

Local Community Development Committee Annual Report 2024



Membership and Administration:

The Galway County Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) has 19 members drawn from the public and private sectors. The membership brings together the expertise and skills of people actively working in local development and community development with local authority members, officials, and state agencies, to implement a joined-up, cross-sectoral approach to local and community development programmes. Six meetings of the LCDC took place in 2024, and membership of the LCDC comprised of the following at year-end:

Pillar	No.	Nominating Body	Name of Nominee
Public Sector - 9			
Local Authority Elected Members	3	Galway County Council	Effective from Jan to June 2024 Cllr. Noel Thomas (Chairperson) Cllr. Gabe Cronneally Cllr. Padraic Mac An Iomaire
		Local Elections took place in June 2024 resulting in 2 of 3 new Elected members	Effective from July 2024 Cllr. Michael Connolly (Chairperson) Cllr. James Charity Cllr. Padraic Mac An Iomaire
Local Authority Officials	2	Galway County Council	Jacqueline Carroll, Director of Services Caroline McDonagh, LEO
State Agencies	4	Health Service Executive	Laurence Gaughan, Project Manager - Health & Wellbeing
		Department of Social Protection	Regina Higgins, Divisional Manager West
		Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board	Donal Walsh, Adult Education Officer
		Údarás na Gaeltachta	Sean O'Coisdealbha, Bainisteoir Réigiún an Iarthair
Private Sector - 10			
Local Development & Community Development Bodies	3	Galway Rural Development	Steve Dolan, CEO
		FORUM Connemara	Karen Mannion, CEO
		Comhar na nOileán CTR	Máire Uí Mhaoiláin, Bainisteoir
Sectoral Interests	2	Employers & Business	Eveanna Ryan, Galway Chamber

		Agriculture & Farming	Anne Mitchell, IFA
Community & Voluntary Interests	5	PPN – Social Inclusion College	Kevin Gavin
		PPN – Social Inclusion College	Peter Gohery
		PPN – Community & Voluntary College	Máirín Ní Chonghaile
		PPN – Community & Voluntary College	Gerard Costello
		PPN – Environmental College	Jen Fisher

The LCDC appoints a chairperson who consults with the Chief Officer on matters relating to the LCDC's administration and operation and has an overall co-ordination role and responsibility for the effective functioning and management of meetings. Cllr. Michael Connolly is the current Chairperson of the LCDC and Cllr. Padraic Mac An Iomaire is the current Vice-Chairperson.

The Chief Executive assigns staff to assist the LCDC in the exercise of its functions, including an assignment to the post of Chief Officer. The Chief Officer is not a voting member of the Committee but attends and participates at all meetings in an advisory and support capacity, particularly regarding policy and strategic direction, promotion of inter-agency working through the Public Participation Network (PPN), and providing an information flow with the local authority, particularly the Economic Development SPC. Mr. Kieran Coyne, Senior Executive Officer, Galway County Council, holds the position of Chief Officer to the LCDC.

Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP):

Galway County Local Economic and Community Plan Project Update

Hub Planning, an independent consultancy, was appointed to assist with the development of the Galway County Local Economic & Community Plan and carried out in accordance with the 'Local Economic and Community Plan Guidelines (2021)'. The Community Plan (LECP), a statutory document that aims to address the economic and community needs of Galway County for the six-year period from 2024- 2030. The four stages of development are detailed below:

Stage 1 March - April

Brand Development: A brand book was developed to guide the designs of the LECP and all supporting materials

Socio-Economic Analysis: Building upon the draft document sent out at the beginning of the project, the Socio-Economic Statement was developed. This was done by leveraging additional data from the 2022 Census, CSO and the 2023 HP Pobal Deprivation Index. This analysis has provided a foundational understanding of the demographic, economic, and social conditions within Galway County. This information was used to inform the draft vision and high-level goals for the LECP. This revised document was input into a design document, implementing the chosen branding concept. A profile in DataHub by Hub Planning was set up to monitor data on an ongoing basis.

