



**Chambers  
Ireland**  
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# Excellence in Local Government Awards 2025



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

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Chambers Ireland would like to thank all of the kind sponsors for their involvement in the 2025 Excellence in Local Government Awards.



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# Welcome to the 2025 Excellence in Local Government Awards!



**Margaret Considine**  
President  
Chambers Ireland

We are proud to mark 22 years of the Excellence in Local Government Awards, a testament to the remarkable achievements of local authorities across Ireland. Each year, local government teams continue to raise the bar with innovative projects and initiatives that make a real difference in their communities. These Awards highlight best practice, celebrate the dedication and creativity within local government, and shine a light on work that often goes unseen.



**Ian Talbot**  
Chief Executive  
Chambers Ireland

As the Awards have evolved, we have introduced new categories to reflect the changing priorities of our communities and our respective organisations. This year, we are especially pleased to launch the 'Celebrating Irish Language and Culture' category, recognising the vital role local authorities play in promoting our heritage and fostering a sense of belonging.

With a record 259 submissions from 26 Local Authorities, the Awards demonstrate the breadth and quality of service delivered nationwide. The standard of entries continues to rise, reflecting the growing ambition and professionalism within the sector.

Chambers Ireland's priorities have also evolved, with a renewed commitment to supporting local government in driving sustainable economic development. We know that strong local government is the foundation of a thriving local economy. Our Chamber Network stands ready to collaborate with local authorities to deliver the key infrastructure, housing, transport, water, grid connections, and green energy that are necessary for Ireland's future prosperity.

We invite you to explore this guide and discover the outstanding projects and initiatives shortlisted across 16 award categories. Congratulations to all shortlisted authorities for your commitment to improving local areas and best wishes for your continued success. We hope you find inspiration and ideas to bring back to your own region.



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# 2025 Judges Quotes

## AMY AHERN

OPERATIONS COMMUNITY LIAISON LEAD,  
ORSTED



I am extremely grateful to be part of the Excellence in Local Government Awards judging panel. It is an honour to support a process that recognises the outstanding work, dedication, and innovation happening

across local authorities. Being involved in evaluating initiatives that directly impact communities and improve lives is both inspiring and humbling. The passion, creativity, and commitment demonstrated by councils and their teams reflect the very best of public service

## GILL BARWISE

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL,  
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING, LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT AND HERITAGE



It has been a pleasure to participate as a judge in the Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Awards. The hard work and commitment to public service in all of the projects is clear to see. All of the

entrants, whether they are the recipient of an award or not, have enriched their communities through their efforts, and should be proud of their achievements.

## DR. PHILIP BYRNE

DIRECTOR,  
BYRNE TRAINING AND CONSULTING



Each year we're inspired by the innovation and dedication shown by our local authorities, but this year's Chamber of Commerce Awards entries have truly set a new standard. The creativity, community impact,

and commitment to excellence demonstrated across every submission highlight the outstanding work being done to support local business growth and regional prosperity.

## DR. STACEY CANNON CAHILL

LECTURER & PROGRAMME LEAD FOR THE  
MA IN STRATEGIC HEALTH AND WELLBEING  
LEADERSHIP, TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY  
OF THE SHANNON: MIDWEST



It's been an honour and privilege to be part of this years judging panel for the ELG awards. These awards showcase and celebrate the tremendous work being carried out by local authorities and

communities, highlighting the positive impact across many areas. It was truly inspiring to see the breath and high standard of projects. Huge credit to all entrants and a special congratulations to those shortlisted.

## TIM CAREY

HEAD OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
GOVERNANCE AND ELECTED MEMBERS,  
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING, LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT AND HERITAGE



It was a pleasure to review the entries. They covered such a broad range of projects in terms of scale, approach and subject. There was a really impressive array of projects. The level of innovation on display shows the

interest and drive by local authorities to enhance and improve the quality of life in their local authority area. There was a consistently high standard which made whittling down to a shortlist a difficult but very enjoyable experience.

## DEIRDRE NÍ CHEALLACHÁIN

LOCAL GOVERNMENT DIVISION,  
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING, LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT AND HERITAGE



The quality of this year's applications illustrate the impactful role that local authorities play in our everyday lives. The impressive innovation displayed is a testament to the dedication of our local

government sector colleagues, who consistently rise to meet the needs of, as well as the challenges facing, our communities in new and creative ways.

## RÓISÍN NÍ CHINNÉIDE

ADVOCACY MANAGER,  
CONRADH NA GAELIGE



Is cúis mhór áthais dúinn go bhfuil catagóir nua sna Gradaim seo i mbliana a aithníonn tiomantas na n-údarás áitiúla don Ghaeilge. Chuir líon, caighdeán agus éagsúlacht na n-iontrálacha iontas orm, agus

ba phribhléid é foghlaim faoi na tograí nuálacha atá idir lámha fud fad na tíre chun an Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn - go mba fada buan é!

## SARAH KELLY

BUSINESS & BIODIVERSITY OFFICER,  
NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY DATA CENTRE /  
ALL IRELAND POLLINATOR PLAN



2025's submissions proved to be of an excellent standard. Yet again commitment, passion, and deep consideration across complex community and project dynamics was so evident in all of the submissions; inspirational

to read. The move towards nature-positive through engagement continues apace!

## ORLA KENNEALLY

LOCAL GOVERNMENT DIVISION,  
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING, LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT AND HERITAGE



These awards are a wonderful initiative to showcase the work of local government. The scale, breadth and ambition of the entries is eye-opening. It is a pleasure to have had the opportunity to take part in this

process. I would like to congratulate all the entrants, whose work has made such a rich contribution to Irish public life.

## MIRIAM MCDONALD

BOARD MEMBER,  
NATIONAL OVERSIGHT AND AUDIT  
COMMITTEE (NOAC).



The National Oversight and Audit Committee monitors performance of local authorities and highlights examples of best practice. It was a pleasure, therefore, to participate as a judge in these Awards and to

see the range of innovative projects. These awards allow a celebration of the positive work carried out by local authorities around the country and the innovative thinking that happens every day as they serve their communities. Well done to everyone involved.

## TOMMY MOYLAN

DIRECTOR,  
ASSOCIATION OF IRISH LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT (AILG)



It is a true honour to serve as a judge for the Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Awards. Each year, these awards highlight the outstanding innovation, commitment, and creativity within our local

authorities. The breadth of projects being delivered across the country is truly inspiring — each one making a real difference in enhancing the quality of life for our citizens and strengthening our communities. While choosing a winner is never easy, every entry deserves immense recognition for its vision and dedication to public service.

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**DR. SEAN O'RIORDAIN****CHAIR,  
PUBLIC POLICY ADVISORY NETWORK**

The Local Government Awards Programme organised by Chambers Ireland with the support of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, is an annual celebration of excellence

delivered through our Local Authorities. The many best practice examples considered by the juries judging the Award Applicants are a showcase of just how positive a contribution our local and democratically accountable Councils make to daily living all over Ireland. It is a pleasure to be associated with the Awards this year, building on many years of being involved. It is something I look forward to each year!

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**DR. CIARÁN SEOIGHE****DIRECTOR GENERAL,  
FORENSIC SCIENCE IRELAND**

Reading the submissions I was immediately struck by the commitment, innovation and hard work put in by so many people. It is remarkable how much is going in every corner of the country not to mention the

diversity of activities. What it shows is that we are a nation committed to public service and making life better for the people of Ireland. Congratulations to everyone who has been shortlisted – and thank you!

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**VINNIE O'SHEA****NATIONAL COORDINATOR,  
HEALTHY IRELAND - LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

It has been a privilege to once again witness the breadth and diversity of initiatives represented in this year's entries. The range of projects highlights the depth of local government's reach —

addressing complex and evolving issues through collaboration, innovation, and a deep connection with local communities. These awards stand as a testament to the joined-up approaches that continue to strengthen public service delivery and enhance quality of life across Ireland. Congratulations to all entrants, and good luck to those shortlisted — your work reminds us what's possible when people and ideas come together for the common good and reflects the very best of local government in action. Enjoy the evening and the well-deserved recognition of your achievements

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**HEATHER YEDIGAROFF****CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER,  
LGIU**

It's been a great honour to be involved with the Awards this year for the first time. It was no easy task given the number and high standard of entries. But the impact of the programmes, and the commitment of the teams

delivering them, shone through in every submission. I'm very much looking forward to seeing the learning from these projects be promoted to the wider LGIU network around the world.



## CARLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

### Applied Learning Programme for Landscape Communities within the Blackstairs Mountains



The Blackstairs Mountain Range in Carlow are among the South-East's premier High Nature Value Landscapes, benefiting in recent years from the Blackstairs Farming Futures EIP, and is now an ACRES CP area. This project focused on the Non-Farming Members of the Blackstairs communities, who are increasingly interested in learning about, participating in, and questioning how, their landscape is being managed (insight from a recent Blackstairs conference).

Based on guidance from the Burren, Comeragh Mountains, and others, the project set out to deliver an improved understanding of results-based landscape management, to encourage farming and non-farming relationships, and to strengthen foundations for future community stewardship. By project end: 13 "Plans for Nature" produced. 7 local groups completed "Heritage Keepers" programme. Over 60 attendees at "The Landscapes that Connect our Farming and Non-Farming Communities" Conference. 4 farm walks completed with 95 participants "Landscapes of Inspiration and Imagination" art publication produced by Borris College.



## CORK CITY COUNCIL

### Transforming Kerrypike: the transformation of Ballycannon Park



This initiative is the investment that Cork City Council has made in working with Kerry Pike and Clogheen Community Association to transform Ballycannon Park into a vital piece of community infrastructure in a rapidly growing part of Cork City.

The Council has worked in partnership with the Community Association to deliver a range of transformation changes including: tarmacing of carpark and footpath around the GAA pitch; installation of lighting in carpark and along the newly tarmacked footpath; installation of a commemorative information panel for local War of Independence events; an outdoor exercise area and a playground. The City Council has also supported the planting of a diverse range of shrubs and flowers to improve the local bio-diversity. Finally, the Council has worked with the Community Association to develop the concept of a sports pavilion for the Park, which has now secured planning permission and is being currently fund raised for.

# SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES



## FINGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

### Meakstown Community Centre and Bloom Community Garden



This innovative development by Fingal County Council is provided within a section of a public park near a local neighbourhood centre. The development responded to local campaigns for a community centre and redevelopment of Lanesborough Park. The community centre is set as a pavilion in a corner of the park. The site is accessible within 10 mins walk of the majority of local residents and a mix of facilities for sport and community use are now available for all ages.

The brief and detail design considered and responded to the needs and requests of the community throughout. The new community centre provides a striking, landmark, environmentally conscious building within the park. The gold medal award winning Bloom Garden from 2023 has been adapted and will be completed shortly beside the new building to further enhance its role as a new thriving hub for local community.



## KILDARE COUNTY COUNCIL

### The DemoHouse



The DemoHouse is a unique initiative led by Kildare County Council to showcase best practices in sustainable home upgrades. Located in Maynooth, this 1990s social housing unit has been transformed into a living example of energy efficiency, universal design, and climate resilience. Visitors can explore fabric upgrades, airtight construction, low-carbon heating systems, and biodiversity-friendly landscaping.

Additionally, the project showcases nature-based Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDs) that manage surface water and includes pollinator-friendly planting to support local biodiversity.

The DemoHouse promotes walkability and cycling to local amenities according to the concept of Town Centre First. It emphasises the principles of circular economy and provides a practical guide for homeowners seeking sustainable living solutions. The DemoHouse also serves as a research and education hub, collaborating with Maynooth University to study energy efficiency and indoor air quality.



## LIMERICK CITY & COUNTY COUNCIL

### Limerick Going for Gold - Environment Improvement Grant & Competition



Limerick Going for Gold Environmental Improvement Grant & Competition is a unique collaboration between Limerick City and County Council and the JP McManus Charitable Foundation providing funding to local groups to improve the biodiversity, nature conservation, circular economy and planting schemes for sustainable living. The competition focus is about the groups coming together to shape, change and improve their area, make it more sustainable, to preserve nature and improve the biodiversity.

