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Excellence in Local Government Awards 2024



An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreacht
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage

Orsted

Chambers Ireland would like to thank all of the kind sponsors for their involvement in the 2024 Excellence in Local Government Awards.



**An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta**
Department of Housing,
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Welcome to the 2024 Excellence in Local Government Awards!



Margaret Considine
President
Chambers Ireland

We are delighted to celebrate 21 years of the Excellence in Local Government Awards. Year after year, local authorities continue to surpass expectations through their innovative projects and initiatives. The Awards showcase best practice in local government and recognise the hard work, innovation and enthusiasm within local government that can often go unrecognised.



Ian Talbot
Chief Executive
Chambers Ireland

Over the years these awards have evolved with new categories, greater innovation and more competition. This year, a record number of 191 submissions were received from 27 Local Authorities, highlighting the significance of these awards in demonstrating the outstanding service they offer to their communities.

2024 proved a busy year for elections and, last June, 949 councillors were elected to serve on the 31 local authorities throughout Ireland. Working with executive officials each one will play a central role in ensuring each region's economic development. All of our affiliated Chambers know that strong local government is essential for a well-performing local economy. The Chamber Network is ready to work with local government throughout the country. Developing key infrastructure—such as housing, transport, water and grid connections, and green energy—will be vital.

Local Government should continue to lead the way in creating and advancing sustainable development plans that will empower us to achieve our national climate action goals. Likewise, they should prioritise and enhance strategic infrastructure that will secure a bright and prosperous future for our communities.

The standard of each application is higher than ever and we hope that you can be inspired to take away new ideas and implement new proposals in your own region. We invite you to look through this guide and find out more about the projects and initiatives that have been shortlisted across the 15 award categories. Congratulations to all shortlisted authorities on your success in bettering your local area, and the very best of luck to you all.



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2024 Judges Quotes

DR. MARK CALLANAN

LECTURER,
INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION



The enthusiasm and innovation underpinning different initiatives submitted to these awards continues to impress. This year's projects demonstrate the passion and drive of both elected members and local government

staff to make real improvements to the local community they serve. As part of the judging panel it was a real challenge to identify winners of different categories, such was the quality of the projects shortlisted. Huge credit and congratulations are due to the winners, but also to all those shortlisted.

TOMMY MOYLAN

DIRECTOR, ASSOCIATION OF
IRISH LOCAL GOVERNMENT (AILG)



It is such a rewarding privilege to be asked to judge the annual Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Awards.

These awards showcase the tremendous work being carried out on a daily basis by our local

authorities, work that greatly improves the quality of life for our citizens and communities across the country. As always the hardest part is picking a winner but great thanks and appreciation must go to all local authority management, staff and Elected Members for their hard work.

KATHERINE FITZPATRICK

CONSULTANT,
PEOPLE MAKE PLACES



Each year the quality of the ELG applications goes up, making the judging increasingly difficult! The calibre of the applications demonstrates how local authorities around the country are working extremely hard on

innovative projects that have a strong focus on community engagement and wellbeing.

HANNAH MUIRHEAD

FORMER HEAD OF INTERNATIONAL
OPERATIONS, LOCAL GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION UNIT (LGIU)



Judging these awards was one of the real highlights of working at LGIU. It's a privilege just to get to read the submissions and bear witness to the real impact these programmes are having on communities across the

country. The innovation and dedication demonstrated across the sector gives me great confidence in the ability of local government in Ireland to continue to be a force for positive change, resilience and genuine progress.

AMY AHERN

OPERATIONS & LANDOWNER
COMMUNITY LIAISON, ORSTED



It has been an honour to be part of the Judging panel for this year's ELG awards. The projects and initiatives delivered by local authorities were diverse and innovative. It was fantastic to see the collaboration between

the communities and local authorities and the positive impact these projects achieved. Every applicant should be very proud of the work they have done in their localities. Best of luck to all the authorities who were shortlisted.

DIARMUID O'LEARY

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING,
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HERITAGE



It is both an honour and a pleasure to participate as a judge in the Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Awards because it gives a chance to see the innovation, dynamism, sheer hard work and incredibly

high commitment to public service in all of the projects submitted. These Awards are a wonderful opportunity to showcase and celebrate all that local authorities do to help make our communities better places in which to live, work and enjoy. There is enormous credit and thanks due to all involved.

DR. SEAN O'RIORDAIN

CHAIR,
PUBLIC POLICY ADVISORY NETWORK



'Yet again it has been an absolute privilege to be associated with this years Local Government Awards. The Awards are a clear demonstration that despite the severe limitations they work

under, local authorities across the Republic play a central role in delivery of vibrant and sustainable communities, at a very high level of performance and quality.

LOUISE PURCELL

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING,
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HERITAGE



The Excellence in Local Government Awards is an excellent opportunity to acknowledge not just the winning local authorities but also all local authorities who in the background work tirelessly to

serve their communities. It must be acknowledged that the local government sector, in its enormity, is fundamental to every aspect of our daily lives. Collectively, they go beyond the call year after year in their commitment to serve which is recognised and applauded.

LEIGH GILLEN

MANAGING DIRECTOR,
LEIGH GILLEN EVENTS



What struck me when reading the wonderful applications from local authorities all around the country, was the level of innovation and creativity. Towns, villages and cities all around Ireland working hard to enhance

communities, raise spirits and generate a sense of local pride throughout. As community members, we all have a responsibility to support these activities and initiatives in our localities, they don't just "happen", they are the result of a lot of hard working people, mostly voluntary, who strive to bring colour, culture and wonder for all of us.

MARTIN TOBIN

CHIEF EXECUTIVE,
EUROPEAN RECYCLING PLATFORM IRELAND
(ERP IRELAND)



It is inspiring to see the breadth and diversity of programmes by Local Authorities to educate and take action across a various range of initiatives to positively impact our social and natural environment. The circular

economy is the pathway towards a more sustainable future and our transition requires action from all sectors of society. Programmes like those championed by Local Authorities further demonstrates the valuable role they play. The incredible high standard of entries for these Awards has made this year's judging very difficult. I would like to wish the best of luck to all those shortlisted.

VINNIE O'SHEA

NATIONAL COORDINATOR,
HEALTHY IRELAND - LOCAL GOVERNMENT



It was interesting and hugely encouraging to be part of the judging process and witness the level of joined-up approaches being undertaken by local government to help improve outcomes at the local level. I

was particularly struck by the range and nature of innovation in the entries that were submitted - especially those submitted in collaboration with local communities, as well as the public and private sector. Congratulations to all the entrants, and a special acknowledgment to those shortlisted for your well-deserved success

FERGAL CORCORAN

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL OFFICER,
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING,
LOCAL GOVERNMENT, AND HERITAGE



It was a great privilege to be asked to participate on the judging panel for this year's Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Awards. The high standard of entries for the Excellence in Local Government

Awards was great to see and I would like to acknowledge the merits of all those who have been shortlisted. On a daily basis, local authorities make our communities and localities better places to live, work, and enjoy, and the work that elected members, officials, and all who work across all our local authority areas is a credit to them.

DEIRDRE NI CHEALLACHAIN

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL,
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING,
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HERITAGE



The Excellence in Local Government Awards provide an invaluable opportunity for local authorities to showcase a sample of the most innovative initiatives underway in our communities. With this year's

applications of a particularly high calibre, the judging process was challenging, but ultimately extremely encouraging to see the ambition and impact of the projects undertaken. The overarching goals of this year's entries ranged from projects to meet pressing social needs, to improve the delivery of services and to enhance the amenities available to us at the local level. I commend the solution-orientated approach on display, and congratulate and thank all applicants for their commitment and creativity in this regard.

SARAH KELLY

AGRI-BUSINESS OFFICER,
NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY DATA CENTRE



It was hard to choose 'winners'. The commitment, passion, and deep consideration across complex community and project dynamics was so evident in all of the submissions; they were humbling and inspiring to read.

Each a testament to the ethos of think global and act local.

FIONA MCMANUS

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL,
DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT,
CLIMATE AND COMMUNICATIONS



Participating in the judging panel this year was an inspiring experience. These awards highlight so many of the diverse and innovative projects and initiatives underway at local level across the country. They

demonstrate the hard work and dedication of local government, which is contributing in a real way to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Ireland across all dimensions – social, environmental, and economic and setting us on the right track to a sustainable future. In addition, these projects show wide ranging collaboration, engagement and participation in communities across the country, a vital element to achieving these Goals together and for everyone, ensuring no-one is left behind.



SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

Burtonport & Arranmore - Harbour to Island Regeneration



The Harbour to Island rural regeneration project addresses the negative demographic trends in Burtonport and Arranmore and the decline in the traditional fishing industry. Ailt an Chorráin serves as the gateway to Oileán Árann Mhór, with both locations intrinsically linked through their reliance on the sea and fishing industry. The project aims to capitalise on the connection between the Port and the Island, focusing on growth opportunities in the Tourism and Marine Leisure sectors, while supporting the community and voluntary sectors' re-population strategy.

Phase 1 of the project in Burtonport is complete, tackling dereliction and vacancy and providing a modern harbour within a revitalised civic environment. On the Island, a new landmark shorefront amenity has been established, featuring performance, rest, and play spaces, along with improved parking and access facilities.



DUBLIN CITY COUNCIL

The Kingfisher Project



The Kingfisher Project is repurposing and transforming public lands at Blarney Park Allotments on the banks of the River Poddle at Kimmage, Dublin into a community knowledge, awareness and educational resource to address our relationship with the natural world and to build community capacity and resilience to cope with the consequences of human induced climate change and the loss of biodiversity.

The Kingfisher Project is a catalyst for attitudinal, behavioural and consumption pattern change that centres on enriching individual households and the urban environment through knowledge, awareness and interaction with nature and the community action it inspires.



SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES



LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL

Investing in our children's future - Promotion of STEAM in secondary schools



STEAM was a new initiative in partnership with the LOETB and Offaly County Council in 2023 / 2024 to promote Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths within secondary schools by offering equipment and support over the next three years.

Portlaoise College, Dunamais College, Clonaslee College and St. Fergal's College Rathdowney, Co Laois, along with their County Offaly equivalents, benefited from the new S.T.E.A.M. programme in Year 1 and availed of digital learning opportunities and supports.



The provision of equipment for VEX robotics, coding, design, and podcasting, together with the opportunity to develop teamwork amongst students in the different areas from design to building robots, recreating virtual sustainable versions of their own communities through Minecraft, coding through block-based coding and Python; and creating Podcasts with their own school podcast studios gives students a chance to develop skills to enhance themselves and to contribute to the development of their communities.

MONAGHAN COUNTY COUNCIL

Lough Muckno Road To Recovery



This project focuses on setting a timeframe for water quality recovery in Lough Muckno through an innovative approach that uses existing water quality data and scientifically sound water quality results & paleolimnological data to determine what status the lake was at in the earlier 1900's. This will set a target status for recovery in the event that all external inputs or pollution loads are reduced and allow Council staff to determine a self-recovery period for the lake.

The project promotes positive social, economic and environmental outcomes for communities and stakeholders who all rely on freshwater reserves. There will be clearly defined work areas for water quality improvements in each sub catchment. The local authority will then be on a better footing to work alone and in partnership with other agencies and community groups and align freshwater initiatives that will create a freshwater reality for Lough Muckno and its surrounding catchments.





SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL

Adamstown: Sustainable by Planning, Design and Implementation



Adamstown is a sustainably planned town, delivered in accordance with a planning scheme that ensures the provision of facilities in tandem with growth in population. The community has easy access to a variety of housing types, public transport, schools, shops, community, sports and outdoor recreation as it grows and develops.

The recent opening of Tandy's Lane Park; which retains naturally regenerating woodland and hedgerows within its design and uses natural based Sustainable Drainage Systems to filter and clean water and Airlie Park; which supports active and passive recreation with its provision of a Cricket Pitch, a full GAA sized 3G pitch, sports pavillion, ball courts and several natural play spaces and teenspaces, is part of this phased delivery. The urban plaza with its interlinked series of streets and squares in the urban area close to the train station integrates play with meeting spaces in this busy part of Adamstown.



DIVERSITY & INCLUSION



CORK CITY COUNCIL Frederick Douglass Unity Courtyard



Cork City Council, in collaboration with local and US stakeholders, developed the Frederick Douglass Unity Courtyard to commemorate the anti-racist legacy of Frederick Douglass’s 1845 visit to Cork.

Situated at a site where Douglass was welcomed and gave an oration, the courtyard features a striking mural of Douglass by the artist Zabou, a commemorative plaque, and public seating. Located in front of the Unitarian Church, near the English Market in Cork’s city centre, the space celebrates Douglass’s message of unity and equality.

During his visit, Douglass noted the “absence of prejudice” in Cork regarding the colour of his skin, and this project ties that historic moment to contemporary efforts to promote Cork as a safe, inclusive city.

The Unity Courtyard serves as a public space where locals and tourists alike can reflect on the significance of Douglass’s legacy and the city’s commitment to social inclusion.



CORK COUNTY COUNCIL Ukrainian Bookclub



In late 2023, Cork County Library established a Book Club for Ukrainian residents living on Sherkin Island as part of its Ukrainian Response initiative. Recognising the importance of social connection and access to literature, the library aimed to build a sense of community and provide a social outlet for Ukrainian residents. The Sherkin Island Ukrainian Book Club, coordinated by Cork County Library staff in Sherkin and Skibbereen libraries, offered participants the opportunity to read *Lessons in Chemistry* in Ukrainian.

This initiative not only allowed participants to engage with literature in their native language but also provided them with an introduction to the broader library services available. By fostering cooperation, creativity, and integration, the Book Club helped Ukrainian residents connect with one another and with local communities in Sherkin and Skibbereen, creating a welcoming environment that emphasised access to culture and community-building.



BORROWBOX завжди доступний



KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL

Gowran Inclusive MUGA



The outdoor Intergenerational Activity Hub is a uniquely inclusive space designed to cater to people of all ages and abilities. It features an integrated playscape, a multipurpose ball court, a 550-metre walking track, and a park.

A key aspect of the facility is its accessibility—much of the equipment is designed for both children and adults with mobility issues, including wheelchair users, through thoughtful landscaping, accessible matting, and equipment design. The highlight of the playpark is its wheelchair-accessible Castle, the first of its kind in Europe and second worldwide. The Hub also focuses on meeting sensory needs, ensuring that it provides a safe and engaging environment for all.

The design was created with input from Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, and Play Therapists, resulting in a space where people of all abilities can socialise, exercise, and play. This innovative, inclusive hub fosters community connection and active participation in a welcoming environment.

LIMERICK CITY & COUNTY COUNCIL

Limerick Migrant Integration Forum



In response to the negative narrative surrounding immigrants in recent times, and recognising the benefits of diversity in Limerick, a forum was established to give migrants living in the city a platform to discuss relevant issues and contribute to local policy development. The Limerick Migrants Forum also provides an opportunity for migrants to showcase the advantages of diversity and demonstrate the positive contributions they make to the community.

Limerick City and County Council engaged with migrant leaders and presented the idea to various cultural groups, receiving enthusiastic feedback. The Council facilitated communication of the proposal through online platforms and community structures, leading to an inaugural meeting in the Council Chambers where over 20 cultural communities were represented.

The forum was unanimously supported, and in Q1/2024, executive and elected officers were appointed. The forum has already participated in local events, strengthening its role in promoting diversity and inclusion in Limerick.



DIVERSITY & INCLUSION



MONAGHAN COUNTY COUNCIL

Chatterbox - A collaboration with Monaghan County Libraries & National Learning Network



In Spring 2023, Monaghan County Libraries proposed the creation of a podcast to the Transitions group of the National Learning Network (NLN) in Monaghan, a training centre that supports people with disabilities and a range of additional needs. From the library's perspective, this was an opportunity to engage learners in a literacy and digital skills project, while for NLN, it was a chance for their learners to be seen, heard, and respected in society.

With the support of an executive librarian from Monaghan County Library, learners planned, recorded, and launched a podcast on the subject of mental health, which was made available on Spotify. This project allowed learners to showcase their abilities, opinions, and voices, breaking down barriers in a space that once felt inaccessible to people in the disability sector. The podcast has empowered participants, demonstrating that they are just as vocal and informative as anyone else in society.



National Learning Network (Monaghan)
20 March 2023
Here is Ciara and Shane promoting today's event #HalttoIsolation and launching our Chatterbox NLN podcast.



OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL

Art in the Landscape - Festival of Change



The Festival of Change was a collaborative initiative between Offaly County Council, Mayo County Council, and Visual Artists Ireland, supported by the Arts Council's Invitation to Collaboration Scheme. The festival explored the profound influence that art, both tangible and intangible, can exert on communities and locations, encompassing social, economic, and cultural dimensions.

Connected to the Tir Saile Sculpture Trail in Mayo and the Lough Boora Sculpture Park in Offaly, the project included artist commissions in both locations and fostered collaboration across counties. Beginning in 2020, the initiative culminated in a festival of artist-led projects, in-person events, and capacity-building activities. These events provided networking opportunities for artists, professionals, communities, and organisations in both counties, facilitating the fusion of diverse communities through artistic expression.

The Festival of Change improved inclusion, access, and a sense of belonging for communities engaged in Offaly's arts programme, promoting social cohesion through art.



SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL

Teenspace Programme Review



South Dublin County Council (SDCC) undertook a comprehensive review of its innovative Teenspace programme, seeking feedback from teenagers on how the spaces could be improved. The focus of the review was to gather insights, particularly from young females, on how they use these spaces and the challenges they face.

Through workshops conducted in a range of settings, female teenagers provided valuable input, highlighting the barriers they encounter when using public spaces and offering suggestions for improvement. As a result of these workshops, the Teenspace programme was redesigned to meet the specific needs of female teenagers. Key changes included placing the spaces in high-profile, well-overlooked areas with good lighting and accessibility, ensuring safety and encouraging use.

This redesign process has led to the development of more inclusive and functional spaces that better serve the needs of female teenagers in the community, creating environments where they feel safe and comfortable.



WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Arklow Library; a sensory space for St Patrick's Day Parade



On St Patrick's Day, children from Arklow and beyond experienced a specially created sensory space at Arklow Library, making the festivities more accessible for neurodivergent children and their families. This initiative was the result of a collaboration between Wicklow County Council Library Service, Making Arklow, and local community groups such as All Kinds of Amazing, The House, Arklow Vikings, and Little Warriors.

The sensory space provided a safe and inclusive viewing area, allowing families who would have otherwise struggled with sensory overload to enjoy the parade. Outside the library, a cordoned-off space gave children plenty of room to watch the colourful festivities. Upstairs, the library offered a quieter bird's-eye view of the parade, with additional activities like colouring books to keep children entertained between floats.

For many families, this was the first time they could attend and enjoy the parade together in a supportive, comfortable environment.



PROMOTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



CORK COUNTY COUNCIL

N22 Baile Bhuirne Macroom Road Development



The N22 Baile Bhuirne to Macroom Road Development project involved the design and construction of approximately 22km of Type 2 dual carriageway. This included both grade-separated and at-grade interchanges, river and road bridges, underpasses, culverts, and environmental mitigation measures.



The project was delivered under Project Ireland 2040, which aims to maintain the strategic capacity and safety of the national road network while planning for future enhancements, and to improve average journey times with a target inter-urban speed of 90kph. The N22 project meets these objectives by enhancing the strategic corridor between Cork City and the urban hubs of Tralee and Killarney. A key aim of the scheme was to remove 40% of the 13,000 vehicles that previously passed through the centre of Macroom each day.



DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

Food Coast Donegal



Food Coast Donegal (FCD) is a dynamic initiative in County Donegal, dedicated to celebrating and promoting the region's rich culinary heritage. Situated along the Wild Atlantic Way, Donegal offers an abundance of fresh, locally sourced ingredients and a vibrant food and drink scene. FCD aims to showcase the diverse talents of the county's food producers, chefs, and artisans.



The initiative envisions a sustainable food ecosystem that supports local businesses, promoting Donegal's outstanding culinary offerings through education, events, campaigns, and promotions. More than just a celebration, FCD provides tailored commercial support to strengthen local producers and businesses. It fosters pride in Donegal's culinary traditions, nurturing growth and building a sense of community.



DUBLIN CITY COUNCIL

Community Wealth Building Dublin City



Dublin City Council spends nearly €2 billion annually on goods, services, and capital projects through public procurement. In addition to ensuring that all procurement activities are cost-efficient and legally compliant, the Council increasingly uses procurement as a tool to deliver broader local economic, social, health, wellbeing, and environmental benefits.



As part of its Community Wealth Building efforts, the Council has developed a Social Value Procurement Framework, outlining the additional outcomes it seeks to achieve through its procurement spending. The aim is to use procurement to support the development and growth of social enterprises and SMEs, increase access to local economic opportunities for Dublin residents, improve the health and wellbeing of workers and communities, and foster a more environmentally sustainable Dublin.

LEITRIM COUNTY COUNCIL

Acquisition and development of Carrick Business Campus by Leitrim County Council



The closure of MBNA's call centre in 2014 was a significant economic blow to Carrick-on-Shannon and Leitrim as a whole. At its peak, MBNA occupied Carrick-on-Shannon Business Campus, employing over 1,000 people. Since MBNA's exit, the Campus had been at just 25% occupancy, with Avant Money, a financial services company, based there.

In 2022, Leitrim County Council applied for RRDF funding to purchase the 112,000 sq ft premises near the N4. The Council aims to create 700 jobs at the Campus within five years, targeting businesses in the "post start-up" phase while also offering turnkey office space to larger companies seeking a second base.

In December 2022, Minister for DRCD, Heather Humphreys, awarded Leitrim County Council funding to support the purchase and partial refurbishment of the building.



PROMOTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



LIMERICK CITY & COUNTY COUNCIL

Building Economic Resilience in Housing - Modern Methods of Construction



The Building Economic Resilience in Housing initiative led by Limerick City and County Council involves a national research project on Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) and their economic benefits. Designed to be replicable for all councils, the initiative aims to establish regional MMC consultancy and contractor frameworks.

Economic benefits include cost savings from streamlined processes and reduced waste, faster delivery of projects to meet demand efficiently, and job creation in design, manufacturing, and assembly. MMC also stimulates local manufacturing and supply chains, supports economic growth, and helps address housing shortages through accelerated construction. Additionally, MMC's emphasis on energy efficiency and sustainable materials benefits the environment and attracts green investors and residents. Overall, MMC enhances the economy through cost reductions, job opportunities, and improved housing availability.



SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL

Networking of Enterprising Women in South Dublin (NEWS)



The Network of Enterprising Women in South Dublin (NEWS) embodies the core principles of promoting economic development by creating a symbiotic relationship between local businesses and relevant authorities.