Draft Socio-Economic Statement: The Socio-Economic Statement, draft vision, and draft high-level goals were published to view by the public at a dedicated website set up for this process.

Stage 2 May – August

Consultation: 540+ public survey responses, 139 business survey responses, 10 focus groups, 10 on-street pop-ups, 5 library drop-in sessions, 20+ one-on-one key stakeholder interviews, 27.1k online reach via social media and 5 written submissions.

Revised High Level Goals and Objectives: Consultation resulted in minor changes to the HLGs based on the public consultation process. Consultation also identified key priority areas or objectives.

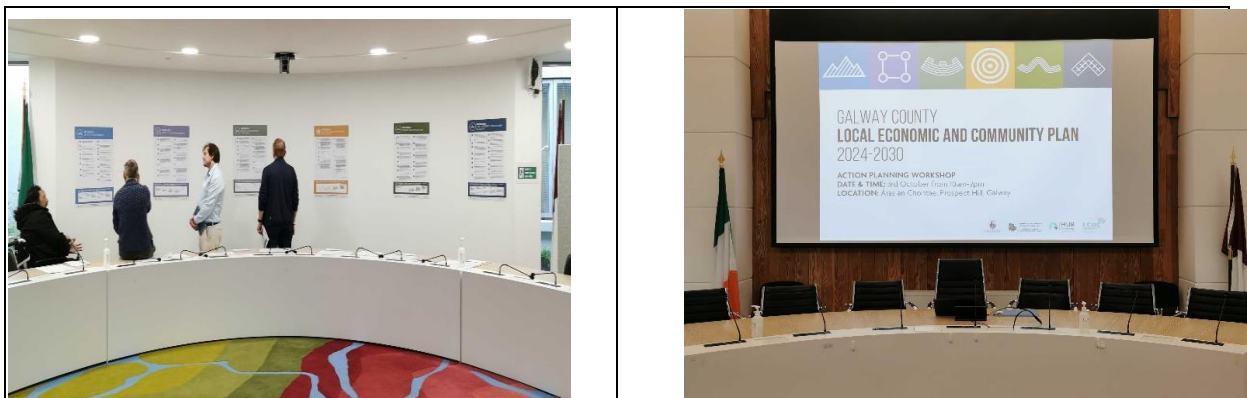
Revised Socio-Economic Statement: The socio-economic statement was updated to include the revised HLGs, explanation of consultation process and the key findings from the consultation.

Stage 3 September - October

Developing Objective and Outcomes: The High-level goals, consultation and socio-economic research was used to inform specific objectives and intended outcomes relating to the economic and community aspects of the plan. Key findings from Stage 1 and 2 were translated into recommended Strategic Community Objectives (SCOs) and Strategic Economic Development Objectives (SEDOs), and actions in accordance with the LECP guidelines. A significant effort was made to translate objectives identified in EU-level, national, regional and local policy to objectives and actions at a local level for inclusion in the LECP.

Action Planning Events

Drop In: In Person event held in the County Chambers on Thursday, October 3. This workshop was drop-in style and involved six stations, one for each of the High-Level Goals. Each station consisted of a poster with key findings from desktop research, statistical analysis, and consultation, as well as draft objectives and key priority areas.



Online: Six online goal specific workshops were hosted by Hub Planning.

Attendees and Output: An audit of key sectoral groups and agencies was undertaken. Invites were issued via Hub Planning, Council and the Advisory Group. These events were well attended and resulted in approximately 100+ actions put forward. Attendees put themselves forward as the lead on actions or express interest in partnering with existing agencies. Actions were designed within the SMART framework, which means they are required to be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Bound.

In Stage 3, a final draft of the objectives and outcomes was then presented/emailed for observation and consideration by Municipal Districts and Regional Assembly. In line with the legislation, the reviewers were tasked with consideration of consistency with;

City and County Development plans

RSES relevance

Consistency between the economic and community elements of the LECP.

