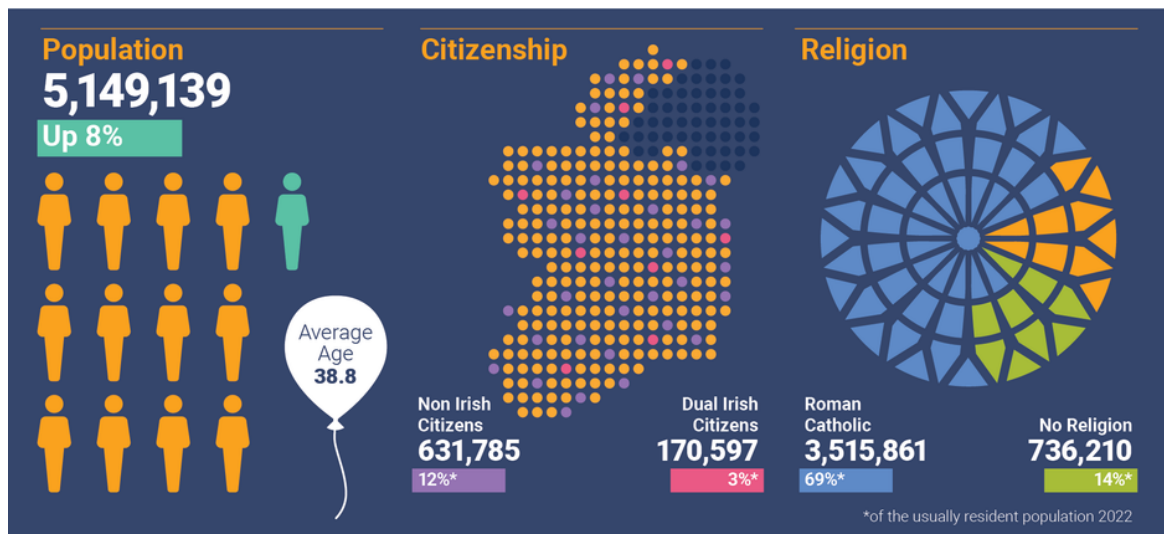


# CENSUS 2022



DAONÁIREAMH  
CENSUS 2022  
www.cso.ie

Census 2022  
Summary Results



The Central Statistics Office has published the Census 2022 Summary Results. These provide high level data on all areas of Census 2022. The results show that the population of Ireland increased to 5,149,139 (+8%) between 2016 and 2022.

Looking at the results of Census 2022, it shows that the population of Laois grew by 8% to 91,877, which means the number of people in the county rose by 7,180 between April 2016 and April 2022. Over the same period, Ireland's population grew by 8% from 4,761,865 to 5,149,139."

[Click Here to](#)  
[See full Census Breakdown](#)  
[For Laois](#)

# FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

## Local Biodiversity Action Fund



**Laois PPN are delighted to see Laois benefit through the Local Biodiversity Action Fund.**

The Local Biodiversity Action Fund is an enormously impactful scheme that supports local authorities and communities to deliver on Ireland's national objectives for nature, from invasive species to habitat restoration to awareness-raising to surveys and monitoring work.

In total there were five different initiatives that benefitted in Laois through this fund. They were:

- Pollinator Awareness Radio Ads
- Biodiversity Awareness on the Portlaoise Orbital Route
- IAS Treatment at Abbeyleix bog
- Biodiversity Enhancement at Laois Education Centre
- Biodiversity Training for Laois CoCo staff, Heritage forum & Laois Chamber

[Click Here to See The Local Biodiversity Action Fund Breakdown](#)



## 2023 LGBTI+ Community Services Funding Call



**Laois PPN are delighted with the announcement that €900,000 is being made available to applicant groups, operating at national, regional and local level, to support community services and promote visibility and inclusion of LGBTI+ people.**

Funding aims to promote inclusion, protect rights and to improve quality of life and wellbeing for LGBTI+ people in Ireland.

Grant scheme is open to applications from existing LGBTI+ non-government organisations and community organisations working with LGBTI+ people.

The 2023 LGBTI+ Community Services Funding Call is an important element in supporting the implementation of the National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy, which was published on 28 November 2019, and complements the National LGBTI+ Youth Strategy published in June 2018.