NEWS connects female entrepreneurs, addressing gender disparities and promoting inclusivity within the local business environment.

Initially focused on events for women in business, NEWS has grown into a comprehensive support network for female entrepreneurs in the area. This expansion has led to increased engagement with various programmes, empowering women to access crucial financial support and resources for business start-up and growth. By bridging the gap between local government and businesses, NEWS exemplifies innovative efforts to boost the local economy, champion gender equality, and support entrepreneurial success.





MUNICIPAL DISTRICT INITIATIVE

KILDARE COUNTY COUNCIL

Leinster Womens Shed Fest



The Leinster Womens Shed Fest was a unique celebration of togetherness among women sheds not only from Leinster but all over Ireland. What began as a local initiative quickly became a National event with long lasting impacts. Women came together to share skills, knowledge and respect.



LIMERICK CITY & COUNTY COUNCIL

Limerick Regional Athletics Hub (LRAH)



The LRAH in Newcastle West was a project initiated by a local athletics club in 2015. Funding from the General Municipal Allocation (GMA) supported a feasibility study, which confirmed the need for such a facility.

The LRAH is designed to accommodate diverse sporting activities and promote overall health and wellbeing. It is a municipal facility open to all and was officially opened in September 2023 at a total cost of €4.35 million.

This world-class venue includes an eight-lane, 400m synthetic athletics track, available to the public, as well as amateur and elite athletes. It features IAAF-standard floodlights and a fully lit 500m walking path around its perimeter.

The hub also includes dedicated areas for shot put, discus, hammer throw, javelin, long jump, high jump, and pole vault. Accessible parking, toilets, and water points are provided for users.



MUNICIPAL DISTRICT INITIATIVE



MONAGHAN COUNTY COUNCIL

Bog Garden



Bogs play a crucial role in combating climate change by sequestering carbon and enhancing biodiversity. Monaghan has one major expanse of cross-border blanket bog in the north of the county, which is under-utilised for tourism, as many people feel disconnected from the bog and fail to recognise its value.

This initiative sought to raise awareness of the bog and its benefits by recreating bog conditions at an unused, often flooded council site in Monaghan town. By 'bringing the bog to the people', the project aimed to foster greater connection and appreciation, encouraging more engagement with the Slieve Beagh blanket bog.

WATERFORD CITY AND COUNTY COUNCIL

Connecting Communities - Healthy Communities Project



Waterford City and County Council, in partnership with community groups and stakeholders, hosted a series of Connecting Communities Roadshows across the city and county. These events offered local communities the chance to engage with the Local Authority and its partners, providing insights into setting up community groups, securing funding for initiatives, and building a stronger, more inclusive, and vibrant community.

The roadshows took place in all Municipal Districts of Waterford. The initiative was led by Healthy Waterford (Community Section WCCC) and Waterford PPN, in collaboration with various Council departments, including the Local Community Safety Partnership, Emergency Services, Climate Action, Customer Services, and Creative Waterford. External organisations such as Waterford LEADER Partnership, Waterford Area Partnership, the HSE, and Waterford Sport Partnership also played a key role.





MUNICIPAL DISTRICT INITIATIVE

WEXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

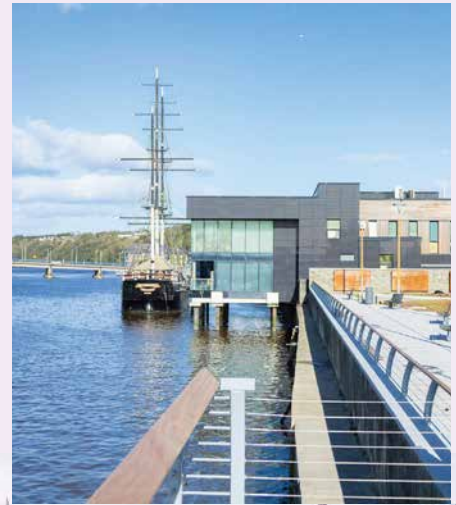
The Emigrant Park, New Ross



The River Barrow running through the historic town of New Ross, had become inaccessible. Industrialisation, car parking, inappropriate building, random flood protection works, and general neglect, had sundered the connection between town and river. Over the past twelve years, the boardwalk development, the Great New Ross Riverside Walk, the Marina improvements and the magnificent Dunbrody project had almost brought the full length of the river back to the town.

The remaining inaccessible piece was the site of 5 large oil storage tanks which hindered access to the walk along the River Barrow, and was an environmental issue.

For visitors coming from the UK or Europe, the entrance to New Ross was blighted by the 5 unsightly oil tanks, which gave a poor first impression of the town. The Emigrant Park was an ambitious project to transform the site into a quality public realm space for the people of New Ross and visitors alike.



SUPPORTING TOURISM



CAVAN COUNTY COUNCIL

Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark - Business Sustainability Programme



The mission of the the Cuilcagh Lakelands UNESCO Global Geopark is... 'to nurture and protect our place to ensure it provides a solid social, environmental and economic platform for its communities and enables them to live in balance'...

With a growing global demand for sustainable options, this initiative was devised to support tourism businesses across the Geopark communities to recognise and appreciate the



inherent regenerative tourism nature of this rural, geologically significant area and to demonstrate the opportunity in partnership and collaboration to increase the tourism offering and stand out among competing destinations.

The three pillars of sustainability (people, planet and profit) are intentionally integrated into training. The programme covers modules on Concepts of Sustainable and Regenerative Tourism, Accessibility and Inclusion in the Visitor Experience, Biodiversity, Leave No Trace, Energy and Water Conservation and Management, Waste Reduction and Management, whilst helping businesses create their own personal Sustainable Action Plan.

CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL

County Clare Green Team achieve international GSTC Recognition



This project describes how Clare County Council is building resilience and genuine sustainability within its tourism industry in Clare by collaborating on the development of a measurable, certified sustainable tourism action plan with our climate action team, tourism agencies and businesses, community representatives and conservation bodies.

Through the experience of the County Council operated Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark's programme of sustainable tourism initiatives within one of the busiest tourism destinations in the country (<https://www.burrengeopark.ie/sustainable-tourism/code-of-practice/>), Clare County Council has learned firsthand the importance

of measurement and management to enable our tourism industry to become more resilient.

Sustainability is a key objective in the Clare Tourism Strategy 2030. Clare County Council is now reimagining the county identity as a tourism destination recognised nationally and internationally for its measurable commitment to sustainable tourism that ultimately benefits its communities; a good place to live is a good place to visit.



SUPPORTING TOURISM

CORK COUNTY COUNCIL

Midleton to Youghal Greenway (MY Greenway): Phase 1: 8km



Phase 1 of the Midleton to Youghal Greenway (MY Greenway), which opened in March 2024, is 8km in length and extends from Midleton Train Station to Mogeely village. The overall Greenway, when completed, will be 23km long and will connect the key towns and villages of Midleton, Mogeely, Killeagh and Youghal along the route of the former railway line.



MY Greenway has the capacity to transform the trailhead towns of Midleton and Youghal and is set to become a key attractor to East Cork and motivation for visitors to explore the wider area. MY Greenway will underpin the development of Fáilte Ireland’s plans for ‘Tourism Growth Towns’ as set out in the Cork City, Harbour and East Cork Destination and Experience Development Plan (DEDP), which are designed to retain visitors for longer in the destination (East Cork) and maximise the day and evening economy of the area.



FINGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

Fingal Cultural & Tourism TV



Tradfest, Ireland’s premier winter cultural festival, celebrates Irish identity through music and culture globally.

In 2023, Fingal County Council partnered with TASCQ CLG to establish Tradfest in Fingal, featuring performances in iconic locations like Malahide Castle, Swords Castle, Seamus Ennis Cultural Centre, and Shakleton Gardens by leading traditional artists. The event expanded to Fingal and included filming performances, resulting in “Tradfest: The Fingal Sessions,” featuring six 30-minute episodes of artists performing and chatting with host Fiachna Ó’Braonáin in the Great Hall, Malahide Castle.



This series showcased Fingal’s heritage properties, notably the restored dining hall. Following its success, three more series were produced, with the fourth, “Ireland Music,” commencing filming at Ardgillan Castle in January 2024.

SUPPORTING TOURISM



MAYO COUNTY COUNCIL

Achill Island Greenway



The new 5km Achill Island Greenway was developed in collaboration with (30) local landowners, local business, and the local community at large. The agencies and Government Departments included Transport Infrastructure Ireland, Department of Transport, Department of Community & Rural Development, Mayo County Council and Achill Tourism.



This extension to Irelands first Greenway sees an additional 6km added to the existing 44km length of the Great Western Greenway, which now links up Westport to Cashel on Achill Island and it further enhances the tourism offering in Mayo.

MONAGHAN COUNTY COUNCIL

Rossmore Forest Park, Monaghan



Monaghan County Council has been working in conjunction with Coillte for the last number of years to develop the recreational facilities at Rossmore Forest Park, located on the outskirts of Monaghan Town. Visitor facilities include picnic areas, ample car parking and an arrival area with a coffee dock, providing on-site refreshments and an adventure play area.

There are several themed walking trails throughout the forest. These include the Lost Castle, Silver Lakes and Woodland Trails - with information panels at key sites, and a family friendly cycle trail which provides an opportunity for safe, off-road cycling for learners and young children. All of these trails are included in a Visitor guide app for the park which consists of a mapped guide, audio quiz, history etc.

New giant sculptures, an extension to the playpark, compostable toilets and wooden carvings on a nature trail will be added shortly.





CLIMATE CHANGE

DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

Energy Retrofit Programme



In 2021, the Department of Housing introduced the Deep Energy Retrofit Programme (DERP), which Donegal County Council embraced within the Lifford-Stranorlar Municipal District. The council selected a housing estate built in the late 1970s, which had long-standing issues with energy efficiency, to implement the DERP.

The initiative involved removing outdated oil-fired central heating, old timber-framed windows and doors, and decommissioning chimneys and fireplaces. The properties were upgraded with air-to-water heat pumps, triple-glazed windows, and modern doors, as well as other necessary improvements. As a result, tenants in the estate experienced lower energy bills and cleaner living environments.

The project delivered impressive results, achieving Building Energy Ratings (BER) of B2 to A3. With the retrofit of 52 properties completed in just four months, Donegal County Council successfully met the project's targets and secured the associated funding, marking a significant step forward in sustainable housing for the local community.



DUBLIN CITY COUNCIL

Climate Neutral Dublin 2030 - Local Authority Climate Action Plan 2024-2029



Climate change poses the greatest risk to our future. To address this, Dublin City Council has developed and implemented its local authority climate action plan, Climate Neutral Dublin 2030, which aims to prepare the city and its residents for the known impacts of climate change—such as flooding, sea level rise, extreme weather events, and drought—as well as the unpredictable aspects, like the intensity and frequency of these events and the evolving influence of climate on weather patterns.

Climate Neutral Dublin 2030 outlines how the city will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and contribute to limiting global warming to below 1.5°C. This plan was designed to ensure that our climate actions are collaborative, interdisciplinary, and promote resilience in a just and equitable way.



CLIMATE CHANGE



FINGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

Wildfire Management Howth Head



Wildfires are a regular threat on Howth, posing significant risk to property. In response, Fingal County Council has collaborated with international wildfire experts, Dublin Fire Brigade, and local community groups to develop a proactive wildfire management strategy. A key part of this strategy involved the creation of 5km of strategic wildfire breaks near residential areas to reduce the immediate risk to homes.