Stage 4 – December

The LECP was updated to reflect this input and formally adopted at the December Council meeting.

SICAP:

SICAP (Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme) is a targeted, holistic programme for individuals who are most disadvantaged and less likely to use mainstream services. Under the programme, the Programme Implementers provides support directly to individuals based on their identified needs, with a view to promoting personal development and progressing to longer-term outcomes such as employment and education. The programme also focuses on collective community needs and the LCDC



has identified 'People living in communities impacted by Disadvantage' as a priority target group, and the Programme Implementers will use a flexible community development approach to design and deliver the most appropriate types of interventions, projects, and initiatives to tackle poverty, high unemployment rates, and other issues associated with the most disadvantaged small areas and communities in the County. SICAP aims to reduce poverty and promote social inclusion and equality through local engagement and interagency collaboration with local, regional, and national services.

At Galway County level, the entire local authority area had been treated as one Lot area for the purposes of SICAP since 2014. In the new SICAP 5-year period 2024-2028 there has been an increase in the number of Lots in the County to 3, as follows:

- Galway East: Municipal Districts of Athenry-Oranmore, Ballinasloe, Loughrea & Tuam
- Galway West: Municipal District of Connemara excluding Galway Islands
- Galway Islands: Galway Islands (Inis Mór, Inis Meáin, Inis Oírr, Inisbofin)

As the tender process was not completed by end 2023, SICAP 2018-2023 was extended by 3 months initially to end of March and then another 2 months to the end of May 2024. Contracts for the delivery of Social Inclusion & Community Activation Programme (SICAP) for the 5-year period 2024-2028 came into effect on 1st June 2024. The contracts were a combined budget for SICAP in County Galway of almost €1.8m per year across the lifetime of the programme and was implemented across 3 Lots; Galway East and Galway Islands by Galway Rural Development CLG, and Galway West by Forum Connemara CLG.



The SICAP Galway West Contract Signing at Galway County Council Chamber

Back Row: (l-r) Mary McGann Administrative Officer, Jacqueline Carroll Director of Services, Kieran Coyne Senior Executive Officer – Galway County Council Community & Rural Development Directorate.

Front Row: (l-r) Liam Conneally, Chief Executive Galway County Council; Cllr. Noel Thomas, Chairperson Galway County LCDC; Karen Mannion, CEO Forum Connemara; Melissa Wallace, Chief Financial Officer Forum Connemara.



The SICAP Galway East and Galway Islands Contract Signing at Galway County Council Chamber

Back Row: (l-r) Jacqueline Carroll, Director of Services, Kieran Coyne, Senior Executive Officer – Galway County Council Community & Rural Development Directorate.

Front Row: (l-r) Steve Dolan, Chief Executive Officer, Galway Rural Development; Cllr. Noel Thomas, Chairperson Galway County LCDC; Liam Conneally, Chief Executive, Galway County Council; Mary Claire Brennan, Financial Administrator Galway Rural Development.

Galway Islands Lot:

The following is the situation regarding the achievement of KPI's under the programme for 2024:

Under Goal 1, 3 Local Community Groups were supported versus the KPI of 3 and under Goal 2 25 Individuals were supported versus the KPI of 23, which has met the required KPI's. Some of the specific initiatives implemented during the 2024 programme were:

- The first Christmas party for senior citizens (50 attendees) was co-organised on Inis Meáin to enable older residents to come together to celebrate Christmas and to reduce social isolation for this cohort. Funding was also provided to the women's group Bothán na mBan for an older person's Christmas party on Inis Mór and to Comharchumann Forbartha Teo (also Inis Mór) to organise a pre-Christmas family event on the island. Bothán na mBan also received funding to support their general activities. On Inis Oírr CLEAS CTR (Garraí na nDaoire) received funding to organise an event to mark the opening of their new community garden.