This scheme celebrates the efforts and endeavours of community groups through Limerick City and County, to make their area a better place to live, socialise, work, visit, and help to transition Limerick to an environmentally sustainable low carbon and climate resilient society. This scheme was initiated nearly 14 years ago, providing more funding each year and in 2024 over €180,000 was distributed to the communities in Limerick City and County.



## MONAGHAN COUNTY COUNCIL

### Protecting the Scotstown River: A Community-Led Blue Dot Waterbody Initiative



The Scotstown River has been designated a 'Blue Dot' river. This means it has reached the highest levels of water quality. It is one of only a few rivers nationally, and the only catchment in Monaghan, that has achieved this. Under this project, various stakeholders led by Monaghan County Council came together to look closer at this amazing river and bring the community along to better understand and protect this unspoiled waterbody.



The project was comprised of 2 elements, an ecological survey and a collaborative community engagement component. A baseline riparian survey of the river was commissioned to assess the catchment's strengths and identify areas for improvement, ensuring resilience against climate change. Secondly, community engagement initiatives were established to raise awareness of the special Blue Dot area, fostering pride and promoting stewardship of the river and to ensure the viability and sustainability of the river for future generations to enjoy.

# SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES



## SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL

### Connecting Communities Through the Regeneration of West Tallaght Parks



South Dublin County Council delivered a transformative €12 million regeneration across Killinarden Park, Jobstown Park, and Whitestown Stream Park, establishing them as vital anchors for daily community life in West Tallaght. Through a collaborative, community-first process, the parks now actively support recreation, health, biodiversity, and social connection across over 95 acres. New inclusive facilities such as playgrounds, skate parks, BMX tracks, outdoor gyms, plazas, and lit active travel routes have embedded the parks into everyday life.



Extensive structured and informal engagement shaped the project at every stage, ensuring the parks reflect and serve the needs of residents. Since completion, usage has surged across all age groups, with the parks hosting regular activities, sports, and events, and fostering new networks of community participation. Antisocial behaviour and illegal dumping have declined significantly. The parks now stand as lasting community hubs, providing a model of sustainable, inclusive urban regeneration.



## WEXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

### The Great New Ross Riverside Walk



The Great New Ross Riverside Walk (TGNRRW) Project transforms the River Barrow town corridor into a thriving ecological and community hub. Over the past twelve years the River Barrow has been returned to the community. Previously none of the over 1200m long town riverfront was accessible. Now through a series of linked projects, including cantilever boardwalk, riverside park, marina improvements and nature walk atop flood protection; the entire riverfront is accessible. It is fully lit with LED lighting with accessible ramps at nine locations along its length making this facility a treasure for all.



This initiative restores native vegetation along the riverbank and creates pollinator-friendly meadows. Low-carbon design principles guide the project, using renewable and reusable materials. The project includes educational signage promoting sustainable living, reduces waste through upcycled infrastructure and aligns with global sustainability goals, balancing infrastructure, ecological restoration with community well-being, economic resilience, and a significantly improved quality of life.



## DUBLIN CITY COUNCIL

## Consultation & Participation Process Co-Designed with Disabled Person's Organisations



Dublin City Council co-designed a structured consultation process with Disabled Persons Organisations (DPOs), grounded in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD). Developed collaboratively with DPOs, elected members, and employees, the process ensures early, meaningful, and ongoing engagement across three phases: Pre-Design, Design, and Post-Project. Piloted on public realm, accessibility, and community projects, it has been refined through feedback and now focuses on accessible documentation, a DPO database, and a consultation tracker.

The initiative is supported by a corporate implementation plan and DCC's new Engage platform, which facilitates transparent public participation. The process has improved project outcomes, built trust with DPOs, and inspired interest from other local authorities. It aligns with Ireland's Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty and was shortlisted for a Global Service Design Award in 2024. This initiative exemplifies inclusive governance and a commitment to accessibility and equity in local decision-making.



## KERRY COUNTY COUNCIL

## Refurbishment of former Moyvane Garda Station for community use



Moyvane Garda Station in North Kerry closed as a functioning Garda Station in 2012. The building lay vacant for several years. The community in Moyvane came together with an aim of acquiring the building for community use. Moyvane is in North Kerry, approximately 11km from Listowel town centre, with a population in the village and surrounding area of 2,440 based on the 2022 Census.

Moyvane, like many parts of rural Ireland has experienced population decline which has had a significant economic and community impact. Following community engagement, Fáilte Isteach Gach Duine Moyvane CLG identified the need to have a community facility to provide a focal point for the older population to meet up as well as to have a remote working hub to attract people back to the village. Such an initiative was intended to enhance village vibrancy and strengthen social connections in the village.



## DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

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post



### KILDARE COUNTY COUNCIL

## Barrow Blueway Inclusive Initiative



Continuously working to break down barriers and promote positive change for all - particularly for people living with disabilities - is how the Barrow Blueway inclusive initiative came to fruition. It's approach is to identify facilities with inadequate provisions and work towards a resolution.



The Barrow Blue Way inclusive initiative is a joint project between Kildare County Council, Sports Partnership section, and Waterways Ireland, with the aim to make the Barrow Blueway accessible to all individuals and families living with disabilities.

The project includes providing wheelchair accessible bikes, tandem bikes, and a fully accessible toilet facility along the tow path trail. The initiative was launched in November 2024 in collaboration with Dilly Dally Café, located in a rural area 6km outside Athy, Co Kildare, along the Barrow Blueway.



### MEATH COUNTY COUNCIL

## Empowering Futures: Entrepreneurship Programme for People with Disabilities



The "Entrepreneurship Programme for People with Disabilities" is a specialised educational initiative aimed at supporting individuals with disabilities interested in self-employment. Understanding the unique challenges they face, this programme provides essential tools, resources, and strategies to help participants navigate the complexities of starting and managing their own businesses. Meath's Local Enterprise Office proudly leads as the first to offer tailored support for aspiring entrepreneurs with disabilities, showcasing a commitment to inclusivity in the business landscape.

Developed by Thomas Cooney, a Professor of Entrepreneurship at TU Dublin, the programme has been designed for local delivery, addressing community-specific needs. Participants will benefit from workshops, mentorship sessions, and networking opportunities focused on enhancing their entrepreneurial skills and confidence. The programme also tackles barriers such as access to funding, market research, and regulatory requirements, empowering individuals with disabilities to turn their business ideas into successful ventures.



## SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL

## Reaching for Gender Equality in Local Government



“Reaching for Gender Equality in Local Government” is South Dublin County Council’s (SDCC) flagship initiative to promote, empower, and increase women’s participation in politics and community leadership. The initiative combines educational outreach, civic awareness campaigns, and recognition of local role models to drive meaningful change. Central to this work is the SDCC Women’s Caucus—an all-female, cross-party group established to campaign on issues affecting women and encourage greater female representation in politics. Key projects include the “Your Voice, Your Vote” campaign and the “Women of South Dublin” exhibition, which celebrated 34 inspiring local women through immersive storytelling and digital media.

These efforts contributed to a landmark achievement in December 2024, when SDCC became the first local authority in the history of the State to have a majority female council (52.5%). This initiative represents a model of inclusive governance and sustained community engagement to advance gender equality at the local level.



## WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

## Wicklow Travellers Urban Outdoor Initiative



The Wicklow Travellers Group Urban Outdoors Initiative, created inclusive, accessible outdoor physical activity opportunities for the Travelling Community in County Wicklow. This programme focused on an ‘Urban Triathlon’, meaning the participants were exposed to walking, running, mountain biking, learn to cycle, sea swimming and learn to swim, all in an urban setting to eliminate travel costs.

This programme addressed barriers caused by social exclusion, supporting physical and mental well-being through tailored activities. With a strong focus on family participation and cultural sensitivity, the initiative offered specialised support such as sensory-friendly



swimming sessions for children with additional needs and sea swimming lessons for Traveller men. Those who engaged in the activities, gained lifelong skills. The initiative strengthened community ties, reduced isolation, and empowered participants through consistent, positive engagement with local facilities and outdoor environments. This project represents a collaborative, person-centred model for inclusion and long-term skill development within a marginalised community.



# COMMUNICATIONS



## CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Clare County Council Election 2024



Clare County Council hosted a live broadcast of the local election count at Treacy's West County Hotel in Ennis on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of June 2024. The broadcast followed the progress of the tally and count, and remained on air until all 28 seats on Clare County Council had been filled.

The election coverage was broadcast simultaneously across social media, including YouTube and Facebook, giving the public unparalleled insight to the workings of local government throughout the weekend. The production team included two camera operators, a producer, sound engineer, and a presentation team comprising three established journalists. Analysis was provided by political representatives and media representatives from Scariff Bay Community Radio, The Clare Champion, The Clare Echo and Raidió Corca Baiscinn. The broadcast received 17,713 views over the course of the two days, with an average watch time of 20.5 minutes and a total watch time of 5,763 hours.



## FINGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

### Promotion of Affordable Housing scheme



Fingal County Council's Affordable Housing team, alongside internal and external partners, has launched a comprehensive communications campaign to simplify and promote the Affordable Housing scheme. This initiative aims to reach as many potential homebuyers as possible by explaining the scheme's criteria in clear, accessible language. The campaign includes website FAQs, launch events, first-time buyer sessions, podcasts, presentations, mortgage lender engagements, festival showcases, and social media outreach.

A key focus is encouraging early engagement with mortgage lenders to help buyers secure affordable homes. By addressing scheme complexities—such as equity share and minimum purchase price—the campaign empowers purchasers to make informed decisions. Since 2023, 551 affordable homes have been sold, reflecting Fingal County Council's leadership in this space. Continued communication ensures ongoing success by guiding more people toward homeownership through transparent information and proactive outreach. This initiative strengthens accessibility and confidence for future buyers.



**MEATH COUNTY COUNCIL****'Local Lens' - A podcast from Meath County Council**

In February 2024, Meath County Council launched "Local Lens", an innovative podcast series featuring six 30-minute episodes aimed at enhancing communication with residents. This dynamic initiative showcases the diverse services the Council offers, utilising modern platforms to reach a wider audience. The series includes in-depth interviews with senior council staff on key topics such as economic development, housing, road maintenance, and climate change—issues that directly impact the lives of Meath residents.

Unique to "Local Lens" are community contributions, featuring voices from residents who engage with these services, including patrons of the Trim Library and visitors enjoying the greenway in Wilkinstown. A special vox pop segment highlights attendees at the Samhain Festival in Kells, celebrating the area's cultural diversity. By blending insights from officials with real community stories, "Local Lens" fosters engagement, ensuring residents are informed and connected to essential local authority services.

**MONAGHAN COUNTY COUNCIL****Personal & Community Resilience Booklet**

Monaghan County Council developed the Personal and Community Resilience Booklet as a county-wide communications campaign to ensure that every household, regardless of age, background, or access to technology, receives vital emergency preparedness information. With 12% of Monaghan's population made up of non-Irish citizens, the booklet was designed to be accessible, inclusive, easy to understand and delivered in physical form to bridge the digital divide. It functions as a clear, trusted communications tool that brings together key information from Monaghan County Council, the HSE, and An Garda Síochána, presenting it in one place.

Accompanied by the "Message in a Bottle" initiative, and supported by explainer videos online, the campaign uses multiple touchpoints to reinforce key safety messages. This proactive, universal communication approach ensures that critical information doesn't rely solely on digital platforms, but reaches all sectors of the community, supporting Monaghan's corporate communications objectives and public trust in local authority services.



information doesn't rely solely on digital platforms, but reaches all sectors of the community, supporting Monaghan's corporate communications objectives and public trust in local authority services.



# COMMUNICATIONS



## SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL

### International Protection: Fact or Fiction



SDCC's International Protection: Fact or Fiction campaign tackled misinformation about asylum seekers by combining community engagement and evidence-based communication. Developed with the South Dublin County Partnership, Volunteer Centre, and Community Integration Forum, the initiative addressed rising anti-immigrant sentiment with a three-pronged approach: a fact-checking leaflet delivered to over 55,000 homes, a compelling online video series featuring voices from the international protection community, and the Mayor's Charter—encouraging local groups to champion dignity and inclusion.