Over the past three years, the Council has trialled various methods to maintain these fire breaks, including the use of machinery and grazing animals. The introduction of goats as a sustainable solution to keep vegetation short in the wildfire breaks has proven both effective and popular. This grazing project has not only helped mitigate fire risks but also reinstated a traditional use of the heathland, attracting interest from locals and tourists alike. The initiative has successfully reduced the scale of wildfires and identified cost-effective maintenance methods.



SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL

Mini Woodland Scheme in South Dublin



To mitigate and adapt to climate change, and to increase the tree canopy in South Dublin County, South Dublin County Council (SDCC), in collaboration with local community groups, developed the Mini Woodland Scheme. This initiative involves planting native tree and understory species in urban locations, creating small, dense, and rapidly-growing woodlands. These “Mini Woodlands” serve as stepping-stone forests, aiding wildlife movement, enhancing genetic diversity, and providing natural refuges within urban environments.

The project follows a two-step process: first, the ground is prepared with cardboard and mulch to suppress weeds, followed by the planting of small trees in early spring. Since the first trial in 2021 at Sean Walsh Park, with the help of the Tallaght Litter Mugs group, 1500 volunteers have planted 40,000 trees in 36 public and private sites. SDCC provides the land, mulch, and trees, while the community contributes their dedication and labour, making this a truly collaborative effort to combat climate change.





**European
Recycling
Platform**

A Landbell Group Company

SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT & BIODIVERSITY

CORK CITY COUNCIL

Enhance Clogheenmilcon Fen Bog to create an ecological visitor attraction



The ownership of Clogheenmilcon Fen Bog transferred to Cork City Council in 2019. Prior to the Town and Village Renewal Scheme (TVRS) funding in 2019 and 2021, the amenity was in poor overall condition with restricted pedestrian access. Cork City Council worked with the local voluntary group Brand Blarney, with help from the Men's Shed, to provide significant upgrades to picnic tables, benches and signage.

Also undertaken was the development of the Ecological and Tourism Plan in June 2021 and the implementation of its key recommendations. These included: clearance works; completion of signage elements; preparation of an interpretation and landscape architect overall plan; enhanced branding and Interpretive signage; design and costing for a looped boardwalk, amphitheatre, and dipping pond. The project has now secured funding under the TVRS 2023 for the next phase of the project for the construction of a viewing platform for wildlife in the Fen.



CORK COUNTY COUNCIL

Introduction of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) - Alternative Fuel



Cork County Council operates over 700 vehicles which produce over 30% of the Council's greenhouse gas emissions. Many of these vehicles are large/heavy machines and currently technology is not available to replace them with electric alternatives.

Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (alternative fuel) was introduced with a goal of significantly reducing Cork County Council's greenhouse gas emissions. Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) is a waste derived fuel and so qualifies as a renewable and sustainable fuel. This means it reduces NOx by up to 29% over regular diesel; it reduces particulates by up to 85%; it reduces carbon dioxide equivalents (CO₂e) by up to 90%; and it can be used in any diesel engine and no modification of vehicles are required.



SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT & BIODIVERSITY



A Landbell Group Company



GALWAY CITY COUNCIL

Buaile Bó Ballyloughane



Ballyloughane became home to a new group of residents in 2024 with the arrival of a family of Dexter cows as part of an exciting biodiversity pilot project by Galway City Council.

Working with a local farmer, Galway City Council brought five Dexter cows to graze the headland east of Ballyloughane Beach, as part of the 'Buaile Bó Ballyloughane' pilot project. A 'buaile' is an Irish word for cattle enclosure, and sometimes referred to as a 'booley'.



Local schools and community groups participated in an ambassador programme to share information about this native Irish breed, agriculture, and its relationship to Irish biodiversity.

Dexter cows work very well for conservation and biodiversity projects because they are hardy and relatively small, so they are not severe on the land.

GCC is working with independent scientists and students from Atlantic Technological University to assess the impacts of the pilot on the 'buaile'.

LIMERICK CITY & COUNTY COUNCIL

GoGreenRoutes (2020-2024) Horizon 2020 project



GoGreenRoutes (2020-2024) is a €10.5 million international project, funded by the European Union. It focuses on six cities in Europe, Latin America, and China. The focus of the project is to enhance the physical and mental well-being of urban residents by increasing their connection to nature. Limerick City & County Council (LCCC), chose an NTA founded Active Travel route, the Castletroy greenway, which was completed in 2021 as a target area for GoGreenRoutes.

The route originally consisted of artificially raised and compacted ground including a number of mature ash trees in serious decline. The Castletroy greenway was a 'brown site' blank canvas to deliver an inclusive co-created design for both the community and nature. The project so far has delivered 8 interactive community-led workshops since 2021 which have informed the NBS design, and implementation.



SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT & BIODIVERSITY

MONAGHAN COUNTY COUNCIL

A Sustainable Solution for Regional & Local Road Pavement Renewal



MCC has piloted the cold-mix recycling of thousands of tonnes of previously discarded material, turning it into a viable sustainable product that can be reused in roadmaking, thus achieving vast reductions in waste, contributing to the circular economy, achieving carbon savings of over 50% when compared to conventional road construction methods, and also improving the connectivity of rural communities in a sustainable manner, as 80% of Monaghan’s population lives outside the major towns.

Asphalt road millings are a by-product produced in the resurfacing of sub-standard roads. Small quantities are sometimes re-used; typically, the majority of milled material is disposed of as waste or stockpiled. Since 2020, MCC has been developing the Cold-Mix-Recycling initiative with the DOT, TII and various other industry leads, and in 2024, it secured regional project approval to share knowledge and educate neighbouring LAs to pilot this initiative for both Road and Greenway construction



WEXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

The Establishment of Sustainable Clothes (Textiles) Banks



WCC provides clothes/textile recycling facility at 15 locations using 35 Clothes bank receptacles. Over the years it had been recognised that banks were not regulated with some operators providing banks without any form of consent resulting in significant dumping as operators were removing waste materials and leaving at sites.

In addition to this there was no record of quantities of textiles being collected, what exactly was happening to these textiles, could they be contributing to a clothes mountain or ending up as waste going to landfill or incineration. WCC was also unsure of the legitimacy of some of these operators, some if not all claimed to be linked to recognised charities, while others provided contact phone numbers that were invalid/non-operational.

It was also recognised that these operators were operating without permits or licensing and were collecting a material that was perceived to be waste but was a valuable tradable commodity.



COMMUNICATIONS



CORK CITY COUNCIL Our City is Changing



In an increasingly fragmented media landscape and amid declining trust in public bodies, Cork City Council developed a 28-page information booklet, 'Our City is Changing,' to ensure clear and genuine engagement with every resident and business in the city. Delivered by An Post to 70,000 homes and businesses, the booklet aimed to enhance understanding of the ambitious €2.5 billion investment in Cork's future.

The next five years will see significant developments in housing, sustainable transport, public spaces, parks, and climate resilience, reshaping Cork into a greener, more accessible, and vibrant city. Through engaging imagery, first-person case studies, infographics, and accessible language, the booklet outlines how Cork's transformation will benefit its residents by improving public transport, creating a healthier, more walkable city, and enhancing the urban environment. The initiative has been well-received, with businesses requesting additional copies for their staff and widespread praise from stakeholders.



DUBLIN CITY COUNCIL Believe in Dublin



Following the riots in Dublin city-centre in November 2023, there were urgent communication challenges to address. The city needed to quickly inform stakeholders that the city-centre was open for business the morning after the unrest, and shortly thereafter, it became essential to restore confidence among a nervous public and business community. Retailers were especially concerned, fearing that their busiest time of the year could be significantly impacted.

The first part of the communications initiative focused on showcasing the efforts of the city's waste management team, which worked overnight to clean the affected streets and ensure the city was ready for business. The second part of the initiative centred on promoting the image of a safe and thriving city-centre ahead of Christmas. As a result, footfall returned to normal levels, and businesses were able to recover during the critical holiday season after an initial dip in public confidence.





NETWORKS

COMMUNICATIONS

FINGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

Virtual Reality for Fingal Libraries - enhancing communications and providing access to emerging technology



The Virtual Reality (VR) for Fingal Libraries project introduces the wider population to emerging technology, providing an innovative way for Fingal County Council (FCC) to engage library patrons. The programme uses VR to showcase digital twins of FCC planning models, 3D videos of heritage properties, Irish language content, and curated apps designed to inspire and engage.

Through creative VR events and showcases, the project reaches new audiences and enhances public engagement. VR Champions are stationed in libraries to assist new users and explore additional ways to integrate the technology. In addition, Fingal Libraries provide access to the gaming software 'Unity Learn' on their public PCs, enabling the next generation of VR creators to develop their skills. By immersing users in virtual environments, this project promotes national and local initiatives while offering educational and interactive experiences. FCC is the first local authority in Ireland to launch a VR programme of this scale in its libraries.



GALWAY CITY COUNCIL

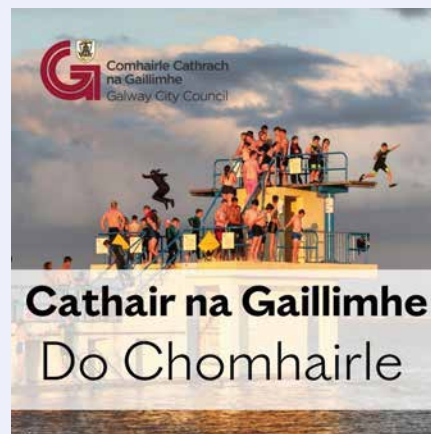
Galway City - Your Council Podcast



As part of #YourCouncilDay 2023, Galway City Council launched the Galway City - Your Council podcast series, offering insights into the wide range of services, projects, and people within the local authority.

As the governing body of Ireland's third largest city, known for its leadership in culture, education, and business, Galway City Council provides services to a population of over 83,000 with a 2023 revenue budget of €113 million and a capital budget of approximately €5 billion over the next decade.

The podcast series shines a light on the people delivering over 1,100 services across a variety of sectors, including beach maintenance, health promotion, tourism, and housing. Through this series, Galway City Council highlights the vital role that local authorities play in the social and economic fabric of the area, while also celebrating the dedication of its staff who work tirelessly to improve the quality of life in the city.



COMMUNICATIONS



NETWORKS



MONAGHAN COUNTY COUNCIL

Creative Monaghan



The Creative Monaghan programme aims to broaden access to and participation in cultural and creative activities, positioning creativity as a catalyst for collaboration, innovation, and economic development in County Monaghan.

By 2027, the vision is for Monaghan to be a place where individuals and communities actively engage in cultural

opportunities that nurture creative talent while contributing to social and economic wellbeing. A communications programme was developed to keep stakeholders informed and engaged, both within Monaghan County Council and across the community, as well as with regional and national partners. This involved hosting information clinics, expression of interest meetings, and presentations, which fostered new discussions and partnerships.

As a result, there has been a multidisciplinary approach to enhanced programming and a better understanding of how creativity and cultural engagement can be embedded into local policy and development, helping Monaghan County Council deliver its broader strategic objectives.



SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL

Women of South Dublin



Women of South Dublin is a physical, social media, and digital exhibition that celebrates the inspiring volunteer work carried out by women in South Dublin County. The exhibition aimed to raise awareness of the valuable unpaid work women contribute to their communities daily, and to inspire future generations of volunteers, particularly with a focus on promoting women and diversity.