Paula Lennon, Public Health Nurse for Inis Meáin; Mayor of Galway, Councillor Peter Keane; and Aran Islands Garda Paul Quinn with residents of the island who celebrated a Christmas Party in Halla Naomh Eoin.

- Three DIY workshops for women were organised for the Islands and 34 women attended - 2 were held on Inis Mór and 1 on Inis Meáin.
- Four Health and Wellbeing events were co-organised on the islands with Healthy Ireland Galway, Galway County Council's Community, Enterprise and Economic Development Unit and the HSE.

Galway East Lot:

The following is the situation regarding the achievement of KPI's under the programme for 2024:

Under Goal 1, 52 Local Community Groups were supported versus the KPI of 43 and under Goal 2 471 Individuals were supported versus the KPI of 458, which has met the required KPI's. Some of the specific initiatives implemented by Galway Rural Development during the 2024 programme were:

- Positive Ageing Week supports included an event in Loughrea for 100 socially isolated older people and the PAW Heroes Project



Positive Ageing Week in Loughrea

- 26 LCGs received grants (€40,580) to upgrade community spaces, increase activity levels and provide equipment

- Support was provided to improve health literacy and community signposting capacity with Health and Wellbeing events held in Ballinasloe and Athenry, cancer talks for Travellers in Ballinasloe and Men's and Women's Health events in Headford.



Health & Wellbeing events in the East Galway



- 25 clients received €11,480 in individual grants to further their education or progression towards employment (e.g. driving lessons, SNA, exercise, and fitness qualifications) and over 700 individuals received our Jobs Bulletin per week. Also, labour market training included Safe Pass courses (4), Barista (4), HACCP (2), Manual Handling training provided to 129 clients and referrals made to GRETB for further opportunities
- Make the Link events were organised in Ballinasloe, Tuam, Loughrea and Gort (734 attendees) with GRETB and the DSP
- Under the action for New Arrivals to access information, services and educational and employment opportunities - 88 New Arrivals received one-to-one supports during this period. Labour market training was provided through English and specifically for Ukrainians with an interpreter (Safe Pass, Barista, Manual Handling and HACCP). Community Interpreting course and Migrant Enterprise Training were organised. Integration activities that were funded included community education classes, wellbeing events and GRETB cookery courses.

Galway West Lot:

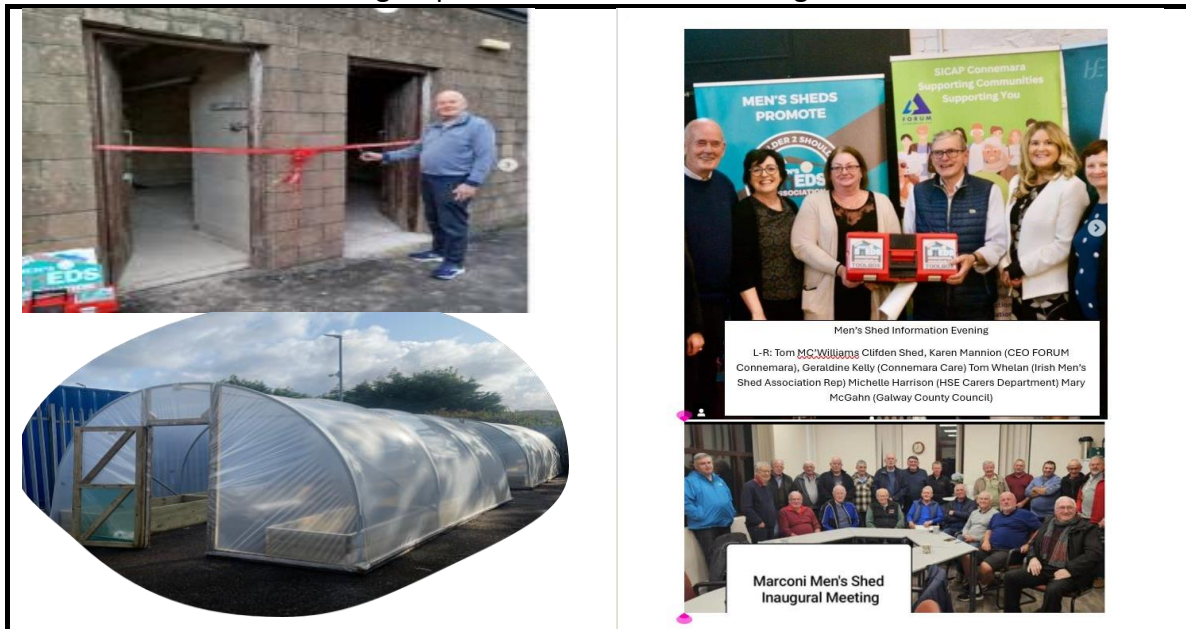
The following is the situation regarding the achievement of KPI's under the programme for 2024:

Under Goal 1, 32 Local Community Groups and 3 Social Enterprises were supported versus the KPI of 15 and under Goal 2 437 Individuals were supported versus the KPI of 164, which has met the required KPI's. Some of the specific initiatives implemented during the 2024 programme were:

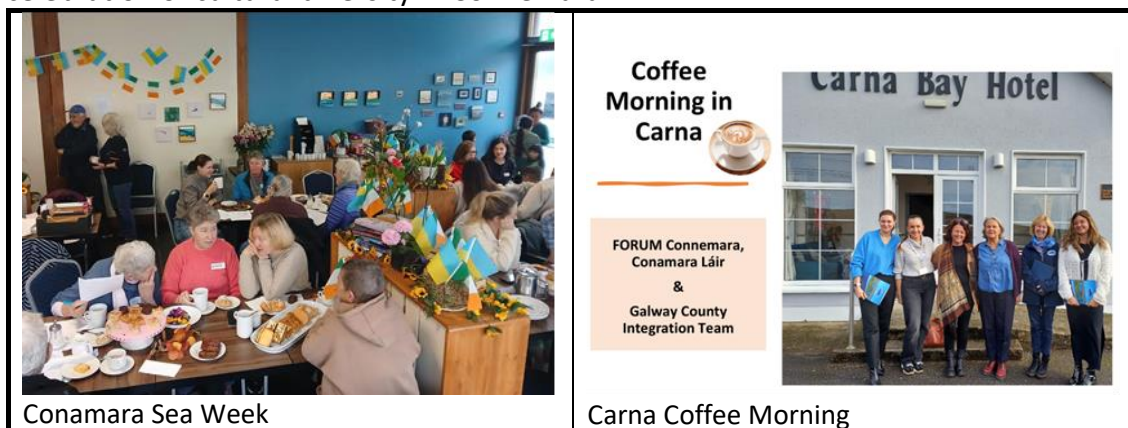
- One of the most successful initiatives in 2024 was the incubation of a Men's Shed in Clifden, in collaboration with the HSE Carer's Dept. Forum worked with a core group of male family carers, they organised a Men's Shed Open Evening, which was attended by approximately 60 people. FORUM Connemara was in a position to ask Eir if they would allow the use of some small, shed units. This all led to the establishment of the Marconi Men's Shed, with further support provided to develop a Shed facility, establish a working committee, and source funding.
- The Marconi Men's Shed was established in November 2024 following an information meeting in Clifden supported by FORUM Connemara, Connemara Care, the Carer's Dept

of HSE, Galway Co. Co. and the Irish Men's Shed Association. The Shed, located on the Eir site in Clifden, received SICAP support for infrastructure, including lighting and electrical sockets. It is overseen by a FORUM Connemara Tús supervisor and a SICAP project officer, with access to facilities at FORUM Connemara's head office. The project received strong backing from the wider community, reigniting interest in the Men's Shed movement across the Connemara area.