The campaign debunked seven key myths using verified national and EU data, fostering greater public awareness and dialogue. It received significant media coverage, including national radio and print, and has since inspired similar initiatives in other Irish councils. By confronting misinformation head-on and promoting empathy, South Dublin positioned itself as a national leader in inclusive, community-driven communication.



## WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

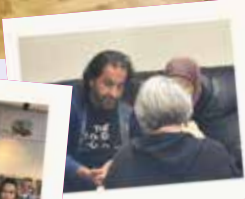
### Wicklow Welcomes: Multilingual Conversation Circles



Wicklow Libraries proudly support diversity and inclusion through their ongoing Language Conversation Groups, designed with new communities in mind. In alignment with the Library of Sanctuary status, these groups offer a welcoming, respectful space for all—regardless of background—to connect and communicate. Going beyond English, they host free conversation sessions in Arabic, Italian, Spanish, French, Irish, and Polish, across six branches: Arklow, Baltinglass, Blessington, Bray, Dunlavin, and Greystones.

Facilitated by volunteers—many of whom are native speakers—these informal groups help reduce barriers, support integration, and foster friendships through the power of shared language.

By offering practical support in a relaxed, inclusive environment, Wicklow Libraries promote cultural exchange, reduce isolation, and encourage a sense of belonging. This initiative reflects the values of the Diversity & Inclusion category, ensuring equal access, uplifting minority voices, and creating vibrant, connected communities where everyone feels welcome and valued.





## DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

### ALPHA Innovation, a hotbed of innovation in the heart of Donegal



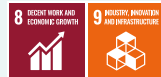
In 2021, the Northern and Western Region was considered a lagging region in terms of innovation by the EU, scored as 'Moderately Innovative', whereas the rest of Ireland was considered a 'Strong Innovator'. In a world where the only constant is change, ALPHA was established to close the gap and increase innovation maturity of startups, scaleups and established businesses in Donegal and the wider North West.

Established by Donegal County Council's Economic Development Unit and co-funded by Enterprise Ireland, ALPHA works with scalable propositions with global appeal, providing a suite of custom interventions for each stage from start-up to scale-up, to raise the innovation capability of the local business ecosystem. Over the last 3 years, ALPHA has conducted 146 workshops, events and initiatives with over 90 coaching clinics, attracting over 1,000 startups, entrepreneurs, students and support networks.



## GALWAY CITY COUNCIL

### CREW: Creative Enterprise and Innovation Hub Galway



Opened in April 2024, the CREW Creative Enterprise and Innovation Hub is a dynamic initiative designed to nurture and support Ireland's creative industries. Established by Atlantic Technological University (ATU), the Western Development Commission (WDC) and Ardán, with support from Galway City Council, CREW drives entrepreneurship across sectors such as gaming, content creation and digital design.

The hub offers state-of-the-art facilities, tailored training programmes and a supportive community for start-ups and innovators. By fostering collaboration and innovation, CREW contributes significantly to Galway's economic and cultural landscape. Its mission is to empower creative enterprises to grow, collaborate and achieve international success, positioning the west of Ireland as a thriving hub for creative talent.

# PROMOTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



## KILDARE COUNTY COUNCIL

### The K-Hub Strategy: Driving Cluster-Led Economic Growth in Partnership



Launched in 2020 by Kildare County Council, the K-Hub Strategy is a visionary initiative aimed at fostering partnership, entrepreneurship, decentralising enterprise support and economic growth through a network of cluster hubs. Informed by national and regional enterprise plans, the Kildare Economic Strategy, and the Kildare Skills Strategy, the initiative strengthens collaboration between businesses, education providers, and communities across sectors such as advanced manufacturing, technology, agri-food, and the green economy.



These hubs promote remote working, sustainability, inclusion and job creation. Partnering the business community the strategy complements nine existing privately operated mix-use hubs, enhancing the overall enterprise ecosystem. With support from statutory agencies, local communities, and private partners, the initiative is set to run through 2027. By aligning infrastructure and innovation with local needs, the K-Hub Strategy positions Kildare as a national leader in place-based economic development, providing a replicable model for how local government can drive sustainable and inclusive prosperity.

## LIMERICK CITY & COUNTY COUNCIL

### Northside Skills Fair



Continuing to push through barriers of disadvantage, Limerick City & County Council works with employers and agencies to deliver the Regeneration Skills Fairs. This initiative is delivered through the Outreach to Employment Programme led by Limerick City & County Council. It is a multi-stakeholder approach to tackling unemployment in Limerick City, which includes five of the ten worst unemployment blackspots and seven of the ten most disadvantaged Electoral Divisions in the State.

The Skills Fairs bring employers, agencies, training bodies and third level institutions right into community settings within the Regeneration areas. They target local communities and secondary school students to highlight opportunities that are available on their doorstep – from training and apprenticeships through to jobs in a range of industries. This initiative is also supported by industry representatives the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board, the Technological University of the Shannon, Limerick Enterprise Development Partnership, and community agencies.





## MEATH COUNTY COUNCIL

### Empowering Entrepreneurs: The Lunch and Learn Roadshow Initiative



Self-employed individuals often struggle to find time for essential business support, which can limit their engagement with available resources. To address this challenge, Meath Local Enterprise Office (LEO) launched the Lunch and Learn Roadshow initiative, aimed at strengthening connections within diverse business communities. By hosting events in accessible community spaces, it focuses on building relationships with both established small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and aspiring entrepreneurs.

Since the initiative began in April 2024, Meath LEO has successfully engaged over 220 individuals across several events, effectively reaching those in more remote areas of the county. This effort has resulted in increased interaction and involvement, allowing them to exceed their engagement targets. These gatherings provided valuable feedback and insights that help tailor support services to meet the specific needs of the communities they are dedicated to empowering, thereby fostering local entrepreneurial growth.



## SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL

### Work IQ, Innovation Centre for Technology and Enterprise Growth



Work IQ – Tallaght Innovation Centre is a key component of South Dublin County Council's (SDCC's) long-term strategy to establish Tallaght as a leading centre for innovation, enterprise, and economic growth. Strategically located in Tallaght Town Centre, Work IQ anchors the emerging Innovation Quarter, a transformative regeneration initiative that also includes a cost-rental housing scheme, Innovation Square public park, and is supported by the low-carbon Tallaght District Heating Scheme.

The Council has invested €16m in the development of the Work IQ, which will support up to 60 businesses and the future creation of over 700 jobs worth €80m to the economy. In developing Work IQ and supporting early-stage startups, and growing SMEs, this forms part of a broader strategy for Tallaght, which will see the creation of up to 15,000 new jobs, all served by Luas and a new transport mobility hub that will see the creation of a thriving economy.



# MUNICIPAL DISTRICT INITIATIVE



## CARLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

### Community Roots Programme



The Community Roots Programme has proven a resounding success, equipping young people in Carlow with vital leadership skills, practical training, and meaningful community engagement. Launched during Climate Action Week in October 2024, the initiative is a collaboration between Carlow County Council, Carlow Regional Youth Services, Carlow Sports Partnership, and County Carlow Development Partnership. Highlights include hands-on climate workshops, accredited training in First Aid, Manual Handling, Volunteer Leadership, Child Protection Awareness and engagement with local groups and elected representatives.

A major milestone was Taoiseach Micheál Martin's visit in November 2024, recognising the programme's national significance. The February 2025 Midterm Programme brought 24 young people together for leadership development and a Dáil Éireann visit, joined by 44 participants who completed the programme from across Carlow. Culminating in a certificate presentation by Cathaoirleach Fergal Browne, the initiative continues to empower young leaders, foster civic awareness, and inspire future changemakers in Carlow communities.



## CAVAN COUNTY COUNCIL

### The Voyage Home - Return of Relics of St Kilian



Cavan County Council's Ballyjamesduff Municipal District team worked with local councillors, community groups, and church organisations to organise the historic return of the relics of Cavan's 6<sup>th</sup> century missionary Saint Kilian to his home of Mullagh from Würzburg in Germany for the first time since he left Ireland over 1,300 years ago.

St Kilian was born in Mullagh in 640AD, trained as a monk & left Ireland with two companions for mainland Europe, where they brought Christianity to the German province of Franconia. They were executed there in 684AD for criticising the local Duke, but are revered to this day. This historic homecoming saw pilgrims from Germany, including Bishop of Würzburg, Dr Franz Jung, Würzburg District Administrator Thomas Eberth, and Mayor of Kürnach Rene Wohlfart, accompany the Saints' relics to Cavan for a four day celebration of shared history and culture, which provided a huge boost to the local economy & community.







## MUNICIPAL DISTRICT INITIATIVE

### CORK COUNTY COUNCIL

## Conversation Cafe



Mitchelstown Library in partnership with Ballyhoura Development CLG hosted its first Conversation Café on 6<sup>th</sup> Sept 2024. Ballyhoura Development Group approached the library to see if it might be a suitable venue where new citizens in the Mitchelstown area might meet to improve their English conversation skills in a relaxed and welcoming social space. The library staff saw this as an excellent opportunity for new migrants to connect both with each other and with the community in Mitchelstown.

The aim is to provide an informal space where participants can practice their conversations skills, Local volunteers and tutors host the sessions and participants learn English through fun games, word play and conversation starter topics. To add to the social atmosphere tea/coffee and refreshments are provided at the end of the sessions and this allows further conversations to develop between tutors, volunteers and participants. Each session lasts about 2 hours.



### KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL

## Creative Connections: Coote's Lane to Ring Road



Kilkenny Municipal District members worked with local schools and community groups to explore ways to rejuvenate Coote's Lane. This project aimed to create a welcoming space, encouraged greater use of the lane, by weaving the story of the ancient path through a tapestry of art installations, pockets of nature and playful features highlighting the biodiversity and heritage of the lane.

The old stone walls along the lane were identified as important habitats for plants and invertebrates, acting as a corridor for species to move from one habitat to another.

Originally called Waters Lane, this route marked the City Borough Boundary since 1844 and in the 1940's a simple wooden footbridge allowed pedestrians to cross the Breaghagh dry-shod. The restoration of the river crossing was central to this project allowing the MD elected members to introduce a new generation to the Borough Boundary route acknowledging a cultural landmark.





# MUNICIPAL DISTRICT INITIATIVE



## LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL

### The Refurbishment of The Peoples Park in Portarlington



The People's Park in Portarlington had a masterplan completed in early 2020 which set out a vision for the future enhancement of the town park. Prior to this project, the park consisted of a playground with limited public seating and no picnic tables. It was predominantly a green field with footpaths but no facilities.



This project aimed to implement the vision of the masterplan to better meet the needs of the local community with the provision of a new central plaza/event space, an edible garden, an outdoor adventure activity area, upgrade of play equipment and the development of natural play features. It also included the upgrade of park furniture throughout the park, enhanced landscaping including a tree trail, provision of sculptures and enhanced information signage.

## MEATH COUNTY COUNCIL

### Live Streaming of the 2024 Local Elections



In June 2024, Meath County Council launched an innovative initiative by live streaming local elections from the Simonstown Count Centre, making the democratic process accessible to over 220,000 citizens in the county. This groundbreaking effort tackled significant challenges, such as providing real-time updates for those unable to attend, competing with various news sources, and educating the public about the electoral process.

By utilising platforms like YouTube, Facebook, and LinkedIn, the live stream allowed citizens to witness the proceedings in real time, engage on social media, and later access the recorded content for educational purposes. Remarkably, the initiative incurred no extra costs, using existing equipment and resources. This approach not only bolstered transparency but also enhanced civic engagement, enabling all citizens to participate in the electoral experience irrespective of physical limitations. The initiative established a new standard for local elections in Ireland, showcasing how technology can strengthen democracy.