The 34 women featured in the exhibition were nominated by the public and represented a wide range of backgrounds, including the arts, music, community groups, outreach, and sports. Each woman demonstrated leadership and made a significant impact on her community, serving as an inspiration to others. Their stories were shared through personal videos and infographics, giving insight into their dedication and achievements.

This awareness initiative, developed through South Dublin's Women's Caucus, successfully celebrated these community heroes and encouraged citizens to get more involved in supporting their local communities.





NETWORKS

COMMUNICATIONS

WEXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

Community Calendar



The Community Section of Wexford County Council has expanded in recent years, supporting a range of programmes and initiatives, including Wexford Local Community Development Committee (LCDC), Healthy Wexford, Sláintecare Healthy Communities, Wexford Age Friendly, and Sports Active Wexford. Additionally, it supports Wexford Traveller Interagency Group, Wexford Comhairle na nÓg, and Wexford PPN.

To raise awareness of the department’s extensive remit and its interconnectivity with these programmes, a 2024 Community Calendar was created. The calendar aims to increase awareness of the department’s services and signpost potential support for local communities. It features local, community-focused photos that showcase the department’s work, along with three key messages per month, tailored to highlight relevant initiatives and support services. Key dates and events are also featured to ensure the community stays informed and engaged with the services available throughout the year.



LOCAL AUTHORITY INNOVATION



FINGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

FCC, SEAI , REIL Pilot Public/Private Energy Retrofitting Scheme, Strandmill Estate



Over a number of years, Fingal County Council has been carrying out energy efficiency retrofitting works to its housing stock under the national Energy Efficiency Retrofitting Programme. This scheme only extends to council-owned stock, with privately owned properties being ineligible.

In 2023, Fingal County Council devised a pilot initiative in collaboration with SEAI and its obligated party REIL to facilitate privately owned, former council properties to avail of funding mechanisms and council contractors to carry out energy efficiency works. To achieve this, in association with SEAI and REIL, Fingal County Council invited private homeowners in Strandmill Estate, Portmarnock to consider having energy efficiency retrofit works carried out to their properties at the same time as works were carried out on council-owned houses.

A number of private homeowners opted in, and works were successfully completed alongside council-owned houses in Strandmill, Portmarnock, as part of the national Energy Efficiency Retrofit Programme (EERP).



GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL

County Galway Pre-Planning System



The County Galway Pre-Planning System is a free pre-planning enquiry system generates a report for your proposed site boundary in County Galway. This report collates common planning information relating to land use zonings, flood risk, protected structures, and other topics. This information can assist with the preparation of a planning application for permission or help decide whether a pre-planning meeting may be required.

The report is in PDF format, can be downloaded for review, and crucially updates automatically every time it is re-opened on the system to ensure it is up to date.

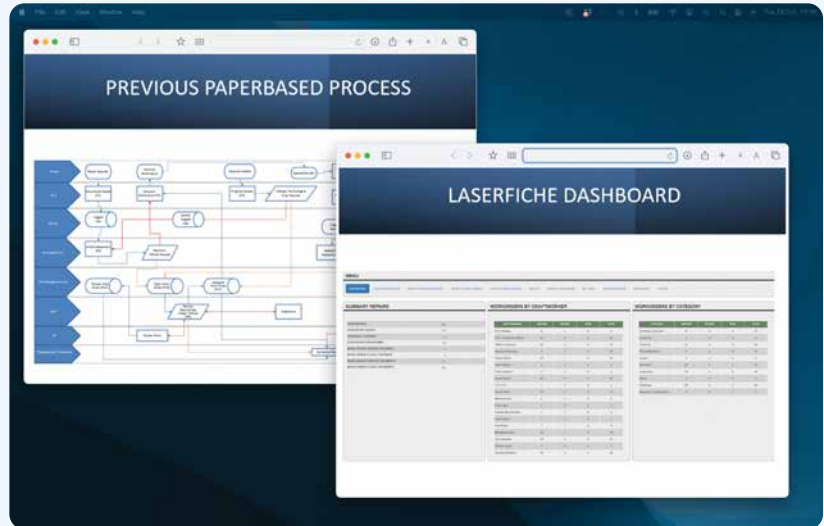


LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL

Dealing with Mould in LA homes - the process



Mould growth is a complex biological process, and every mould problem is different, requiring an individual approach to resolve. Inadequate heating has become a major issue with the increased cost of living and energy costs in recent years. Tenants are becoming increasingly assertive in looking for solutions. The Council's responsibility is to maintain the structure and installations of the dwelling to the Housing Standards Regulations.



Laois County Council has developed a new streamlined paperless process for dealing with mould complaints, which clearly sets out the Local Authority's responsibilities and tenant responsibilities. This new process is managed via a new online Laserfiche IT system.

LIMERICK CITY & COUNTY COUNCIL

Living again: Vacancy, Dereliction and Reuse initiative



Limerick City & County Council delivers a programme to activate vacant homes and derelict sites throughout the city and county, aiming to bring neglected properties back into productive use. The Council operates under an area-based approach, linking together the Government's Housing For All and Town Centre First policies.



Derelict sites may be acquired compulsorily under the Derelict Sites Act 1990, and in the last five years, LCCC has completed 185 such acquisitions. The innovation occurs where the Council acquires the sites, registers them with a clean, new title, and may sell them at that stage to new owners on the private market.



Due to LCCC's success in this area, they secured funding of €2.5 million, which enabled the de-risking and refurbishment of derelict houses in 12 towns and villages in County Limerick before putting them for sale on the open market. The Council has also secured funding of €9 million from the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund.

LOCAL AUTHORITY INNOVATION



MONAGHAN COUNTY COUNCIL

Monaghan Peace Campus & Project Children Cultural Partnership



The Peace Campus project in Monaghan was developed to address the needs that still exist in communities around segregation, fears to engage and an unwillingness to express identity. This project allows all communities to come together to engage in a safe setting. It is of major significance as it is the first time that the Orange Order and the Ulster-Scots Agency have engaged in a Peace Programme in County Monaghan.

An integral part of the MPC is a new cultural partnership with Project Children launched recently at a major event attended by then Taoiseach Leo Varadkar, Chairman and co-founder of Project Children Mr Denis Mulcahy. This exciting new

partnership will see a unique archive of images, interviews and footage documenting Project Children’s work over the past half a century find a home in the new Peace Campus and deliver a large programme of celebrations marking Project Children’s 50th anniversary in 2025.

SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL

Library Labs: STEAM at South Dublin Libraries



Library Labs is a year-long STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths) programme created to promote digital learning and STEAM across South County Dublin. It marks a major step in South Dublin Libraries’ commitment to fostering innovation, creativity, and lifelong learning within the community.

The programme is designed to engage people of all ages and backgrounds, including schools, the public, and neurodiverse groups. Through interactive workshops, hands-on demonstrations, and expert talks, participants explore various STEAM disciplines.

Library Labs seeks to inspire future innovators, problem-solvers, and lifelong learners. It highlights the richness of STEAM subjects through diverse activities and events, showcasing the connections between science, technology, art, and society.



WEXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

Just 1 Life - Road Safety Programme



For the past 17 years, Wexford County Council, in cooperation with Wexford Rotary Club, has presented a unique road safety event called Just 1 Life. Targeted at Transition Year students from secondary schools across the county, the programme aims to prevent young drivers' lives being needlessly lost in road traffic collisions.

Described by some as a “shock and awe” approach, the hard-hitting initiative features interactive videos and presentations from Wexford County Council, An Garda Síochána, the National Ambulance Service, the Health Service Executive, Mental Health Ireland, and Wexford Fire Service.

Since its inception, over 20,000 Transition Year students have attended, with more than 2,000 students participating this year alone in five events held at the National Opera House.



HEALTH & WELLBEING



CARLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Wednesday Wanderers



Wednesday Wanderers is a social walking group that traverses County Carlow. The weekly excursions afford participants the opportunity to elevate their activity levels, explore the county, engage in social interactions, and forge friendships. The inclusion of activator poles, available to all participants and accompanied by trained tutors for demonstration, renders the walks universally accessible, particularly for older adults and individuals with mobility issues and disabilities.



Since its inception in November 2023, the initiative has led over 198 participants to some of Carlow’s most picturesque destinations, such as St. Mullin’s, Rathwood, Clogreanne, Oak Park, and Altamount Gardens. Organised by Carlow Sports Partnership and financed by Carlow County Council and Sport Ireland via the Dormant Accounts Fund, these walks have garnered significant momentum. They have not only introduced participants to previously unexplored areas of the county but also supported local enterprises, including coffee docks and cafés, while fostering meaningful social connections.

DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

Model Beach Accessibility to improve Health and Well Being - A Strategic Approach



One of the greatest community assets in Donegal is its wonderful beaches. The Covid-19 pandemic brought a new appreciation of what it means to have access to these open spaces, and how important this is for health and wellbeing.

Unfortunately, not everybody is afforded the same level of access to enjoy this freedom. The objective of Donegal County Council’s beach accessibility project is to overcome the barriers that exist for many people and to establish a ‘gold standard’ of beach access. Therefore, identifying a systematic approach to achieving this goal across the county is a key objective.

The community and available resources where people live have a big influence on the quality of their health and wellbeing, both physical and emotional. This project is a good example of how a planned approach to partnership, collaboration, and improving infrastructure can remove barriers and create a more inclusive community.



HEALTH & WELLBEING

DÚN LAOGHAIRE-RATHDOWN COUNTY COUNCIL

DLR Inclusive Water Sports Camps 2023



Many children with complex and challenging disabilities are not able to access mainstream camps, and even if facilities are available, staffing and activities may not be suitable for their needs. Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown’s Inclusive Water Sports Camps have been established over the past three years to meet the needs of these children by providing accessible, enjoyable, and safe opportunities for all. The key objective of these one-to-one camps is the removal of barriers to access for children living with severe disabilities who would otherwise never have the chance to attend a summer camp.



The camps comprised four weeks of various water-based outdoor sports held in June and July, with 80 children participating. Activities with the delivery partner Active Connections included kayaking, sailing, water safety, pier walks, and group fun activities. Participants included children high on the autism spectrum, those with visual impairments, wheelchair users, and those with severe intellectual disabilities.

KERRY COUNTY COUNCIL

Development of a walking/running track and outdoor recreational area



One of the main walking and running routes for people living in the wider Reenard community in Kerry is along the L4005 (Reenard Road), which runs from the N70, Ring of Kerry Road. The L4005 is an extremely busy road that has no verge, making it extremely unsafe for people using it for recreational activities, such as walking and running.

Reenard GAA Clubhouse and grounds essentially serve as the ‘community centre’ for the rural area. All voluntary and community activities, as well as most of the local primary school’s extracurricular activities such as sports days and fundraisers, take place at these facilities. The enhancement of these facilities with the development of a designated walking and running track was agreed to be of tremendous benefit to people of all ages and abilities living in Reenard and the greater South Kerry area.



HEALTH & WELLBEING



MAYO COUNTY COUNCIL

Fit Sticks Trail



The “Fit Stick” Trail project has two components as part of the Sláintecare Healthy Communities Programme (SHC): Enhanced Outdoor Infrastructure and Community Engagement. The Fit Stick trails are fully accessible walking routes, ensuring equality of access through their design, delivery, and promotion, thereby increasing participation in physical activity for all ages, abilities, fitness levels, and those utilising mobility aids.