There are two streams of funding;

Scheme A will support new initiatives but is also open to applications from existing LGBTI+ NGOs for funding to maintain and enhance existing services and initiatives. This will assist these organisations build capacity and maintain existing and well-established LGBTI+ supports.

Scheme B will provide small grants to organisations for projects that promote visibility and inclusion of LGBTI+ persons.

**All applications must be submitted electronically.  
Closing Date: 12pm on Wednesday 26 July 2023.**

Groups can access a detailed guidance document and complete an online application form at the following links:

**Scheme A:**

[Click Here to Register under Scheme A](#)

**Scheme B:**

[Click Here to Register under Scheme B](#)



# COMHAIRLE NA NÓG



**Comhairle na nÓg are child and youth councils located in counties all around Ireland. Laois Comhairle na nÓg aims to empower the youth in the County to voice local issues faced by people their age. Laois PPN's Dan Bergin sits on the Laois Comhairle na nÓg Steering Committee.**

Anyone between the ages of twelve to eighteen are welcome to join the group. In order to give students the opportunity to understand what they could achieve with Laois Comhairle na nÓg, an AGM is held every year and students from secondary schools all over Laois are invited to attend. Every year at this AGM a new topic is voted on, this topic is always something that is currently affecting the young people of Laois. The members of Laois Comhairle na nÓg then work on achieving positive change based on the chosen topic in it's weekly meetings.



Last year the group organized a colour fun run with the aim of raising awareness for mental health. Over five hundred people joined in on the day in Vicarstown. Currently, the group are working on the topic of discrimination, as voted for by young people at the AGM last November. After coming up with the idea to create a podcast, the members of Laois Comhairle na nÓg have been working hard to bring it's vision to life. The aim is to educate people in Laois about the different types of discrimination that people are facing in our local area and hope that by shining a light on the topic, people may learn where they can find help.

Laois Comhairle is looking for more young people from a diverse background to join the group. Email: [comhairle@ywilaois.com](mailto:comhairle@ywilaois.com) or send WhatsApp message to 086 787 6277.



# PORTLAOISE MEN'S SHED 10TH ANNIVERSARY



*Liam Ramsbottom (Laois Partnership Company), Ray Harte (Portlaoise Men's Shed), Cathaoirleach Cllr Thomasina Connell, Senator Pippa Hackett, Minister of State Seán Fleming, Dan Bergin (Laois PPN Resource Worker)*

**Dan Bergin, Laois PPN Resource Worker was delighted to attend the 10th Anniversary celebrations of Portlaoise Men's Shed. The idea of a men's shed in Portlaoise was born in 2012 at a meeting between Laois PPN Representative Ray Harte (now secretary of the shed) and the late Councillor Jerry Lodge.**

The Men's Shed is located at the Portlaoise Equestrian Centre on the Timahoe rd. The Men's Shed has been heavily involved in Environmental projects throughout Laois, these include:

- setting up of a community garden
- Water Conservation
- Wildlife Conservation
- Bird Box Builds with Younger Children
- mud kitchens for childcare facilities
- buddy benches for schools

Ray Harte, Secretary of the Portlaoise Men's Shed said, "Absolutely delighted with how our anniversary event went. A huge thank you to everyone who turned up on the day to help us celebrate this event. Hopefully we can achieve as much if not more as we head into our next 10 years and continue to provide benefits to our growing membership."



*Ray Harte,  
Portlaoise Men's Shed*



Even with all this activity they continue to do what sheds do best which is providing an informal social hub for men of all ages where they can meet chat, drink tea, tell stories, and share skills.



*Dan Bergin,  
Laois PPN Resource  
Worker*

Laois PPN Resource Worker, Dan Bergin, Said " Laois PPN was delighted to attend the 10th Anniversary of Portlaoise Men's Shed.

Wishing Portlaoise Men's Shed every success for the next 10 years and beyond."

[Click Here For More Info on  
Portlaoise Men's Shed](#)



# LAOIS AFRICA DAY



**On a scorching Saturday, on the 3rd of June, Portlaoise Leisure Centre was awash with culture as Laois Africa Day took place!**

The day started with Laois Africa defending their title against Laois Gardaí in a soccer match with the Gardaí coming out victorious.

Following the match all in attendance celebrated the diversity of African Culture. There was African music, hair braiding, competitions, African cultural performances, spoken word and more.



*Bolaji Adeyanju,  
Laois PPN Secretariat*







## CONTACT US

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

**You can also contact us by:**



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