## MUNICIPAL DISTRICT INITIATIVE

### MEATH COUNTY COUNCIL

## Meath Community Amenity Project Scheme



The Community Amenity Project Scheme, established by Meath County Council, aims to foster community development and revitalisation. It offers capital grants to community groups for the development and refurbishment of essential facilities that support social, sporting, recreational, environmental, heritage, and cultural activities. A key objective is to prioritise projects that enhance local areas and promote collaboration among community organisations, thereby stimulating social and economic growth, especially in disadvantaged regions.

Each funding cycle allocates €100,000 to each Municipal District to maximise impact across localities. Eligible projects range from community centres and sports facilities to initiatives promoting arts and culture. Applications are evaluated based on community benefits, value for money, need, collaborative effort, and the applicant's funding history, with final approval by Elected Members. Launched in 2018, the scheme has had several funding rounds, with the next one scheduled for 2025, continuing its commitment to support community-driven initiatives.



## SUPPORTING TOURISM



### CAVAN COUNTY COUNCIL

## Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark - Regenerative Tourism Business Network - Climate Change



Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark Regenerative Tourism Business Network is a cross-border initiative led by Cavan County Council and Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, supporting local businesses in delivering sustainable, high-quality tourism experiences across Cuilcagh Lakelands UNESCO Global Geopark.

This innovative network brings together over 32 tourism businesses across counties Cavan and Fermanagh to champion a regenerative approach, one that not only protects but actively enhances the regions natural environment, cultural heritage, and community wellbeing. It empowers businesses through tailored training, peer support, and access to the Geopark brand, all while aligning with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

This model of regenerative tourism has positioned the Geopark as a leader in responsible destination development, offering a replicable blueprint for rural areas across Ireland and beyond seeking to balance economic opportunity with environmental and cultural stewardship.



### CORK COUNTY COUNCIL

## Explore Cork app



Explore Cork' is Cork County Council's flagship digital tourism platform, created to support economic recovery and long-term tourism development. Initially developed in response to the challenges faced by the tourism sector during COVID-19, the app has since become a sustainable, multilingual marketing tool showcasing over 850 attractions across 20 categories. With interactive features like "What's Near Me?", dedicated town profiles, and mapped amenities, it empowers visitors to explore Cork. The app was developed through a fully in-house, cross-directorate collaboration, using an agile, stakeholder-driven approach.

Now with over 40,000 active users and significant increases in visibility for local businesses and amenities, the app plays a critical role in supporting the tourism economy. It demonstrates innovation, community engagement, and digital leadership within the local government sector, underpinned by data analytics and sustainable promotion. Explore Cork continues to support local businesses, enhance visitor experience, and inform future tourism development through comprehensive user insights.







## SUPPORTING TOURISM

### DUBLIN CITY COUNCIL

#### The Dublin Portal



Dublin City Council's Smart Tourism Programme team and Tourism unit, initially sought to develop an iconic physical and digital cultural engagement experience between Dublin City and New York City. It now link Dublin with Vilnius, Lithuania and Lublin, Poland. The Portal technology street art design engineering sculpture which connects people and cultures across borders was launched on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

The Portal captured the world's attention stimulating global debate, creating 22 billion social media impressions and generating 450+ news articles. The Portal attracted 100's of portal-to-portal activations, and 500,000 visitors in 6 months bringing positivity to the area. It has achieved a top 10 ranking for free tourist experiences, and with over 400 reviews, it holds a 4.4/5 rating on Google Maps. Dublin, Vilnius, Lublin and Philadelphia, will connect to new cities in Asia and South America soon. The Portal showcases Dublin as a leading tourism capital that embraces innovation, new cultural experiences and is a flagship of our EU Capital of Smart Tourism designation in 2024.



### KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL

#### The Barrow Valley Activities



The Barrow Valley Activities Hub & Motorhome Aire in Graigueenamanagh, supported by Kilkenny County Council, is a purpose-built social enterprise tourism and community facility situated on council land along the River Barrow. Thoughtfully integrated into its natural environment, the Hub features a central Headquarters with multifunctional space for training and gathering, complete with changing and shower rooms. The four-acre landscaped site offers serviced motorhome camping, a heated entertainment area for live music, an all-weather pitch, and access to water-based and outdoor recreational facilities, making it ideal for school groups and large events.

Attracting over 26,000 visitors annually and hosting up to 70 motorhomes nightly, the Hub has made a significant economic and tourism impact. In 2023 and 2024, it generated €1.5 million and €1.9 million respectively. This flagship tourism initiative supports local business growth, job creation, and community wellbeing as part of a broader regional strategy for sustainable community-driven tourism.

# SUPPORTING TOURISM



## LIMERICK CITY & COUNTY COUNCIL

### Limerick Greenway - Embrace the Unexpected



Since 2019, Limerick City and County Council (LCCC) have worked on a project to transform the disused Limerick to Tralee railway line into a 40km scenic Greenway. Opened in 2021, Limerick Greenway offers a safe, off-road walking and cycling experience through the picturesque countryside of West Limerick. Connecting five rural towns and villages, it promotes wellness, heritage, and regional tourism.

With features including restored 19<sup>th</sup>-century relics, hand-crafted art, and age-friendly amenities, Limerick Greenway integrates local culture and accessibility for all. Visitor numbers reached 640,000 since it opened in 2021, delivering a major socio-economic boost to the region. The project is underpinned by three pillars: economic stimulus, visitor innovation, and community value. It now serves as a sustainable tourism anchor, aligned with national and European strategies for outdoor recreation. Continuous investment and development of Greenway Hubs will ensure this initiative remains a transformative and future-focused asset for West Limerick.



## WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

### Wicklow Passport



The Wicklow Passport invites visitors to collect a series of stamps representing various areas of County Wicklow. Each stamp can only be collected in the area it represents and is available through a network of more than 100 stamping locations around the County. The project creates a fun and interactive way to discover the lesser-known areas in Wicklow.

There are currently 23 stamps representing 26 areas, with bonus seasonal stamps, e.g. for Halloween. After collecting 15 stamps or more, visitors are awarded a Wicklow Ambassador Certificate along with a pin and neck buff. It has proven to be a fantastic infrastructure upon which various itineraries and challenges are designed, such as local Heritage Trails, cross-selling itineraries between the local tourism trade, national and international promotional activities, and more. The Wicklow Passport has also inspired local Wicklow residents to challenge themselves to (re)discover the hidden gems in their County.







## CLIMATE CHANGE

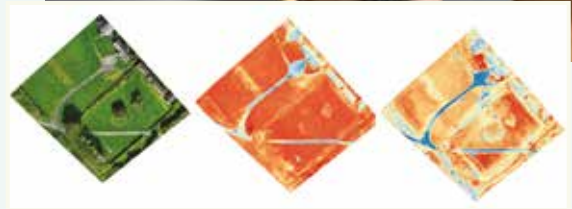
### KILDARE COUNTY COUNCIL

## Grass to Gas Project



The Grass to Gas Project is a collaboration between the Parks Department and Climate Action Team at Kildare County Council (KCC), and Maynooth University. This innovative project harnesses the principles of the circular economy to convert waste municipal grass cuttings to biomethane, offering a sustainable alternative to fossil fuels.

Central to the project is the recently created Grass to Gas Dashboard which supports the decision-making process involved in scaling the conversion of waste municipal grass to gas on a country scale. This computer system aids decision making in relation to land management and takes into consideration the impact of collecting waste grass on finances, biodiversity, other land users, and carbon emissions. This proves the feasibility of a future where biomethane from municipal grass cuttings can be piped into existing gas networks and used as an alternative to fossil fuels, providing numerous co-benefits to the economy, the environment and society.



### KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL

## Championing Community Climate Action, Kilkenny



Kilkenny County Council, through accessing the Community Climate Action Fund (CCAF), has developed a meaningful and results-driven programme of sustainable, community-led climate action initiatives. Spearheaded by the Climate Action Team, an all-of-Council approach to Phase 1 of the CCAF (April 2023 to present) was adopted in direct response to the needs identified by local communities. A total of €672,000, funded by the DECC, Kilkenny County Council, and community contributions, was invested in 22 projects.



This leveraged considerable additional indirect investment, volunteer engagement, and led to notable reductions in energy consumption, emissions, and water use, delivering tangible savings on utility bills, enhanced nature protection, native planting, and reduced reliance on single-use plastic bottles. To ensure long-term sustainable impact, the initiative focused on building community capacity, developing resources, adopting an evidence-based approach to measuring outcomes, and showcasing projects to inspire others. Insights and outcomes gained will be pivotal in shaping Phase 2.

## CLIMATE CHANGE



## LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL

## Portlaoise: Ireland's First Low Carbon Town



Portlaoise is Ireland's first designated Low Carbon Town—an ambitious, place-based initiative led by Laois County Council to deliver measurable climate action at town scale. Guided by the 2040 and Beyond Strategy, it integrates sustainable mobility, urban regeneration, and deep community engagement to reduce emissions, revitalise the town centre and build long-term resilience. Flagship projects include the Triogue Way green corridor, a Mobility Hub, an e-bike rental scheme, and an expanding cycle lane network.



Over 1,300 daily users now access the new 70-stop town bus service. Vacant buildings are being retrofitted to NZEB standard, preserving embedded carbon while ensuring a vibrant, compact town centre that invites walking and cycling. The 'Town in a Garden' initiative has captured the public imagination, transforming the public realm. The Portlaoise Climate Alliance provides a community-led forum for shaping climate responses, complementing strategic business engagement through the Council-led low carbon innovation hub, The Cube.

## LOUTH COUNTY COUNCIL

## Louth Urban Food Sanctuary



Louth Urban Food Sanctuary (LUFS) was a Creative Climate Action project that explored the concept of local food resilience and cultivation as a potential climate change mitigation action. The project was funded through the Creative Climate Action Spark II Fund, an initiative administered by the Creative Ireland Programme and was led by Louth County Council.

The key aims were to promote food sustainability, explore possible measures to mitigate climate change impact on food consumption and engage the local community in events that increased awareness of regional climate change and issues threatening local biodiversity. Community gardens across the county and a group of individual back-garden growers undertook trial-growing a selection of produce chosen by the LUFS team. The project was further strengthened by the invaluable support of a local tillage farmer, who agreed to trial-grow several crops on a larger scale at his commercial farm.







## CLIMATE CHANGE

## MONAGHAN COUNTY COUNCIL

## Empowering SMEs for Climate Action: Ireland's First ESG Cluster



Monaghan County Council's ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) Cluster Initiative is the first in Ireland, designed to empower micro and small enterprises (SMEs) to take climate action while boosting competitiveness. Delivered through the Local Enterprise Office (LEO), the programme offered an ESG toolkit, bespoke workshops, and a pioneering green accreditation framework. Participants received personalised reports detailing ESG scores, benchmarks, insights, and aligned Sustainable Development Goals.

The initiative achieved a 53% reduction in calculated emissions, identifying 17,535 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> savings. Two SMEs secured contracts through green procurement compliance, enhancing growth and visibility. The ESG cluster was developed collaboratively by the Climate Action Team and LEO, which holds dual responsibilities for climate and economic development. The idea originated at the Climate Action Committee, where aligned goals led to a targeted, practical initiative. The project demonstrates how local government can combine sustainability and enterprise support to promote economic and environmental resilience.



## WATERFORD CITY AND COUNTY COUNCIL

## The Business Pledge for a Cleaner, Greener Waterford



Waterford City and County Council is committed to achieving a Carbon Neutral Waterford by 2040. In September 2024, the Council launched the Business Pledge for A Cleaner, Greener Waterford. A 2021 emissions inventory revealed that businesses are the largest contributors to Waterford City's emissions, accounting for 28%.

Recognising the challenges small businesses face in becoming more sustainable, the Council initiated an ambassador campaign in 2024 to encourage businesses across the City and County to join the Pledge and take steps to reduce their carbon footprint. Participating businesses receive a rates discount as an incentive, while the Council tracks their emissions reductions.

1,003 businesses (of which 869 were eligible) have already committed to the Pledge, and the Council is actively supporting them in their journey towards sustainability.





# SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT & BIODIVERSITY



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## CARLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

### Carlow County Fire Service - ECO Class Fire Appliance



The development of this Fire Appliance represents a significant innovation in emergency services and environmental stewardship. Traditionally fire appliances were heavy, fuel-intensive vehicles with large carbon footprints. By contrast, this Low-Carbon fire appliance combines advanced smart technologies with sustainable fuels, drastically reducing emissions while maintaining the vehicles high performance, essential for life-saving operations.

The development involves the use of alternative fuels, solar panels and advanced intelligent software systems. This innovation reduces the operational carbon footprint of firefighting vehicles and sets a new standard for emergency service vehicles globally, demonstrating that sustainability can be achieved without compromising functionality or safety. This initiative aligns with the Government of Ireland's National Climate Action Plan 2023 which mandates Local Authorities to reduce their Carbon and emissions output by 51% by 2030. Carlow County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 has been prepared to facilitate the transition Carlow to a low carbon and climate resilient County.



## CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Knocknahila Bog Peatland Rewetting Project



Knocknahila Bog Peatland Rewetting Project is an ambitious project, the second community peatland rewetting project to be undertaken in County Clare and the first of its kind to be carried out in West Clare. The project is a partnership with a local farmer, Knocknahila Community Biodiversity Group and Clare County Council's Biodiversity Officer.



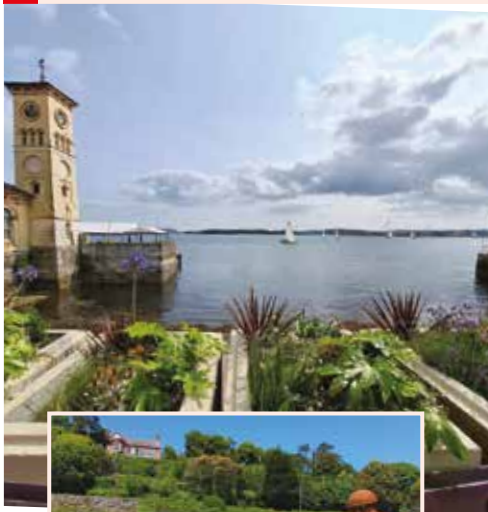
The project involved rewetting 27 acres of blanket bog through the construction of peat dams and a network of contour peat bunds to raise water levels to create a reconfigured wetland habitat to benefit biodiversity including rare habitats and ground nesting birds in the townland of Knocknahila More, County Clare. Knocknahila Bog is now supporting the expansion of the rare habitat 'active blanket bog', listed on Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive. The rewetting project involves managing peatlands in a sustainable manner for biodiversity by creating optimal baseline conditions for the establishment of Sphagnum mosses.



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## SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT & BIODIVERSITY



### CORK COUNTY COUNCIL

## Cobh Nature Based Solution- Raingarden Demonstrator, National Pilot Scheme



The Cobh Nature-Based Solution initiative marks Ireland's first implementation of NBS in an urban context, positioning Cobh as leading in sustainable town regeneration. Launched in 2023 by Cork County Council and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, this three-phase project reintroduces nature into the urban fabric to manage flood risk, improve water quality, enhance biodiversity, and revitalise public space.



The first phase delivered a raingarden at East Beach, which filters polluted road runoff through bioretention soils before discharging cleaner water into the harbour. In 2024, the second phase introduced the Sea-Shantyman Pocket Park at Five-Foot Way, integrating a raingarden and Stockholm Soils to support tree growth in compacted conditions. The initiative is not only environmentally functional but also socially inclusive and culturally responsive. Collaboration with Tidy Towns, the Chamber of Commerce, schools, and local residents was key to success, creating engaged, local champions for climate action and biodiversity.

### KILDARE COUNTY COUNCIL

## Kerdiffstown Park Project



Kerdiffstown Park is a transformative environmental and community project that converted a former landfill site into a vibrant 30-hectare public park in Naas, Co. Kildare. Enforcement action from the EPA forced the closure of a privately operated landfill at Kerdiffstown and following a significant underground fire, Kildare County Council with support from the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, spearheaded efforts to remediate the site.

Utilising advanced landfill management and sustainable construction techniques, the project successfully mitigated pollution risks making the site safe for generations to come. The establishment of a multi-use park featuring 2 full size all-weather sports pitches and 3 five-a-side pitches, walking trails, ecological zones, a playground, adult gym, 3 ponds and cultural installations enhance the health and well-being of the local community. The park's landscape design includes natural habitats for flora and fauna, encouraging biodiversity to support and enrich the local environment.



# SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT & BIODIVERSITY



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## **SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL**

### **Balancing Green and Growth: Delivering Sustainable Development and Protecting Biodiversity**



South Dublin County Council's Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy is a pioneering approach to integrating biodiversity and sustainability into local planning. It creates a connected network of ecological corridors across the county, ensuring that essential development can proceed while protecting and enhancing nature.

A key strength of the strategy is its integration into daily operations, from influencing every planning application to guiding the management of parks, open spaces, and drainage networks. It is also implemented through projects delivered by local community groups. Innovative elements include Ireland's first use of a Green Space Factor to assess green infrastructure in developments, a county-wide Pollinator Action Plan covering over 200 hectares of meadows, and community-led planting of Miyawaki woodlands. By embedding sustainability into all aspects of planning and land management, the strategy enables balanced, nature-friendly development and offers a replicable model for how local authorities can foster biodiversity while meeting their development needs.





## CELEBRATING IRISH LANGUAGE & CULTURE

### CAVAN COUNTY COUNCIL

#### Glangevlin Gaeltacht Prayer Book Revival



As part of Cavan County Council's Commemorations programme, Cavan County Library Service coordinated the reproduction of the Glangevlin Prayer Book - first published in West Cavan in 1921. The book, 'Night Prayers (Rosary, Litany) Prayers after Mass: Collected and arranged with Pronunciation', contained prayers in Irish along with the phonetic renderings of these prayers as they were transcribed in Glangevlin, along with select English translations.

This publication is of immense significance, in terms of its place in the history of this region, and in the study of the Irish language. The re-edition's fascinating bilingual introduction by Dr. Nollaig Ó Muraíle (University of Galway) explains the background of the original, and what it can tell us about the form of Irish spoken in Glangevlin and West Cavan in the 1920s. The re-edition of the Glangevlin Prayer Book was launched in St. Patrick's Hall, Glangevlin in April 2025, following a special bilingual Mass.



### CORK CITY COUNCIL

#### Ar Scáth a Chéile: Clár Teanga agus Cultúir Ghaelach i Leabharlanna Cathrach Chorcaí -Scéalta, Ceol, Cultúr, Pobail-



The Ar Scáth a Chéile programme at Cork City Libraries is an all inclusive and eclectic programme of events celebrating Irish language and culture. It plays a significant and vital role in supporting Irish language and culture in Cork city, through its collections of over 8000 items, Irish language clubs, Ceardlann Scríbhneoireact, book publications and launches, children's storytimes, workshops, partnerships and vibrant programmes of Irish literary and musical events during festivals most notably Cork World Book Fest and Seachtain na Gaeilge. The programme is accessible to all and free of charge.

With ten libraries at the heart of communities across the city Ar Scáth plays a key role in promoting our national identity through Irish language and cultural events. The programme has garnered awards including two Gael Taca Gradam Uí Chuanacháin Awards in 2018 and 2019 and Best Irish Language Initiative in the 2024 National LAMA Awards.

# CELEBRATING IRISH LANGUAGE & CULTURE

## DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

### Ceiliúradh teanga í a léamh



Ceiliúradh teanga í a léamh is an Irish language resource for parents and teachers so that they can share Irish language books with the young people in their lives. The resource is the result of a partnership between Donegal Library Service and Children's Books Ireland. The resource pack can be used in tandem with fifteen high-quality books for readers from 0 to 18, with questions, challenges and activities that will allow them to further engage with the stories. This resource and all the activities included in it are free to download from the library website.

There is a summary of each book along with a glossary for certain books and information on the author and illustrator. There are creative activities for young people to engage with when the book has been completed. Links to online activities, further reading recommendations and recordings of some of the books are also included.



## DUBLIN CITY COUNCIL

### Gaeilge365 - Coordinating Irish Language Innovation Regional Roll-Out



Over the last 12 months, Dublin City Council has co-ordinated the regional roll-out of Gaeilge365 (G365) to all Dublin local authorities. This has transformed Dublin City Council's flagship Irish language innovation programme into a regional initiative while paving the way for national expansion. Traditionally, local authority engagement with Irish focused on translations and classes. G365 changes this by viewing Irish as a resource which can unlock greater public service impacts.

Based on the success of a pilot which commenced in late 2023, Dublin City Council proposed to other Dublin local authorities to co-ordinate regional expansion to amplify impact across the county. The expansion which underpinned a wider commitment in the Programme for Government to expand the programme nationally has secured co-funding commitments of €4.5m from participating Local Authorities and national government is delivering tangible uplift in opportunities to speak Irish across Dublin.





# CELEBRATING IRISH LANGUAGE & CULTURE

## KERRY COUNTY COUNCIL

### Blas Beo, North Kerry Irish Language initiative



The 'Blas Beo' Irish language adult programme was launched at the Teach Siamsa Finuge, Folk Arts & Culture Centre in February 2025. Set within a farmhouse styled centre in the middle of North Kerry, the programme has exceeded expectations with classes reaching full capacity. Demand for children's classes is growing steadily, and plans are now underway to expand provision for secondary school students. This vibrant uptake reflects a renewed appetite for Irish language learning and cultural participation across generations.

The Blas Beo approach differs by the fact that Coiste Teach Siamsa Finuge has embedded it within a community-centre ethos where the connection between the Irish language and other elements of Irish culture, such as dance, music and drama can be experienced. This initiative is proudly supported by Oifig na Gaeilge, Kerry County Council who are delighted to collaborate with such groups as the Irish Language continues to grow in the county.



## LOUTH COUNTY COUNCIL

### Lú Festival of Light



The Lú Festival of Light is a free, multi-day event that illuminates Drogheda's historic landmarks with large-scale projections, urban animations, and live on street performances. It brings to life ancient Irish myths—such as those of Cú Chulainn, Boann, and the Salmon of Knowledge—by transforming St. Peter's Church, St. Laurence's Gate, the Old Abbey and St. Dominic's Bridge into storytelling canvases.



Ar Oíche Shamhna bhí gach seó de Lú Festival of Light a insint trí Ghaeilge. Tá sé mar aidhm ag na féilte an Ghaeilge, an béaloideas agus an oidhreacht chultúrtha i gContae Lú a cheiliúradh agus iad seo a thabhairt beo trí bheochan uirbeach.



# CELEBRATING IRISH LANGUAGE & CULTURE



## MEATH COUNTY COUNCIL

### Siamsa Glas Festival



In 2024, Meath County Council launched Siamsa Glás, a vibrant festival to promote Irish language and cultural heritage in the scenic Gaeltacht area of Bhaile Ghib. Spearheaded by the Council's Tourism Officer, the festival featured over twenty dynamic events held on September 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, engaging attendees of all ages. Activities included thrilling treasure hunts, hands-on pottery workshops, and scenic nature walks showcasing the region's landscapes.



Highlights of the festival included an immersive theatre experience that brought local stories to life and a lively Céilí Mór for participants to dance and enjoy traditional merriment. There was also a delightful teddy bear picnic for younger attendees.

The weekend culminated with a concert featuring local musicians, blending traditional and contemporary Irish music.

Extensive promotion through Discover Boyne Valley generated great interest, attracting over 1,500 visitors and making Siamsa Glás a remarkable success for the community and its cultural heritage.



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LOCAL AUTHORITY  
INNOVATION

## CARLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Innovation in Fire Appliance  
Vehicle to Vehicle Digital Alerting

Carlow County Council has become the first county in Ireland to implement a new innovative technology to protect motorists during emergency incidents. The county's Fire and Rescue Service has paved the way for road safety by installing digital alerting in its emergency service vehicles. Safety Cloud digital alerting warns other road users of the presence of a fire appliance responding to an emergency or when road users are approaching an accident scene.

This provides emergency vehicles with safer and quicker passage to emergencies giving other road users time to slow down, move over or avoid the scene completely by taking an alternative route. The system is compatible with the Apple Maps and Waze apps and in-built software across a number of vehicle brands and appears in the form of a text and symbol notification.