These trails incorporate additional infrastructure, including double-sided information boards with illustrations such as a trail map and distances, warm-up and warm-down routines, stretches, and functional fitness exercises. Distance markers are placed every kilometre, and exercise stations with safe standing areas are located at regular intervals. Rest areas allow participants to take breaks, relax, and appreciate the surrounding natural beauty.

The designation of the route as a “Fit Stick” trail provided opportunities with partners to offer evidence-based physical activity programmes targeting people with limited or chronic illnesses. Participants’ feedback showed improved feelings of contentedness, environmental stewardship, and enhanced mental health.



FESTIVAL OF THE YEAR

CORK CITY COUNCIL

Cork World Book Festival



Celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2024, Cork World Book Fest (CWBF) connects readers, communities, and writers through imaginative and collaborative programming.

The festival showcases both emerging voices and established figures, offering a diverse, multilingual programme that reflects Cork’s vibrant and diverse communities. The festival engages literature not just on the page, but also on the stage and the streets, incorporating spoken-word performances, music, storytelling, dance, and visual art.

With events and activities for all ages, CWBF creates creative spaces for writers to develop their craft while fostering connections between Cork and the global literary community. Free workshops with agents and editors attract large audiences and have led to publishing deals for some attendees.

The Teen Committee offers a platform for young voices, launching poetry, short stories, and graphic novels. CWBF is committed to fair treatment and remuneration for all participants, providing welcoming spaces to network and engage with literature.



CORK COUNTY COUNCIL

Mallow Castle Community Festivals



The Mallow Castle Festival fosters unity and joy by offering inclusive, non-religious celebrations of music festivals and holiday-themed walks, welcoming families from diverse backgrounds to come together.

Set in the scenic Mallow Castle grounds, the festival celebrates the rich cultural diversity that has developed in the town over the last decade. Mallow has become a melting pot of nationalities, and the festival reflects this diversity, transcending barriers of nationality, age, or social status. Music, as a universal language, takes centre stage, with vibrant performances that resonate with all attendees. The festival also features beloved holiday traditions like the Haunted Halloween Walk and Illumination Christmas Walk, ensuring that everyone can enjoy these special moments, regardless of cultural or religious background.

By providing a space for shared experiences, Mallow Castle Festival promotes cultural appreciation, community unity, and inclusivity, creating lasting connections among the town’s diverse population.



FESTIVAL OF THE YEAR



DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

Sound! Soundtrack Film Festival



Sound! is Ireland’s first Soundtrack Festival, celebrating the art of music and sound in film. Presented by the Regional Cultural Centre Letterkenny, the festival offers a unique opportunity for audiences to experience the power of sound in cinema. Highlights of the festival include screenings of cinematic classics accompanied by live musical scores, as well as new works by leading Irish filmmakers. In addition to film screenings, the festival hosts workshops with composers, sound designers, and instrument builders, providing hands-on experiences for aspiring sound artists and musicians.

The festival’s diverse programming caters to all ages, ensuring a fun and educational experience for attendees. Sound! attracted large audiences from across the country and inspired local musicians and sound designers to explore new career pathways in the film industry, further enriching Ireland’s cultural landscape and showcasing the vital role that music and sound play in cinematic storytelling.



DUBLIN CITY COUNCIL

Dublin Festival of History



The Dublin Festival of History, funded by Dublin City Council and organised by Dublin City Libraries in partnership with the Dublin City Council Culture Company, is a free, annual event that explores history’s impact on our everyday lives. Now in its twelfth year, the festival has gained a reputation for offering fresh perspectives on history, attracting best-selling Irish and international historians to Dublin for a series of talks and debates each autumn.

In 2023, the festival featured over 60 partner organisations and drew 9,750 attendees to venues such as Printworks at Dublin Castle, local branch libraries, and partner locations across the city and suburbs. The programme covers a wide range of topics, from international and national history to local events, including the Decade of Centenaries and the late 20th century. The festival provides a valuable opportunity for people of all backgrounds to engage with history and reflect on its ongoing relevance.





FESTIVAL OF THE YEAR



FINGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

Fingal Proms 2024



The Fingal Proms 2024 was a vibrant cultural celebration in Fingal, delivering an eclectic mix of music performances. Organised by the Events Unit of Fingal County Council, the event featured world-class musicians and emerging local talent, fostering a rich, community-centric experience.



The event kicked off on Friday, May 3rd, at Shackleton Gardens in Clonsilla with “Broadway & Beyond,” featuring Paul Byrom and his band with Guest Leah Barniville. On Saturday, May 4th, Shackleton Gardens hosted “On The Road Again” with Tom Dunne and Fiachna Ó Braonáin, while The Séamus Ennis Arts Centre in Naul had another “Broadway & Beyond” performance. Sunday, May 5th, saw “Tim Edey, Paddy Keenan & Dermot Byrne” perform “Trad & Tea” at Shackleton Gardens, and Baldoyle Community Hall hosted the final “Broadway & Beyond” show.

The initiative showcased exceptional artistry and highlighted Fingal’s heritage and diverse community locations, reaffirming its commitment to making high-quality music accessible to all.

LIMERICK CITY & COUNTY COUNCIL

Riverfest Limerick 2024



Riverfest, now in its 20th year, puts Limerick centre stage on Ireland’s May Bank Holiday weekend, with over 133,000 people attending the festival. Some 67,000 people passed through the festival village over the 4 days of fun, food and music on the banks of the River Shannon.



Families and festival goers were treated to a wide variety of offerings and events including the Pegasus Parade, Fashionfest, Riverfestival Village, River Shannon zip-line, Panoramic Wheel and National BBQ Competition. Also included were on-river events and aerial shows from Limerick’s own Fidget Feet with their show Bingo Fever ‘House’. Sunday’s Great Limerick Run attracted 17,000 participants. The streets were filled with music from the Limerick Opera Festival to the Riverfest Street Party with Red Bull chill out beats. Riverfest 2024 concluded with Sunday’s magnificent fireworks display with the backdrop of Limerick’s iconic King John’s Castle.



FESTIVAL OF THE YEAR



SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL

South Dublin Community Public Services Day



South Dublin County Council, in partnership with An Garda Síochána and The Square, Shopping Centre Tallaght, held a Community Public Services Day on the 22nd of July, 2023. The event was organised to celebrate and highlight the essential services provided within the County by various public and voluntary services and organisations. Members of the public were invited to meet, interact, and find out information while enjoying a free event.

The event enabled members of the community to explore various emergency vehicles and stands brought along by Dublin Fire Brigade, Airport Fire Services, National Ambulance Service, Dublin Bus, Go Ahead, Defence Forces and many more. Tallaght Garda Station was also open to the public, offering tours of the station, including prisoner cells, the fingerprinting process and Garda vehicles.

Following the success of the event, the Council has committed to organising this event again in 2024.



CARLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

GNÁTHÓGA NÁDÚRTHA / Natural Habitats - arts led project at Drummin Bog



Initiated by Carlow County Council Arts Service, this long term project takes a ground up approach of deep listening with the community who live close to the Drummin Bog in County Carlow. These are mainly artists, who have backgrounds as ecologists, scientists, geologists, farmers and climate activists. This arts-led project is preserving the bog site as a site of inquiry, collaboration, education and seeks to restore the community’s relationship to the natural world while fostering empowerment, climate awareness and engagement with biodiversity through artistic means.



Drummin Bog artist Jules Michael, who lives close by, is the lead artist commissioned by Carlow County Council who works collaboratively with communities on the site through music, performance, drawing, food and gatherings. Carlow has also collaborated with Kildare and Meath Arts Services to commission lead artists on their raised bog sites to bring this to a wider audience and shared conversation regarding climate change.



CORK COUNTY COUNCIL

Events at Living Youghal



Two of Cork County Council’s most prestigious buildings in Youghal, The Mall Arts Centre & St. Mary’s Collegiate Church have played host over the last decade to both artists of international renown, but also given a home to performances by local arts and cultural organisations.



Managed by The Youghal Socio-Economic Development Group’ on behalf of Cork County Council, and operating as ‘Events at Living Youghal’ these venues have proven to be places of joy and creativity for the community at large.

A programme of events runs in both locations and strikes a fine balance between local/ culturally diverse events as well as hosting both nationally and internationally recognised performers.



Not only do these venues provide inspiring and welcoming spaces for the arts community, both are major economic drivers for the local night time economy, with accommodation, eateries and attractions benefitting from the additional footfall this arts programming brings.

SUSTAINING THE ARTS

HOUSE OF
WATERFORD

IRELAND 1783

DUBLIN CITY COUNCIL

Gaeilge365 - Building Local Government's First Irish Language Innovation Unit



Launched in 2023 by Dublin City Council, Gaeilge365 transforms the Irish language into a dual-impact resource, enriching the community and economy while boosting daily Irish usage. Each initiative is crafted to expand opportunities to speak Irish and simultaneously deliver substantial benefits in public services, economic vitality, and cultural enrichment.

Incorporating social innovation, language planning, and behavioural psychology methodologies, DCC have pioneered a new language innovation category. In the process, they are seamlessly integrating Irish into everyday life, demonstrating that language revitalization can produce tangible societal benefits.

This dual-focus strategy has led to a 71% year-over-year increase in opportunities to engage with Irish created by DCC. While delivering secondary benefits including, spurring 32% of residents to participate in targeted Irish-themed street festivals, and delivered significant economic boosts through shop support schemes, averaging €17,600 annually for local retailers. Gaeilge365 is more than a language initiative—it's a powerful catalyst for community and economic enhancements.



DÚN LAOGHAIRE-RATHDOWN COUNTY COUNCIL

Nature and Place



Nature and Place invited artists to create work inspired by the forests of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown and provided unique experiences for visitors to experience this contemporary work in a natural setting. Managed by Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council Arts Office, it was supported by Coillte and the Dublin Mountains Partnership.

Méadhbh O'Connor's sonic artwork Sky Walkers invited people to take a walk in the forests, and to stop at key points to listen and take a private moment to reflect. Photographer Martin Healy's series of photographs, Silva, were captured while walking in and observing the forests over two months. A site-specific guided soundwalk, ReRoot, co-created by composer Robert Coleman and dancer Laura Sarah Dowdall, explored the sensory soundscape of Barnaslingan Wood.



GALWAY CITY COUNCIL

Reflections - A Commemoration of the Irish Women of 1923



“Reflections: In Commemoration of the Irish Women of 1923” was a captivating series of talks and artist residencies that honoured the significant contributions of Irish women during this pivotal year. Through engaging discussions led by historians and scholars, the initiative delved into the social, political, cultural, and economic experiences of women, shedding light on their challenges and triumphs.

The series featured three artist residencies over a six month period where artists from diverse disciplines immersed themselves in the history and stories of Irish women, creating original works inspired by their research and engagement with communities.

“Reflections” not only served as a platform for historical reflection but also sparked conversations on gender equality, women’s empowerment, and the continued struggle for recognition and representation. By highlighting the stories of Irish women from 1923, this initiative aimed to inspire and empower present and future generations.



MEATH COUNTY COUNCIL

Trim Library and Cultural Centre



The Trim Library and Cultural Centre consists of a new multipurpose performance space with a seating capacity of up to 235 people, linking the existing library with the adjacent former St. Patrick’s Chapel. The chapel building has undergone conservation and refurbishment work to bring it back into a useable multi-functional space.

The development by Meath County Council (MCC) has established a public facility within town, contributing to the ongoing and sustainable regeneration of Trim and augmenting its tourism potential within the wider Boyne Valley.