- SICAP also supported three polytunnels for a community garden, now used by the Marconi Men's Shed and groups like the Clifden Gardening Club.



- As part of the Connemara Sea Week celebrations, FORUM Connemara, through the SICAP programme, hosted Meet, Greet & Eat—a cultural exchange event celebrating Irish and Ukrainian communities in Connemara. Held on Saturday, October 26th, from 2:00 to 5:00 PM at the Wild Goat Café, Connemara West Centre, Letterfrack, this special gathering provided an opportunity for both communities to connect, share experiences, and strengthen ties. In a warm and welcoming café atmosphere, attendees enjoyed traditional Irish and Ukrainian food, music, song, and dance. A dedicated kids' corner ensured a family-friendly experience, making the event an inclusive and vibrant celebration of cultural diversity in Connemara.



- FORUM Connemara SICAP officers Yevheniia Bohachova and Alina Dagner supported a coffee morning organised by the local Comharchumann Fobairt Chonamara Láir and the Local Authority Integration Team to connect migrants in Carna with locals for guidance and social activities.

The Community Support Fund under the Community Enhancement Programme 2024 (Local Enhancement Programme - LEP)

Galway County LCDC received an allocation of €185,377 under the Community Support Fund from the Department of Rural and Community Development. The purpose of the Community Support Fund was to support groups, particularly in disadvantaged areas, with:

Capital General Allocation of €145,220 and a Women's Group ring-fenced allocation of €30,896.

The LCDC set a maximum grant of €5,000 and priority was given to projects which would enhance disadvantaged areas or assist disadvantaged groups. The types of groups which received funding under this stream were Community Centres and other services targeting disadvantaged groups, and funding was allocated towards upgrade of community facilities, accessibility and safety improvements to community amenities, and community safety initiatives.

LCDC identified Women's Groups in area – such as Women's Sheds, Groups, Clubs Networks, or other appropriate groups like ICA's LGFA, Irish Girl Guides and upon clarification it was noted that it was for specific female-only groups - Girl Guides, ICA, Women's Sheds, Female Sporting Groups

In total, there was 99 successful applications under the General Fund Allocation receiving €145,220 and 21 successful applicants under the Women's Group Fund Allocation receiving €30,896. A more detailed breakdown is outlined below;

In the General Fund €145,200 – there were two categories - grants under €1,000 and grants over €1,000.

In accordance with a Departmental recommendation, approximately 30% of the fund was allocated towards small grants under €1,000.

54 grants under €1,000 were given out, totalling €40,550. Priority was given to support smaller community groups with limited resources which are active at grassroots level to purchase equipment for community use or carry out small scale capital repairs/projects Examples: equipment for Men's Sheds, Older People's Groups, Youth Groups, Community Groups in Disadvantaged Areas.

45 grants totalling €104,650 was given out over €1,000.



Roof repairs at Oughterard Courthouse in Oughterard



New Energy Efficiency Lighting at St Catherine's Hall in Aughrim



New fencing and gates at Ballinakill Sportsfield, Loughrea



New IT and Audiovisual equipment for Clifden ICA Group, in Clifden



New Equipment for Youth-Led Workshops for Youth Work Ireland, East Galway in Ballinasloe

Empowering Communities Programme 2024

The Empowering Communities Programme (ECP) is a national €2m pilot programme which targets 14 small areas with the highest socio-economic deprivation (as measured by the Pobal HP Deprivation Index). The programme uses community development principles to address social exclusion and deprivation. Through engagement with the target communities, developing relationships with community stakeholders and groups, collaborating with statutory agencies and other structures along with the use of a bottom up approach communities are empowered to craft tailored and sustainable responses to identified challenges. In particular, the ECP works closely with other government-funded initiatives such as Community Safety Partnerships/Joint Policing Committee, Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme, Youth Justice, Community Garda, Galway County Council and Healthy Ireland, etc.