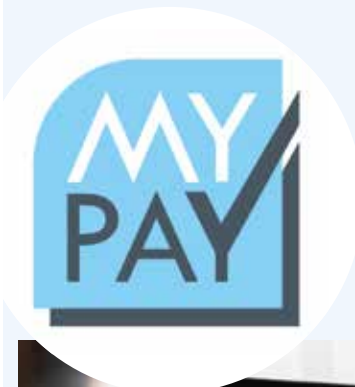


## LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL

MyPay Robotic Process Automation -  
Superannuation Starters project

MyPay implemented Robotic Process Automation (RPA) to streamline the Superannuation Starter Notification process. This process, previously manual and error-prone, involved collecting and validating new starter data submitted via email to a ticketing system - FreshDesk, then updating CoreHR and internal systems. Partnering with Deloitte, they delivered the solution over 16 weeks in a series of sprints covering preparation, development, testing, and hypercare.

The automation significantly reduced manual data handling, eliminated rework from incomplete forms, and increased processing speed and accuracy. As volumes are forecasted to double, the RPA solution provides scalability without requiring additional headcount. The estimated time saved is 1,500–3,000 hours per year, with a return on investment expected within 9–18 months. This initiative not only improved operational efficiency and staff morale, but also enhanced service delivery to local authorities and new employees. It demonstrates MyPay's commitment to innovation and continuous improvement in public sector service delivery.





## LIMERICK CITY &amp; COUNTY COUNCIL

## Co-Plan: Keeping Limerick On Track



Limerick made history in June 2024 by inaugurating Ireland's first Directly Elected Mayor with executive powers. This milestone presented Limerick City and County Council with an unprecedented challenge: implementing and tracking a comprehensive five-year Mayoral Programme while maintaining excellence in existing services. Co-Plan emerged as a solution—a data analytics platform that transforms political commitments into measurable outcomes through dynamic visualisation.

Named from the Irish “comh” (together), Co-Plan introduces a pioneering methodology that:

1. Converts narrative policy documents into structured, trackable objectives
  2. Creates real-time progress visualisation across departments
  3. Employs analytics to identify delivery risks proactively
  4. Preserves institutional knowledge despite personnel changes
- By bridging the gap between political vision and operational delivery through data intelligence, Co-Plan establishes a new paradigm for evidence-based governance in Irish local government, offering unprecedented transparency in the implementation of democratic mandates.



## MIDLANDS IRELAND

## Driving STEM in the Midlands



The Midlands is driving the STEM agenda through an exciting partnership between regional stakeholders including Local Authorities, Industry, Academia and communities. The Midlands is the first Irish region with a STEM eco-system in place, made possible by strong collaboration and a commitment to create and foster skills which can adapt to future skills needs of industry. The Midlands is designated as an EU Just Transition Region.

In response to this challenge, regional stakeholders form a triple helix, through the Midlands Regional Enterprise Plan and Midlands ICT Network collaborating for the greater good. Flagship initiatives, reaching thousands of children in hundreds of schools, include VEX Robotics, with 3 Midlands teams qualifying to date for the World Finals, STEM Passport for Inclusion, which offers a Level 6 qualification and recognition towards entry to a STEM-related University course, and DreamBig, partnering with 16 regional manufacturing businesses for a week-long programme showcasing STEM careers.





## SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL

**Clonburris Delivery Model - Strategic Innovation for Sustainable Growth**

SDCC is leading the delivering of the Clonburris Strategic Development Zone through a unique partnership model involving public and private stakeholders. SDCC established an innovative partnership with private landowners and the establishment of a special purpose vehicle (Clonburris Infrastructure Limited (CIL)).



SDCC advances the delivery of the Clonburris strategic infrastructure programme by coordinating a complex series of stakeholder groups through a governance structure setting out the relationships of SDCC as a landowner and Sponsoring Agency with private landowners, CIL, multi-disciplinary design teams and contractors, which will deliver a c.€268m investment in public infrastructure, c.9,000 units, including 2,500 Council dwellings, as part of a €2.5 billion regeneration project. With c.690 homes already completed c.2,330 under construction, Clonburris exemplifies what Local Authority led coordinated urban development can achieve. The delivery model has gained strong endorsement and it is recognised as a replicable national model for coordinated and climate-aligned urban growth.

# HEALTH & WELLBEING



## CORK COUNTY COUNCIL

### Teen Talk



Cork County Council's Teen Talk, launched in 2017, is a pioneering initiative promoting mental and physical well-being among transition year students in Cork County and City. Collaborating with local schools, mental health services, and health experts, Teen Talk delivers engaging workshops and resources addressing mental health, nutrition, and physical activity. Reaching over 14,000 students through in-person events (2017, 2019, 2022-2024), online formats (2020-2021), and hybrid models (2022-2024), it fosters peer support and reduces stigma.

Recognised with a 2023 LAMA award, the program empowers youth with life skills, facilitates early interventions, and promotes healthy lifestyles. Teen Talk's accessible, multi-stakeholder approach ensures relevance and impact. Coordinated by Cork County Council, it continues to evolve, with plans for hybrid events in November 2025, solidifying its role as a transformative community health initiative.



## FINGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

### Fingal Sports Festival



Fingal County Council Sports Office launched the Fingal Sport Festival to promote physical activity and wellbeing across the county. Drawing inspiration from Ireland's 2024 Olympic success, the festival welcomed over 8,500 attendees and featured more than 30 National Governing Bodies, offering the Fingal community the opportunity to try Olympic and community sports.

The inclusive "come and try" model encouraged participation by people of all ages and abilities, supported by scorecards to track engagement. Local Olympians shared inspiring stories and joined the community in their activities, while ongoing initiatives like "Fingal on the Move" were promoted to ensure long-term community impact. The festival was amplified through strategic partnerships, strong media coverage, and dynamic social media promotion led by radio presenter Marty Guilfoyle. It succeeded in connecting people to local clubs and year-round activity programmes, contributing to Fingal's goal of supporting participation and a healthier, more active population.







## HEALTH & WELLBEING

### KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL

#### The UcanACT Project



The Urban Action Against Cancer (UcanACT) project is an innovative health initiative promoting physical activity in urban green spaces as a means of cancer prevention. Developed through the EU Erasmus+ programme with co-funding from the EU Commission, the project demonstrates cross-sector collaboration and community engagement. Over three years, Kilkenny County Council has led the local implementation of UcanACT, working closely with physiotherapists, the HSE, and academic partners across Europe.

50 adults, aged over 50, engaged in physiotherapist-led exercise programmes in three parks in Kilkenny City. The project also piloted a customised Physical Activity App and developed a Citizen Engagement Strategy to enhance participation. UcanACT showcases how local authorities can enhance community wellbeing through innovation, citizen engagement, and strategic partnerships. This project represented a unique fusion of healthy lifestyle, sports, and the outdoors to promote physical activity at the heart of public spaces in the community.

### LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL

#### Live Well Health and Wellbeing Expo Event (Live Well)



The Live-Well Annual Expo is an innovative health and wellbeing initiative, designed to bridge the gap between people and the services that support them. Developed in response to extensive public consultations by Laois County Council, it addresses real challenges around access to information and empowers individuals to take charge of their own health. Laois County Council collaborates with 110 service providers, community groups, and organisations to come together with the public, in one large barrier free event.

While the core focus is on those aged over 45, the event is open to all and promotes intergenerational engagement. Tailored communications alongside culturally sensitive planning, ensure that no one is left behind. By providing clear signposting to vital health, social, and community services, Live-Well strengthens personal wellbeing and community resilience. This collaborative, citizen-informed approach makes a meaningful difference to lives across Laois and sets a model for community health engagement.



## HEALTH &amp; WELLBEING



## MEATH COUNTY COUNCIL

## Boyne Valley to Lakelands Greenway



The development of the disused Navan to Kingscourt railway line into a 30km Greenway for walkers and cyclists connects Navan's Boyne Valley with Kingscourt in County Cavan. This route will link directly to Corridor 13 from Drogheda to Trim and potentially to other corridors in the National Cycle Network, enhancing connectivity for the Greater Dublin Area.

The Greenway promises numerous benefits, including passive recreation, improved health and well-being, and opportunities for social interactions among community members. It will attract tourism, as its length caters to one-day or half-day activities, generating economic benefits through local spending on food, bike rentals, and accommodations. Preservation of the railway's heritage is vital, with plans to restore old platforms. Additionally, the Greenway supports educational activities for local schools and is inclusive, offering features for neuro-diverse individuals, thus promoting health, social engagement, and mental rejuvenation in a welcoming environment.



## SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL

## South Dublin County Council Junior Safety Forum



The Junior Safety Forum is a youth-led initiative by South Dublin County Council, modelled on the Joint Policing Committee, giving 6<sup>th</sup> class students a meaningful voice in building safer, healthier communities. Held in the Council Chamber, the Forum enjoys official status and is attended by the Chief Executive, Directors, Senior Management of SDCC, and An Garda Síochána. Through workshops and structured meetings, students voice concerns, suggest solutions, and take part in community decision-making.

The Forum focuses on early intervention, addressing important issues like vaping, nitrous oxide use, and personal safety. It promotes youth leadership, responsibility, and empowerment. Supported by Healthy Ireland, the HSE, Dublin Fire Brigade, and local Drug and Alcohol Task Forces, the initiative connects young people with key services and decision makers. The Forum launched the Escape the Vape campaign and is now producing a student-narrated video on nitrous oxide dangers, helping students educate and influence their peers directly.







## HEALTH & WELLBEING

### WATERFORD CITY AND COUNTY COUNCIL

## Good Grief



Good Grief is a collaborative initiative between Waterford and Wexford County Councils, funded by Creative Ireland, focused on exploring the role of creativity in supporting self-soothing for adults over 18 in their second-year post-bereavement. This innovative project combines longitudinal research with immersive creative experiences, engaging 36 participants through eight tailored retreats across multiple venues and artistic disciplines.

By partnering with academic institutions and health organisations, Good Grief seeks to understand how artistic engagement can aid emotional healing and resilience during the complex grieving process. The project documents outcomes using established research measures, providing valuable insights into the therapeutic potential of creativity beyond traditional clinical approaches. Good Grief exemplifies a community-focused, cross-sectoral approach to bereavement support, highlighting the importance of creative expression as a tool for wellbeing and recovery in the later stages of grief.



# FESTIVAL OF THE YEAR



## CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy (Willie Clancy Traditional Music Summer School)



Now in its fifth decade, the Willie Clancy Summer School, Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy, stands as Ireland's foremost traditional music festival. It honours the legacy of the great uilleann piper Willie Clancy, while creating a vibrant and inclusive space where music, culture, and community thrive.

Drawing thousands of participants and audiences from Ireland and across the world each July, the festival transforms Miltown Malbay into a living classroom and performance space that celebrates Irish music at its most authentic and dynamic. Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy is more than a festival, it is a cultural institution that plays a critical role in the preservation and evolution of Irish traditional music. Its long-term commitment to cultural sustainability makes it a beacon for similar initiatives across Ireland and beyond. The festival's continued relevance after 50 years, speaks to its ability to inspire, adapt, and lead.



## DUBLIN CITY COUNCIL

### Dublin City Council Sensoria Festival



Dublin City Council's Sensoria is a family fun festival dedicated to neurodiversity, involving two full days of laughter, fun and learning through a thoughtfully curated, neurodivergent-friendly programme. This was a free and immersive event, catering to all age ranges and tailored to a whole range of comfort levels and interests.

Visitors were entertained by a wide range of family friendly activities, such as science shows, magic shows, performances from acclaimed artists of the neurodiverse communities, yoga and dance classes, aerial performances, and many more. In consideration of the diverse needs of event attendees, Sensoria featured multiple areas for relaxation and self-regulation, including a sensory garden and all-ages regulation spaces—ideal for anyone who may need to take some time away from the festivities. The festival also included a sensory tent and a large soft play area, managed by on-site Occupational Therapists, perfect for burning off any extra energy.







## FINGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

**Howth Maritime & Seafood Festival**

The Howth Maritime and Seafood Festival is a flagship community celebration curated by Fingal County Council's Events Unit, honouring Howth's rich coastal heritage, maritime traditions, and world-renowned seafood. Held annually in the picturesque harbour town of Howth, the festival brings together local fishers, chefs, artists, musicians, and maritime experts to deliver a dynamic programme of food tastings, sailing displays, cultural exhibitions, and family-friendly entertainment.

This free, inclusive event attracts thousands of visitors from across Ireland and beyond, showcasing Fingal as a vibrant coastal destination.

The festival promotes sustainability, supports local businesses, and fosters pride in the area's marine identity. By uniting community groups, volunteers, and regional tourism partners, the Howth Maritime and Seafood Festival not only drives economic impact but also deepens public appreciation for Fingal's coastal assets. It exemplifies innovation in local government-led cultural programming and deserves recognition as a model festival of community engagement and place-making.



## GALWAY CITY COUNCIL

**Galway Climate Inspirations Festival-  
Communities in Action**

In 2024 Galway City Council launched a new annual climate festival, the first of its kind organised by a local authority in Ireland. 'Climate Inspirations-Communities in Action' is an innovative, creative, and collaborative festival which aims to change the narrative around climate action to one of positivity. It harnesses Galway's creative energy and embraces its theatrical, musical, art, active travel, Gaeilge and food cultures.

A festival line up including Mary Robinson, Philip Boucher Hayes, musician John Spillane, comedian Colm O'Regan, journalist Ella McSweeney, Fregoli Street theatre, Stomptown Brassband and a host of other performers, speakers and supporters brought the streets of Galway alive for this community climate action festival. Highlights included climate talks, field trips, street theatre, live music and DJ's, storytelling, a community harvest feast, a family bike ride, a 'sounds of climate change' commission and many other events for all the community to enjoy.



## FESTIVAL OF THE YEAR



## KILDARE COUNTY COUNCIL

## Brigid, Spirit of Kildare Festival



Brigid, Spirit of Kildare is a community festival celebrating St. Brigid “Her Spirit, Our Story”. Building on the success of the Brigid 1500 programme, Spirit of Kildare takes the celebration of St. Brigid’s legacy to an even grander scale, engaging new audiences and deepening the community’s connection to this powerful historical figure.

The programme engages with the values St. Brigid championed including spirituality, biodiversity, sustainability, arts, culture, social justice, female leadership, peace, hospitality, and education.

A 10-day inclusive programme took place from the 25<sup>th</sup> January to the 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2025 and included a host of activities such as concerts, light processions, art commissions, pilgrimages, workshops, and talks. The celebrations included a school’s programme and 13 large flagship events alongside various community initiatives delivered through a dedicated grants scheme. The festival was delivered in partnership with key stakeholders, with community participation playing a pivotal role.

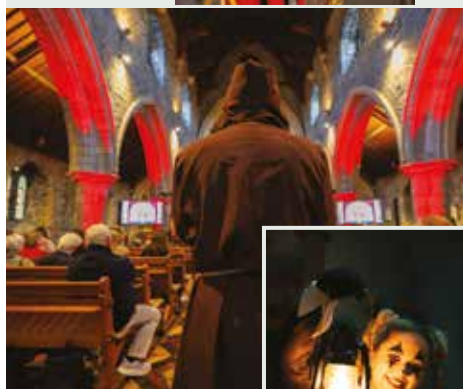


## KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL

Kilkenny’s Toil and Trouble -  
Discover the spells cast on society  
during the Kilkenny Witch Trials

Marking the 700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Kilkenny Witch Trials, Kilkenny’s Toil and Trouble stood out as a bold and imaginative initiative redefining how local Government can engage communities with their history. It transformed a dark chapter of medieval injustice into a vibrant, inclusive programme that educated, inspired, and united the community of Kilkenny.

The Initiative featured a wide-ranging suite of events from expert led tours to a dedicated podcast series. A landmark religious and Civic Service offering public atonement for the burning of Petronella de Midia and honoured the memory of the 11 others unjustly condemned for witchcraft. A key highlight was the first public display of the Red Book of Ossory, written 700 years ago by the inquisitor in the trails. The artefact anchored the programme, deepening its resonance and authenticity. This initiative demonstrated how thoughtful commemoration can be a powerful catalyst for dialogue, creativity, learning and healing.





**CORK CITY COUNCIL**

## Knocknaheeny Per Cent For Art: "I Can Colour Between The Lines but I Choose Not To"



I Can Colour Between The Lines But I Choose Not To is a three-part project celebrating the creativity and community spirit of Knocknaheeny. Part One involved connecting with local communities from autumn 2017 to summer 2018, fostering imagination and collaboration. Part Two featured a community installation at 46 Kilmore Road Lower during the Cork Midsummer Festival in June 2018, transforming the house with themed rooms and artistic contributions from residents, artists, and volunteers. Part Three explored the symbolism of cherry blossoms, reflecting participants' stories and memories. This resulted in a tiled-mural installed in 2024.

This initiative, produced by Cork Midsummer Festival and commissioned by Cork City Council, as part of the North West Quarter Regeneration highlights the resilience and vibrancy of Knocknaheeny's residents.

**DÚN LAOGHAIRE-RATHDOWN COUNTY COUNCIL**

## Children and Young People's Edition, dlr Arts Development Plan 2024- 30



The creation of the first Children and Young People's Edition of a Local Authority Arts Development Plan for Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown. In advance of developing the new Arts Plan for the County we worked with children and young people to hear their views, through a variety of consultation methods. This feedback then formed part of the new Arts Development Plan for the County entitled 'Creating with Communities'. A draft of this new plan was then brought back to children and young people for further development.

The resulting publication, The Children and Young People's Edition of our new plan Creating with Communities, gives voice to their vision of local arts development for their County. It is hoped, in their words, it will help more children and young people to do creative things.



# SUSTAINING THE ARTS

## HOUSE OF WATERFORD

IRELAND 1783



### GALWAY CITY COUNCIL

## Youth Lates



Youth Lates is a Galway City Council (a pilot in 2024) initiative sustaining the arts by engaging young people (14-19) in the night-time economy (NTE) through accessible cultural events. The programme offers diverse activities such as live music, open mic nights, creative workshops and game nights. The programme is in partnership with local arts organisations (Galway Arts Centre|Nuns Island Theatre), youth services (Youth Work Ireland, Comhairle na nÓg), and music education (Music Generation Galway City).

The fully booked program demonstrated a strong demand for youth-centric evening arts engagement. Youth Lates provides safe, vibrant spaces for young people to participate in and shape Galway's cultural scene, fostering creativity, social connection, and a new generation of arts enthusiasts and potential future artists. Continued in 2025 it's a key element of the city's Night-Time Economy (NTE) Action Plan, directly addressing the need for youth engagement in the arts.



### KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL

## Art of Change



This initiative is part of the Arts Office's Climate Action programme encouraging young people to explore environmental issues through the arts. It inspires and raises awareness about the impact of our actions on the environment. By learning new art techniques, participants feel empowered and understand that their choices matter. It offers an alternative way for young people to engage with environmental topics, providing hands-on experiences influencing their perception of nature and natural resources.

The programme includes a project series at two youth centres and two schools. The schools programme was led by the student's interest in fashion focusing on a sustainable fashion workshop delivered by the Rediscovery Centre. The youth group participants engaged with different artists each week, focusing on various mediums and materials, developing new skills and confidence. Workshops explore artists' sustainable practices and material choices, fostering discussions on environmental issues and how we might consider reducing our impact.





HOUSE OF  
**WATERFORD**  
IRELAND 1783

## SUSTAINING THE ARTS

### WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

## Creative Places Baltinglass



Creative Places Baltinglass is a community-focused arts project celebrating Baltinglass as a place and the creative potential of those who live and work there. It provides opportunities for people to experience high-quality, inclusive creative activities in their locality. CPB involves statutory, professional, creative, community and voluntary organisations working together to animate Baltinglass as a place of social creativity.

It has been designed for community members and artists and so reflects the local culture, heritage, existing community assets, people's needs, concerns and interests. It aims to inspire and connect people of all ages and develop socially engaged arts practice. It is managed by the lead partner, Wicklow County Council Arts Office. Local partners include WW Interagency Group, Baltinglass MD and Library, Heritage Office, Tidy Towns, B.A.R.T., Baltinglass Art Group, Respond, Historical Society, the Gardaí, Community Gardens, CARE, Youth Services, Music Generation Wicklow, schools and InSync Youth Services.



# URBAN REVIVAL



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## GALWAY CITY COUNCIL

### Ireland's first city-centre School Street - Scoil Iognáid, Galway



In 2020, Galway City Council in partnership with Scoil Iognáid, the National Transport Authority (NTA) and An Taisce's Green Schools programme, launched a pilot School Streets programme, the first city centre School Street in Ireland. The project arose out of concerns of parents and school management about the interactions between children and cars in the front of school environment - a narrow, residential street in an older part of Galway.

The pilot saw the street closed to traffic (except for residents and 'blue badge' holders accessing the school) at school drop-off and pick-up times. It proved very popular among the school community has been highly successful in changing the travel culture at Scoil Iognáid, with a significant increase in the number of children walking and cycling to school. Works completed by Galway City Council in 2024 have now made this a permanent feature and have further developed these benefits.



## KERRY COUNTY COUNCIL

### Island of Geese - New Urban Quarter - Tralee



The Island of Geese project involved the regeneration of a large brownfield site (Old Denny Factory) in the centre of Tralee. This Masterplan led regeneration project will ensure the proper and sustainable development of the area in tandem with the continued development of Tralee as the capital of County Kerry.

The Masterplan set out to create an urban design layout and architectural framework to provide a new urban mixed-use quarter at The Island of Geese site, which includes: An inclusive and attractive "go to" space in the town, a Civic / Commercial hub, a new Living Quarter, and a new public plaza, for gatherings, festivals, markets and events. Kerry County Council has invested in the public realm in Tralee and has created a pedestrian priority core in the main shopping areas. The next phase of works will create a seamless pedestrian link between the Island of Geese and the town core.





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## URBAN REVIVAL

### KILDARE COUNTY COUNCIL

## Naas Library & Cultural Centre



This initiative was a capital redevelopment and rejuvenation of Naas Town Hall into a modern library and cultural centre. This conservation project aimed to repurpose the building to meet the needs of one of the fastest growing towns in Ireland. A key strength of this project lies in the integration of the history and built heritage to transform a historic municipal building into a modern public realm facility.

This sensitive consideration of history and heritage creates opportunities to further embed a 'sense of place' in the community. The regeneration of the building provides a new synergy for the area including a distinctive new character and has attracted increased public interest. The ability of the facility to adapt and respond to future challenges has also been incorporated to support and underpin the changing economic, social and environmental needs of the town. Quality of life is improved through education, recreation, culture, and imagination.

### KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL

## Mayfair Library and Public Realm



The transformation of the iconic Mayfair Ballroom, vacant since 1973, in the heart of the Abbey Quarter regeneration site in Kilkenny city, into a vibrant new City Library stands as a leading example of urban revival and adaptive reuse. Funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development and Kilkenny County Council, this €7.2m project, has preserved a cherished part of Kilkenny's built heritage while reimagining it for modern day community use.

The redevelopment included the demolition of outdated extensions and the construction of a striking two-storey addition expanding the floor area to 1,800m<sup>2</sup>, boasting an inclusive, accessible library, cultural and event space. The Mayfair City Library opened its doors in April 2024, and exemplifies breathing new life into the urban core, welcoming 188,000 visitors in its first year, creating a dynamic civic space blending cultural heritage with modern day needs, enhancing quality of life and rejuvenating a long-dormant landmark.



# URBAN REVIVAL



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## MEATH COUNTY COUNCIL

### East Meath Civic Centre - Bettystown Library



Bettystown Library is a modern, four-storey public library located on the picturesque seafront of Bettystown, County Meath. Opened to the public on February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025, it serves as a vibrant community hub, part of the 950-square-metre East Meath Civic Centre, which includes a Lifeguard Station and public restroom facilities.