The centre provides a new location for the performing and creative arts, specifically Trim’s renowned and energetic music, drama, and stagecraft groups who have sought a replacement location since the closure of the former town hall in 2011. The proposal builds on the success of Meath County Council’s Trim Library and specifically the My Open Library initiative which has had a successful roll out in 2019.



SUSTAINING THE ARTS

HOUSE OF
WATERFORD

IRELAND 1783

MONAGHAN COUNTY COUNCIL

A Deep Ravine



From tiny acorns mighty oaks grow...and that is certainly the case for this Bordering Realities 'A Deep Ravine' project. During one of the most challenging periods of life, creative, arts and cultural industries were among the first sectors to shut their doors in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

But as every door closed, the sector responded immediately by opening new doors of engagement and that is simply down to creativity, innovation, sheer determination, and wanting to give people opportunities to participate during a dark, lonely isolating time for a lot of people.

What started as a response to the online Cruinniú programme in 2021, engaging 12 young musicians to the establishment of the new cross border youth folk orchestra with 100 young people, commissioning of award winning composer Michael Rooney and esteemed writer Tommy McArdle, over the past 2 years has created an incredible programme of creativity and arts.





Oifig an Rialaitheora Pleanála
Office of the Planning Regulator

URBAN REVIVAL

CORK CITY COUNCIL

Playful Placemaking- Cork City's Dynamic Community Engagement



Cork City Council has embraced play as a lever for a placemaking approach to urban revival since its participation in the URBACT Playful Paradigm (2018-2021).



Having absorbed lessons and best practices from the lead city, Udine, and adapted these initiatives with a Cork flavour, the playful approach has brought new energy to streets and communities.

What started as using play as a tool for social inclusion, community engagement and early years development has evolved to a cross sectoral, cross directorate way of working. Led by a local, inter-agency partner group, 'Let's Play Cork', the mission of the project is now focused on encouraging stakeholders to take a playful approach to realising ambitious goals. The city has not limited its learning transfer to Cork City, as the Council led a National Practice Transfer Initiative, working with towns in Laois, Wicklow, Donegal and Sligo to encourage them to take ownership of playful processes.



DÚN LAOGHAIRE-RATHDOWN COUNTY COUNCIL

Myrtle Square & Convent Lane



Dún Laoghaire Town is an urban centre with a great maritime character and history. In recent years, investment has drawn large increases in footfall to the coastline. The town centre, particularly along the main street, has not seen the same uptake in footfall.

Like other Irish urban centres around the country, the main street remains in a state of decline with empty premises. The town has always lacked a plaza or public square offering locals and the broader community a gathering and destination space.



This project was driven by the need to encourage regeneration and vitality in the town centre. This involved the creation of a new town square and the upgrade of a connecting laneway. The most important step involved the removal of rat running through traffic. The square incorporates extensive tree planting, greening, play elements, seating and a landmark structure that has been planted with climbing plants.

URBAN REVIVAL



Oifig an Rialaitheora Pleanála
Office of the Planning Regulator

FINGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

Revitalising Heritage: Restoring St. Ita's Historic Homes for Modern Use



A group of 100-year-old vacant and derelict cottages are in the process of being brought back into use as part of a €4 million restoration scheme. The houses were built some 100 years ago for workers on the St Ita's Hospital Campus and are part of the St Ita's Architectural Conservation Area. In essence, this means that the exterior appearance of the cottages must be retained during any redevelopment or repair.

Demolition or reconstruction was not an option even though some were in very poor condition so the only route back for them was to restore and conserve the properties. Modern interventions have been removed and any fabric that was beyond repair has been replaced on a like-for-like basis.

While carrying out this repair it was decided to improve the energy rating of the homes. Energy retrofits in heritage buildings present unique challenges that require careful consideration and specialized approaches.



KERRY COUNTY COUNCIL

Tralee Regeneration project - Positioning Tralee as a Regional Economic Driver and Destination Town



Concerned about the socio-economic decline of Tralee, Kerry County Council undertook a preliminary study of the extent of the disrepair of the public realm within the town.

A Streetscape Analysis identified significant issues arising from the condition of the town centre and the implications to the sustainability of its economic viability.

Investment in the town is vital to arrest this decline and renew vibrancy. By investing in schemes designed to enhance the town, its streetscapes, heritage and public spaces, it would provide a stimulus for further private & business investment.

Kerry County Council created the Tralee Town Regeneration Project and established a collaborative partnership with key stakeholders, identifying a socially inclusive strategy to change the narrative of the town and provide a catalyst for future economic growth. A new vision for Tralee as a Regional Economic Driver and Destination Town was presented as the way forward.





Oifig an Rialaitheora Pleanála
Office of the Planning Regulator

URBAN REVIVAL

MONAGHAN COUNTY COUNCIL

Ballybay Revival ~ Breathing life back into a rural town



Ballybay was once a thriving market & fair town established in the eighteenth century that had fallen on hard times with privately owned derelict properties along the main street in the town centre, natural open space amenities that needed upgrading, civic buildings that needed restoration, and some areas had attracted antisocial behaviour and littering.

Monaghan County Council put a plan in place to regenerate Ballybay Town and address these issues by purchasing private fire damaged & derelict buildings for social housing, providing improved open space amenities, new beach and boathouse to take advantage of the local natural beauty of Lough Major, and repurposing the Ballybay Civic Building to bring it back to use - all to reenergise Ballybay and breathe life back into the town.



SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL

New Urban Squares and Linear Park for Tallaght



Tallaght Town is rapidly developing and expanding. To the north of the existing Tallaght Town Centre urban core lies industrial use brown field lands at Cookstown. SDCC have encouraged the redevelopment of these lands through Planning Policy and Development Management.

In 2018, with the announcement of the first round of URDF funding, SDCC sought funding to assist in realizing a series of strategic infrastructure projects. Central to these proposals was the delivery of new infrastructure that would create new links and open key routes towards Cookstown. This included an ambitious project to develop two new parks on SDCC lands at the edge of Cookstown and adjoining the Luas station/ Bus Connects (proposed) interchange as well as the upgrade of existing public realm and delivery of new high quality public realm linking all these elements.



URBAN REVIVAL



Oifig an Rialaitheora Pleanála
Office of the Planning Regulator

WATERFORD CITY AND COUNTY COUNCIL

Reviving urban living by reducing property vacancy & dereliction in Waterford



The mid 2010s brought many challenges - not long after the property crash, it became obvious that there was a significant deficit in both available housing and overall housing supply. In late 2015, Waterford City and County Council began looking at ways of increasing housing supply, especially in relation to those that would be unable to afford it without some level of support.

The consideration and potential of vacant housing as a source of housing supply became a central theme of housing delivery in Waterford, and has subsequently expanded into a revival of town, village and city living that had become a memory for many, and an aspiration for others.



WEXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

Gorey District Park



Gorey is a dynamic, modern town with an expanding, culturally-diverse population (14% over the last 6 years, CSO 2022) that required and deserved a high standard of public space with attractive recreational opportunities. The re-developed district park now provides this. Furthermore the extended park provides quality, accessible recreation opportunities for citizens of the wider hinterland of North Wexford and South Wicklow. It is an attraction for visitors providing quality, free recreation opportunities.

The redevelopment of the District Park included the provision of new facilities, including a pitch, accessible changing facilities, cafe, public toilets, changing space unit, playground, outdoor gym, walking/running track with further gym equipment, biodiversity and sensory gardens while retaining the existing playground and skatepark.





HERITAGE AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT

CAVAN COUNTY COUNCIL

Virginia Civic, Cultural and Library Services Centre



The Virginia Civic, Cultural, and Library Services Centre is a transformative, integrated civic services centre incorporating a new library, civic space and an upgraded Ramor Theatre.

The ground floor contains the Juvenile and Young Adult Library and other public library facilities, while the first floor houses the adult library, study area, and a meeting room for community use. The lower ground floor comprises a multipurpose exhibition/studio space, shared by the library and theatre, and accommodates community events and classes.

The former Parochial House adjacent to the existing Ramor Theatre has been transformed into a box office, office space, and digital suite for the theatre. The theatre and library are now linked by a shared foyer, with customer and performer facilities greatly enhanced by new reception space, a “green room,” and improved accessibility. This €6.3m project has had a hugely regenerative effect on Virginia, with the library recording a 2,400% increase in membership since opening.



CORK COUNTY COUNCIL

Restoration of Casemate Building at Camden Fort Meagher



The restoration and preservation works of a casemate building at Camden Fort Meagher, Crosshaven, Co. Cork, a Victorian-era military fort classified as a national monument and operating as a tourist attraction, involved several specialist tasks. These included the excavation, waterproofing, and backfilling of barrel-vaulted roofs, which revealed two original stone gun rails that had been hidden over time.

Traditional methods were used for stone cleaning and re-pointing of stonework with lime mortars to safeguard the integrity of the original construction. The works also included the replacement and repair of cast-iron gutters and downpipes, lead work, roof works, painting of handrails, gutters and downpipes, flaunching of chimney headcaps, and lead capping to chimney flues, all carried out using traditional techniques.

These efforts are part of a phased repair to render the building waterproof, ensuring the preservation of the structural, historical, and cultural heritage of this unique building for future generations.



HERITAGE AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT



DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

The Wonder of Weave - A Showcase of Irish & Scottish Tweed



“The Wonder of Weave - A Showcase of Irish and Scottish Tweed” was designed to further explore connections between Ireland and Scotland as part of the Economic Development Unit’s ongoing Diaspora work. Ireland and Scotland have a long and strong tradition of Diaspora engagement, with Tweed, Knitwear, and Wool being shared interests. This initiative aimed to explore and expand on this connection by connecting Irish and Scottish businesses, building stronger working relations between them, and developing Donegal County Council’s relations with local businesses, universities, and Scottish enterprises.

The event allowed for the display of Irish and Scottish tweed and involved a panel discussion of business representatives looking at the history and future of Irish and Scottish tweed, showcasing it as a sustainable, progressive, and forward-facing textile. An Irish hand loom was also brought over for the event to demonstrate the differences in Irish and Scottish production.



DUBLIN CITY COUNCIL

14 Henrietta Street



14 Henrietta Street is a social history museum developed by Dublin City Council in Dublin’s North West inner city. It explores the previously overlooked social history and living conditions of people in Dublin’s tenements, as told by its former residents. The museum opened to the public in September 2018 following a phased programme of works that commenced in 2008 with emergency stabilisation works.

Since its opening, the museum has positively impacted this historic early 18th-century street and the inner city, increasing footfall to the area and fostering a renewed engagement and sense of pride among Dubliners with links to the house, the street, and wider tenement Dublin. It has become a catalyst for heritage regeneration on the street, ensuring it will be enjoyed by visitors long into the future.





HERITAGE AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT

GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL

Galway County Ecclesiastical Heritage Project



The Galway County Ecclesiastical Heritage Project is dedicated to celebrating 1,500 years of church heritage in County Galway. It has involved conducting comprehensive audits of all church and holy well sites in County Galway, both active and disused, and creating engaging books and booklets to highlight the county's rich ecclesiastical history. Furthermore, the project collaborates with local communities to develop Conservation Management Plans and carry out necessary conservation work on selected sites.



Galway County Council provides funding from its own resources and also applies to the Heritage Council and the Community Monuments Fund for funding to undertake this valuable work and assists community groups in their applications for funding. Additionally, multimedia content such as podcasts, films, and StoryMaps are being produced to further showcase and preserve this significant heritage, community, and tourism asset. Through these combined efforts, the project aims to raise awareness and appreciation of Galway's diverse ecclesiastical legacy for current and future generations.