The area covered by the Ballinasloe, County Galway ECP is the Urban Small Area comprising of six estates: Saint Grellan's Terrace, Saint Anne's Park, Saint Theresa's Park (the initial three estates), as well as Curragh Park, Hymany Park and Dunlo Court (now also being targeted). In 2024 the project was staffed by a project team leader and one part-time Community Engagement Worker. The budget allocation is based on the level of population in each small

area and Ballinasloe Urban receives an annual allocation of €140,000. The programme is administered by Galway Rural Development CLG (GRD).

Some of the projects undertaken during the year 2024:

- During the Autumn of 2024 the programme expanded the target area from 67 houses to over 200 houses. The project has connected with, and continues to engage with, every household in the target estates to increase awareness of the Empowering Communities Project (ECP), identify the needs and the issues of residents living in the target areas, raise awareness of the services and supports available in Ballinasloe. Furthermore, ECP continues advocating on behalf of the residents and communities in the target areas and helping to raise awareness of issues they are encountering. Prominent among the issues are anti-social behaviour and various estate management issues. In addition, the project has worked closely with residents to help them create long-term and sustainable solutions to the barriers they identify.



Pictured is Yvonne Hoary of ECP during the empowering Christmas initiative in the estates.

- ECP Facilitated an environmental awareness event on the green in Saint Theresa's Park in October. ECP collaborated with the Fire Brigade, the Garda Crime Prevention Unit and local Garda, the Civil Defence, GSP, SICAP, and others. The Cathaoirleach of Ballinasloe MD attended and spoke on community spirit and the event helped increase environmental awareness for the residents of St Theresa's, St Anne's and St Grellans estates. Various fun activities took place with refreshment stalls and a colouring competition for children was held along with a storyteller that was there to communicate and raise awareness on environmental issues (through stories in an age-appropriate manner). The event aimed to break down barriers and preconceived idea as well as promote increased awareness of supports available in Ballinasloe. As the event was held at Halloween, the Fire Brigade delivered information on the dangers of Bonfires, fireworks, and general fire safety in the home. They also gave information on how to contact them in an emergency. To support this, the Civil Defence attended and gave demonstrations on how to treat minor injuries and burns. Members from the Garda Crime Prevention Unit and local Garda attended to highlight how to contact them through the Garda Confidential line in relation to anti-social behaviour and other issues. ECP plan to build upon the success of this event and provide further support in relation to environmental awareness and sustainability.



Event on the green in Saint Theresa's Park in October.

- Among the supports provided in the estates, the ECP provided 'Alternative Dispute Resolution' (ADR) support to the St Theresa's, St Anne's & St Grellans combined estates resident's association. The background here was that some conflict developed between committee members in relation to the responsibilities the supports offered to residents, and the composition of the committee. The conflict expanded and began to involve and affect residents. As the conflict continued to escalate, it involved more residents from the estates and affected the ability of the ECP to deliver projects and support within the estates. Both the resident's association and residents from the catchment area asked the ECP for assistance to help resolve the growing conflict. The ECP worked hard to engage with all parties concerned using mediation techniques. Following the intervention, communication improved and hostilities reduced considerably. This then led to holding of the Residents Association AGM and progress thereafter. ECP supported the resident's association in preparing, organising and running the AGM.

GRD continues to leverage all of our programmes (SICAP, Tús, WorkAbility, ParentChild+, Social Prescribing, Migrant Health, etc) and our relationships with all our excellent partner organisations to maximise outcomes for estate residents.

Healthy Galway

Healthy Ireland is a government-led initiative aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of everyone living in Ireland. The National Policy document "A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013-2025" has 4 key goals:



- Goal 1: Increase the proportion of people who are healthy at all stages of life.
- Goal 2: Reduce health inequalities.
- Goal 3: Protect the public from threats to health and wellbeing.
- Goal 4: Create an environment where every individual and sector of society can play their part in achieving a healthy Ireland.