One of its standout features is the first purpose-built Sensory Room in Meath, catering to individuals with sensory sensitivities.

The library also boasts five meeting rooms, an adaptable study room, and dedicated spaces for Adults and Children. With free public computers, Wi-Fi, and a state-of-the-art 3D printer, it fosters creativity. The innovative Tovertafel, projecting interactive games, enhances engagement for users of all ages. Within its first week, the library attracted over 1,300 new members and has welcomed more than 13,300 visitors, becoming a cornerstone of the local community.



## MONAGHAN COUNTY COUNCIL

### Church Square - a Vibrant Performance Area & Community Space



The revitalisation of Church Square has reimagined one of Monaghan Town's most historic and central public squares. Designed as a vibrant public space, the upgraded square now supports a wide range of uses- from food markets to cultural performances – by offering a more open, accessible and welcoming environment. Key enhancements included hard and soft landscaping, new connections for events infrastructure and feature lighting to enhance and delineate the space.

The transformation has greatly improved the visual appeal and functionality of the town centre encouraging footfall and creating a focal point for community life and tourism activity. Prior to this development, Church Square was used on occasion for a few key festivals. Following the recent investment, the space is now also routinely used for meet-ups and for smaller events – busking, pop-up activities, local choir performances etc - so that there is something giving life to the town centre throughout the year.







NETWORKS

## HERITAGE AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT

### CAVAN COUNTY COUNCIL

#### Bailieborough Bridewell



Redevelopment of the historic Bridewell building in Bailieborough to preserve the space and develop a brand-new visitor experience, museum, and community space on Main Street, Bailieborough. The courthouse space has been converted into a community space and is widely used for meetings, events and gatherings.

The Bridewell which was constructed in 1833 and closed in 1900, is now a compelling visitor experience telling the story of the Bridewells that were established, primarily to house petty criminals, vagrants, those awaiting trial, and sometimes children. It is a macabre and darkly captivating insight into the past. It also tells the story of the Three Folk – Gael, Ulster-Scots, and English – who made this part of Ulster their home. The project, which opened in December 2024, was delivered via a partnership between Cavan County Council, Bailieborough Development Association, and The Ulster Scots Agency. Bailieborough Development Association and Cavan County Council jointly manage the facility.



### KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL

#### Restoration and conservation of Victorian Woodstock House, Gardens & Arboretum



Woodstock Gardens and Arboretum is a Victorian estate with historic gardens and rare tree collections. Kilkenny County Council has led extensive restoration projects to preserve the horticultural and architectural heritage of the estate. Key elements including the walled garden, turner conservatory, yew walk, rose garden, terraced beds, and ornamental fountains have been meticulously restored alongside the revitalised monkey puzzle and noble fir avenues.



Spanning 50 acres, the estate offers accessible scenic walking trails including the waterfall loop. Projects included improvements to visitor amenities and interpretive signage supporting educational, recreational, and cultural experiences. Recent conservation works to Woodstock House have ensured its protection as a significant heritage building, enhancing the visitor experience. Woodstock Gardens is a thriving destination allowing visitors to connect with Kilkenny's built heritage through educational programmes, promoting biodiversity and supporting wellbeing in nature-based experiences. This initiative is a model of successful heritage conservation and environmental stewardship.

# HERITAGE AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT



NETWORKS

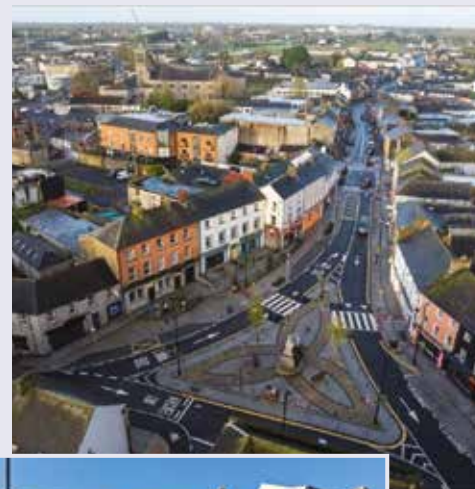
## MEATH COUNTY COUNCIL

### Heritage Led Regeneration Project in Market Square, Navan



Market Square, in the heart of Navan suffered decline in recent years with some key buildings vacant and in poor condition. Meath County Council approached the owners of two protected structures and worked in collaboration to regenerate the area. The 'St Laurence Hotel', built c.1780, frames the square. It contributed significantly to the towns social and cultural life, but had been closed for two decades.

Works undertaken included refurbishment and replacement windows, new cast-iron rainwater goods, render repairs, new shop front glazing, new railings and paving to the street terrace and all surfaces received a new coat of paint. The Meath Chronicle Building, built c.1750 with integral carriageway arch, involved more substantial structural intervention to consolidate the front facade wall. P.V.C. windows were replaced with timber sliding sash, cement render replaced with a new lime render, new signage and paint scheme.



## SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL

### Ely Arch: Heritage Conservation Through Public Realm Design



Ely Arch, constructed in 1771 as an entrance to Rathfarnham Castle, stands as a significant historical landmark in South Dublin. Over time, the surrounding landscape had deteriorated, leaving the Arch isolated from its original context. In May 2024, South Dublin County Council (SDCC) completed a comprehensive landscape regeneration project, transforming the area into a welcoming pocket park.

The project introduced universal access, seating, picnic areas, paved walkways, and pollinator/ biodiversity friendly planting, creating a vibrant community space. Located directly beside the Dodder Greenway, the site is now a key focal stop-off along this major active travel route connecting Tallaght to the Grand Canal Dock. This integration not only enhances local heritage and biodiversity but also supports sustainable transport, social connection, and public engagement. The project combines careful conservation with new landscape design, re-establishing Ely Arch as a point of civic pride and everyday use for the wider community.







## AGE FRIENDLY INITIATIVE



### CAVAN COUNTY COUNCIL

## The Art of Life - Death Positive Libraries



The Art of Life - Death Positive Libraries is a project by Creative Cavan and Cavan Library Service, in partnership with age friendly groups in Cavan and Fermanagh, which uses creativity and the arts to help older people engage in real discussion about one of life's great taboos - death.



The project has two primary strands: Art of Life: which employs workshops to facilitate exploration and expression of participants' thoughts on end of life through art; and Death Positive Libraries: stocking a collection of books discussing death and grief in an informative and creative way. End of life is a universal experience and yet rarely spoken about, to the extent that worry and lack of understanding can reduce a person's enjoyment of the here and now.



By facilitating frank, honest conversation, the Art of Life - Death Positive Libraries allows older people to process their emotions around death and so better enjoy life.

### CORK CITY COUNCIL

## EnergyCloud Age Friendly Pilot Project : Cork City



The EnergyCloud Age Friendly Initiative, launched in Cork City on April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2025, is a collaborative effort between EnergyCloud Ireland, Cork City Council, and Cork City Age Friendly. This pilot project aims to address energy poverty among older residents by redirecting surplus renewable energy from wind farms to provide free hot water.

By installing smart devices in the homes of 40 older adults, the initiative reduces energy costs and supports Cork City Council's Climate Action Plan. This innovative approach not only alleviates economic hardship but also promotes environmental sustainability. The project exemplifies how local government, social enterprises, and communities can work together to create age-friendly solutions that champion climate action.



# AGE FRIENDLY INITIATIVE



## DUBLIN CITY COUNCIL

### Community Wellness Programme



The Dublin City Sport and Wellbeing partnership is delivering a large scale multi agency community wellness programme (CWP) targeting older people across Dublin as they recover from cardiac and pulmonary disease. This is a first of a kind initiative for local government in Ireland. It initially started in 2018 between Dublin City Council (DCC) and the Health Service Executive (HSE) to support older patients (Pulmonary) promoting long term adherence to health enhancing behaviours.



An initial collaboration created a referral pathway linking DCC's St. Catherine's Community Sports Centre with physiotherapists at Chronic Disease Hub (CDH) 1 and St. James's Hospital in Dublin South West, also Glin Road with CHO9 and associated Beaumont Hospital. The CWP has expanded rapidly from 2022 now serving over 120 participants (850 classes 2024) and is now also catering to cohort of Cardiac clientele which supports positive psychological aspects of wellbeing, positive emotions, optimism and life satisfaction.



## FINGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

### Sheltered Housing at Monastery Court, Lusk



The new age-friendly housing scheme within the village of Lusk, Co. Dublin, was completed by Fingal County Council in 2024. The project consists of five new social houses, all designed for age-friendly living. By incorporating age-friendly design principles, these homes are tailored to meet the needs of older citizens and individuals with medical priority requirements.

The location of the housing scheme provides easy access to local services and activities for older people in the community. This approach not only enhances the quality of life for residents but also promotes a more diverse and inclusive environment.







## AGE FRIENDLY INITIATIVE

### KILDARE COUNTY COUNCIL

## Ireland's first Age Friendly Race Course



The Age Friendly concept is well established, particularly in County Kildare. At its core is a recognition that the older cohort in our society should have the best possible opportunity to live their lives to the fullest and that the facilities and supports are available to enable them to do that. Fulfilling this ambition is no simple challenge and requires the involvement of a range of agencies and organisations, especially at local level.

Thankfully, people are living longer and the majority are active and engaged members of society. Many are racing enthusiasts and that is why this initiative for Naas Racecourse to become age friendly is so significant. What we are witnessing is the practical application of the Age Friendly concept in a well-established local racetrack with a proud tradition.



### KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL

## Information & Activities Programme for Older People



Kilkenny County Council's Age Friendly Programme identified a gap in targeted communication and access to information for older people through a county-wide survey. In response, the Council established a steering group to develop the information Activities Programme for Older People. This was an 8-week initiative designed to inform, engage and empower.



Delivered in the newly opened Mayfair Library, the programme included expert-led sessions on key topics like Aging Well in the Community providing practical guidance on local services and supports. The informal setting was welcoming and offered vital social interaction, practical introductions to services and pathways to reducing isolation. Over 500 older adults from across county Kilkenny participated, demonstrating a strong appetite for inclusive and shared access to information. The initiative has not only enhanced awareness of the available supports and increased engagement, but it has also strengthened Kilkenny's commitment to enabling people to age well in their community.

## AGE FRIENDLY INITIATIVE



## MEATH COUNTY COUNCIL

## The Meath Befriending Network



The Meath Befriending Network (MBN) supports older individuals facing social isolation through a volunteer-led, person-centred approach. Coordinated by Meath Partnership under the Meath Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)-led Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP), MBN aligns with the Meath Age-Friendly Strategy. Trained volunteers offer weekly companionship and practical support, helping to reduce loneliness and enhance well-being while improving access to services for beneficiaries.



MBN collaborates extensively with local stakeholders, including the Age-Friendly Alliance, SICAP, and LCDC, to expand its reach and effectiveness. In addition to one-on-one visits, MBN organises social gatherings, workshops, and community events that foster connection and well-being. Activities such as fire safety awareness sessions and storytelling projects support MBN's holistic approach. By building meaningful relationships and providing consistent assistance, MBN empowers older adults to remain active and engaged, ultimately contributing to a more inclusive and age-friendly community.

## SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL

## Ballyroan: A Dementia-Inclusive, Age Friendly Community



South Dublin County Council's Age Friendly initiative in Ballyroan brings together the library, community centre, and local businesses to support older adults through inclusion, creativity, and care. The area now hosts a dementia-inclusive programme, a monthly Dementia Café, the Pendulum Project – a library-led series of art workshops based on memory – and an Age-Friendly Mentor Clinic for older entrepreneurs.

Launched in 2023 with support from the HSE and Alzheimer Society of Ireland, the dementia pilot trained local businesses and employees to provide a more understanding environment for people with dementia. The Dementia Café offers monthly support and social engagement in the Community and Youth Centre. The Pendulum Project uses creative expression - drawing, painting, textiles, writing – to help older people reflect on and share their life stories. The mentoring clinic, delivered by the library and Local Enterprise Office, supported older crafters exploring business ideas. These initiatives have deepened community connections in Ballyroan.







# THE GLOBAL GOALS

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