MONAGHAN COUNTY COUNCIL

Castleblayney Gate Lodge Library and Market Square Regeneration



The project consisted of conservation and renovation works to the derelict Gate Lodge building, a protected structure to provide a modern public library, community, and cultural space. The initiative included public realm enhancement works to Market Square to link the building to its adjacent sister building.



The principal focus was on conserving the surviving fabric of the heritage building and bringing it back into community use as a new branch library for Castleblayney. A new extension was constructed as a contemporary addition, maximising natural light and conveying openness and activity to the public. The building defines a formal entrance to Hope Castle Estate and Park, an extensively used recreation area within Castleblayney.

In addition to the conservation of the historic structure, the wider objective of Market Square Regeneration was to enhance the user experience entering the estate, with the provision of quality community spaces and public realm improvements.

HERITAGE AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT



SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL Saggart Schoolhouse Community Centre



South Dublin County Council led the conservation, restoration, and enhancement of the vacant protected structure of St. Mary's National School building in Saggart.

This project included the addition of a new entrance, reception, service area, and multi-function hall to create the new Saggart Schoolhouse Community Centre for the benefit of the Saggart community.



Famine records have been digitised by Tipperary County Council



TIPPERARY COUNTY COUNCIL Tipperary Studies Digital Platform



'Tipperary Studies Digital Platform' involves the development of an online platform to showcase the archival collection at Tipperary Studies. This collection is wide and varied, including manuscripts, images, postcards, journals, sporting programmes, theatre programmes, booklets, and ephemera that showcase the extensive history of Tipperary and other locations further afield. All items have been digitised in-house by Tipperary County Council Library staff and presented online, free of charge, to a global audience.

14 NEWS TIPPERARY LIBRARIES DIGITISE CLASSIC PHOTOS Classic glassplate image collection now digitised by Tipp Library Service



During the Covid-19 lockdown in 2021, a digitisation project was implemented to scan and put online a collection of Poor Law Union Minute Books. Ninety Minute Books were digitised from the pre-Famine to post-Famine era (1839-1852), resulting in 42,165 high-definition page scans. These were converted into 322 separate PDF documents for uploading to the website. The work on this digitisation was featured on Nuacht TG4 on Friday, 30 April 2021.



HERITAGE AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT

WATERFORD CITY AND COUNTY COUNCIL

Irish Wake Museum



The conservation of 3, 4, and 5 Cathedral Square, originally built as an almshouse in 1478, has transformed these buildings into the Irish Wake Museum. This unique visitor attraction in Waterford celebrates how the Irish have approached death since prehistory, with a particular focus on the customs and superstitions of the traditional Irish 19th-century wake. The small houses, occupied from the 15th to the late 20th century, are the oldest domestic urban buildings in Ireland. While unsuitable for residential or commercial use, their historic importance made them ideal for a sixth Waterford Treasures Museums visitor attraction, located in Ireland’s only dedicated museum quarter. The site provides a palimpsest of human occupation in the ‘dead centre’ of Waterford, a former graveyard stretching back 700 years.

The conservation project team included Council architects, planners, a conservation officer, an archaeologist, museum staff, and a master conservation mason. Waterford Council has reimagined the historic city core, the Viking Triangle, through heritage, tourism, and inner-city regeneration.



AGE FRIENDLY INITIATIVE



CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL

Clare Culture Companions



Clare Culture Companions is a vibrant social network designed to enrich the lives of older residents in County Clare by fostering connections through shared experiences in the arts, culture, and volunteering. Recognising that many older people would attend more cultural events if they had company, the initiative connects individuals with a shared passion for the arts. Participants can easily find companions to attend plays, concerts, films, exhibitions and other cultural activities, making outings more enjoyable and accessible.



In addition to enhancing social lives, Clare Culture Companions taps into the county’s rich cultural scene, promoting cultural participation and encouraging community engagement. The programme not only alleviates loneliness but also builds a sense of belonging, offering older people opportunities to experience the arts while forging meaningful social connections within their community.

CORK CITY COUNCIL

Cork Age Friendly Conversations



This initiative was a collaboration between the community, represented by the Cork Age Friendly Steering Group, the education sector through University College Cork (UCC), and Cork City Council. The partnership used participatory and co-design community engagement methods to review the existing Age Friendly Strategy and establish the framework for the new strategy. This approach identified new themes and shaped the process for broader Age Friendly consultations, placing older people at the heart of planning future services and initiatives.

The “Cork Age Friendly City Conversations” project was co-run with Community Academic Research Links (CARL), a research initiative at UCC that connects community groups with students and staff to explore relevant research questions. The resulting report, Working Towards an Age Friendly Strategy for Cork City, is now a key document for Cork City Council, serving as a model for future national initiatives involving the participation of older people.





AGE FRIENDLY INITIATIVE

DÚN LAOGHAIRE-RATHDOWN COUNTY COUNCIL

Creative Brainwaves-Ageing well in dlr!



According to the 2022 Census, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown (dlr) has one of the largest ageing populations in Ireland, with over 17% of residents aged over 65, a figure expected to double by 2050. Knowledge has the power to inspire and, in dlr, the Creative Brainwaves programme aims to inform and engage the ageing population on good brain health and creativity. This programme not only seeks to enhance quality of life but also to connect and energise the community. It forms part of dlr’s Age-Friendly agenda, supporting the implementation of the Age-Friendly Strategy 2022–2026.

Building on past efforts, Creative Brainwaves has focused on supporting individuals and families living with dementia and brain health issues, recognising the crucial role of creativity. The initiative includes the Creative Brainwaves talks and event series, the annual dlr Age Friendly Magazine (2024 edition), and Rendevers virtual reality kits, all aimed at promoting good brain health.



FINGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

Vintage Picnic Arts Creativity and Music Festival for +55s



The Fingal Vintage Picnic, Arts, Creativity and Music Festival was created specifically for older adults, offering a vibrant and enjoyable day out to socialise, meet new people, try new activities and simply have fun in the scenic setting of Swords Castle.

The festival caters to a wide range of interests, featuring art demonstrations, craft-making workshops, mind and body sessions, and physical activities like tai chi, Zumba and chair yoga. Attendees can also enjoy tandem cycling, outdoor garden games and browse information stands offering useful resources. Entertainment on the main stage includes performances from local musicians and headline acts, tailored to appeal to the audience.

The festival is a joyous, uplifting event where participants are encouraged to dance, sing, try new things, or simply relax and take in the atmosphere. Following overwhelmingly positive feedback, the Vintage Picnic is now a permanent feature of Fingal County Council’s annual festival programme.

AGE FRIENDLY INITIATIVE



KERRY COUNTY COUNCIL

Youth Action Addressing IT poverty among older people in Kerry

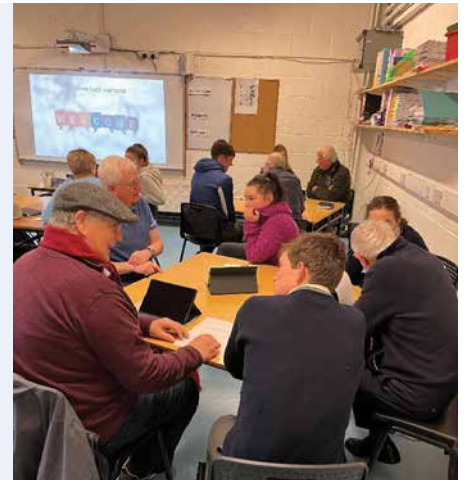


Research has shown that older people often face challenges such as loneliness and isolation, which can negatively impact their well-being.

The recent pandemic has further compounded these issues. To address these problems, an intergenerational project was developed through the Kerry Diocesan Youth Service in partnership with the University of Limerick's Executive Leadership Programme.

This initiative aimed to tackle IT poverty among older people in South Kerry, based on a detailed problem analysis. The analysis identified two key barriers to connectivity: first, the availability and cost of devices and internet access, and second, the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of older people towards IT.

By pairing younger people with older adults, the project provided training on age-friendly IT devices, helping older people to build both the capacity and confidence to engage with technology. The initiative has fostered stronger community ties and opened up new opportunities for social connectivity and engagement.



KILDARE COUNTY COUNCIL

Ballymore Eustace as an Age Friendly Climate Friendly Village



The initiative aimed to help the ageing population remain active, valued members of their community and live independently in their own homes for as long as possible. The project focused on enabling all residents to move easily through the village and enjoy its open spaces.

Recognising that climate change is the defining issue of our time, the project also addressed the need for an urgent response to international and national climate targets. By combining the goals of age-friendly and climate-friendly living, the initiative sought to create a village that was inclusive, accessible, and sustainable for all generations. Achieving this required cooperation across age groups and the formation of new partnerships at all levels of the community. The result is a village where older people can go about their daily lives in comfort, while also contributing to broader climate goals through sustainable living.

<p>1/2 Day Workshop "I liked the breath of information provided as well as the sharing of other peoples ideas" Lower Kinnage Road Residents' Association</p>	<p>Climate Action "I really enjoyed the clear and excellent range of illustrative slides delivered professionally by Gavin Harle" Ratoath Men's Shed</p>	<p>Local Site Visit "I felt empowered on the steps I can take to involve myself in Climate Action" Clashmore and Kinsalebeg Community Council</p>
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Let's Talk Climate Action:
This half day workshop will include lunch and an afternoon site visit for Age Friendly Ireland network members to better understand the need for climate action at a local level.

A workshop in 4 parts:

1. An introduction to climate science, impacts and solutions
2. A focus on energy saving, carbon footprint and home energy upgrades.
3. A facilitated workshop to identify possible climate actions at a local level
4. Lunch followed by local riverwalk



This workshop will assist individuals and community groups to improve local environmental innovation and encourage communities to start climate action projects.
"I recommend this workshop to other Local Authorities and Community Groups" Bernadine Conry, Meath County Council

Contact Carmel Cashin email: ccashin@kildarecoco.ie



AGE FRIENDLY INITIATIVE



MONAGHAN COUNTY COUNCIL

Beech Hill College Intergenerational Project



The Beech Hill College Intergenerational Project continues to connect Transitional Year (TY) students with residents of local nursing homes and older people’s organisations in Monaghan through a regular local news broadcast.

The project addresses the isolation and loneliness experienced by many residents, especially those without nearby family. By involving students in broadcasting, the project also directly benefits the TY students, who learn new skills and build their confidence as they gain experience in journalism and public speaking. The students hope to visit the nursing home residents in person as the project develops, further strengthening intergenerational ties.

Supported by the staff and pupils of Beech Hill College, along with the Northern Standard newspaper, the initiative has received considerable praise. The students were generously provided with an Apple MacBook by the County Monaghan fund, which recognised the project’s valuable contribution to fostering connections across generations.



WEXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

Sporting Memories



Sporting Memories is an awareness and support programme designed to use the power of sports reminiscence to improve the health and wellbeing of individuals, particularly those living with dementia. The programme aims to tackle dementia, depression, and loneliness by offering safe, friendly sessions where people with dementia and their family carers can stay connected to their communities.

By sharing memories sparked by images, videos, and other sports-related tools, Sporting Memories encourages social engagement and strengthens bonds. Whether participants played sports, were local club members, or simply enjoyed watching and listening to games, these sporting memories help create a sense of identity that lasts a lifetime. Through the use of sporting cues, the programme stimulates memory, improves communication and social skills, and fosters a sense of belonging within the local community, bringing people together and enhancing their connection to their past and to one another.





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