The Healthy Ireland Fund Local Strategy for the Galway County Council area identified the following priority focus area which will be the focus of Annual Workplans under the Healthy Ireland Fund, which is monitored by the Health & Wellbeing Sub-Committee:

“To increase the percentage of people aged 50+ who engage in one or more social / leisure activity at least once a week.”

Some of the projects and initiatives which were delivered during 2024 included:

- Healthy County Galway and Healthy Galway City launched a monthly newsletter to support community health and wellbeing in June of 2024.
- A further objective of the Healthy Galway County plan is to improve access and opportunities for participation in physical activities within the county. The Active Parks Initiative, funded by Healthy Galway and in partnership with Galway Sports Partnership, has identified and approved three areas for the installation of Activator Fit Stick Trails in Galway County for 2024. Active Parks utilize local city parks and greenspaces to create opportunities for community residents to engage in physical activities, thereby improving their health and wellbeing. Three areas in Galway County were selected for the installation of activator signage.
- The 'Playground Markings' initiative for 2024 provided schools with stencils to paint traditional playground games like Hopscotch, A Maze, the Snail Game, and an Activity Circuit. This program emphasizes the importance of physical activity for overall well-being and aims to foster lifelong healthy habits, addressing rising inactivity and obesity rates among Irish children. The games were originally designed for both group and individual participation, promoting structured and informal play.



- Mending Hearts Program is an Arts and health project which was launched on World Heart Day. The purpose of the program is to create a sustainable model for Arts engagement in Healthcare Settings funded by Creative Ireland in partnership with Healthy County Galway. Through a series of art workshops across Galway city and county the project seeks to widen arts engagement in healthcare settings.
- As part of a Community Garden Grant Scheme rolled out in 2024, a total of €30,000 was made available by Healthy Galway to support project proposals within the community, with grants ranging from €1,000 to €5,000. The funding supported the purchase of equipment and materials to enable participation in social and leisure activities in outdoor spaces with project proposals required to demonstrate an increase in the number of people engaging in regular and sustainable social and leisure activities. Proposals were welcomed from any not-for-profit community or voluntary sector organization managing a community garden that is freely available to the wider community. The aim was to improve social connection opportunities for older people, reduce isolation, and subsequently support physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing.
- A pilot project was conducted in Oughterard to map social and leisure activities, resulting in the publication of a Booklet of Activities for the area. There are plans to expand this initiative to other locations in the future.
- The Healthy Islands Roadshow, developed and delivered by Galway County Council under the Healthy Galway Programme in partnership with the HSE, brought together statutory, community, and voluntary organizations with the unified aim of promoting

health and wellbeing, improving communication, and enhancing knowledge of available services. The events on each island saw strong turnouts and featured free activities and resources such as blood pressure and audiology checks, healthy cooking demonstration workshops, relationship and sexual health talks, information stands from participating organizations, an onsite barber providing free haircuts, and the local Public Participation Network (PPN). Participating organizations and services included Galway County Council, Croí, Galway Public Participation Network, Age Friendly Homes, Sexual Health West, Alzheimer's Society of Ireland, Mental Health Ireland, Chime, ALONE, Irish Wheelchair Association, HSE Health Promotion & Improvement Unit, Galway Rural Development, Jigsaw, Parkrun Ireland, West Be Well Suicide Prevention Service, Domestic Violence Response Galway, and local Public Health Nurses and Gardai.



- Initiative Rolled Out by Healthy County Galway in 2024: Health & Wellbeing Boards. The Community Health and Wellbeing Boards project in 2024 was funded by West Be Well, and involved collaboration between Mental Health Ireland, Galway Sports Partnership, HSE, and Healthy Galway County.
- Sensory Equipment Loan Boxes initiated in 2023 were further continued in 2024. Sensory Equipment boxes were disbursed for the new All Stars programme.