



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

TURASCÁIL BAINISTÍOCHTA MANAGEMENT REPORT



Márta 2026
March 2026

CORPORATE SERVICES

US TRIP

The annual trip of Galway County Council representatives to the United States, in line with the St. Patrick's Day festivals, was a great success once again in 2026 with a busy schedule of meetings and events over the duration of the visit, which are synopsized hereunder for the information of the Elected Members.

THURSDAY 12TH MARCH -MEETING WITH THE CHAIR AND CENTRE BOARD MEMBERS OF THE IRISH CULTURAL CENTRE IN BOSTON.

Galway County Council representatives met with the Chair and the Board of the Irish Cultural Centre (ICC) Boston to strengthen collaboration and acknowledge the Centre's ongoing development of its 61-acre cultural, sporting, educational, and business campus.

With increasing numbers of Irish companies entering the US market, the Board emphasised the importance of connecting the Irish diaspora with these businesses. They offered strong support for Galway LEO companies seeking to expand into the United States.

The Centre outlined its plans to further enhance its facilities and programmes and expressed sincere appreciation for Galway County Council's visit and recognition of their work.



MEETING WITH MS. MARTINA CURTIN, CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF THE IRISH CULTURAL CENTRE



L-R: MS. IRENE MURRAY, MR. PETER MURRAY, MR. JAMES GREALISH. MS. MAUREEN LENIHAN, MR. MICHAEL O'CONNOR SNR, MS. MARY CONROY-HENDERSON, CLLR. DAVID COLLINS, MS. MARTINA CURTIN, MR. LIAM CONNEALLY, MR. MICHAEL O'CONNOR JNR, MR. OLLIE GARRY AT A MEETING WITH THE BOARD MEMBERS OF THE IRISH CULTURAL CENTRE IN BOSTON

L-R: MR. LIAM CONNEALLY, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, CLLR. DAVID COLLINS, CATHAOIRLEACH, MS. MARTINA CURTIN, CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF THE IRISH CULTURAL CENTRE, AND MR. MIKE O'CONNOR, FOUNDING MEMBER OF IRISH CULTURAL CENTRE IN BOSTON



FRIDAY 13TH MARCH - MEETING WITH THE IDA, BOSTON OFFICE

The Cathaoirleach and the Chief Executive met with representatives from IDA, Boston. The discussion focused on Galway's strong economic performance and the significant opportunities emerging across both the city and county. IDA Boston highlighted the value of peer-to-peer engagement created by major investors such as Dexcom and noted Galway's position as a global hub for medical technology, which continues to generate promising spin-out and start-up potential.



Inward investment prospects for Galway were explored, with the region's socio-economic profile seen as a strong asset in attracting new projects.

L-R: LIAM CONNEALLY, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, CLLR. DAVID COLLINS, CATHAOIRLEACH, AND MS. SUZANNE LYNCH, IDA BOSTON

FRIDAY 13TH MARCH - GALWAY HURLING CLUB BANQUET, CANTON, BOSTON



The Cathaoirleach addressed over 220 attendees at the celebration marking the Boston Galway Senior Hurling Club's five-in-a-row achievement. The Chair of the North US GAA Board warmly welcomed Cathaoirleach, Cllr D. Collins and emphasised the importance of maintaining strong ties between Galway County and the Galway communities across the United States. He noted that the presence of the Cathaoirleach and Chief Executive reinforces to the New England Galway diaspora that they remain a valued part of County Galway despite the distance.

L-R: MR. LIAM CONNEALLY, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, MR. EOIN CASEY, MR. PETER STAUNTON, CLLR. DAVID COLLINS, CATHAOIRLEACH



MONDAY, 16TH MARCH - MEETING WITH IDA, NEW YORK OFFICE

This meeting centred around the Galway Housing supply pipeline and the very positive work that Galway County Council had undertaken in terms of increased residential zoning was recognised. The importance of the Galway Ring Road was accepted by all in attendance. Galway is a very attractive Foreign Direct Investment location - it is important

to keep removing any potential barriers and preparing the strategic economic and planning environment through the finalisation of the Economic Strategy for Galway.



L-R: MR. JOSHUA HEALY, VICE PRESIDENT, EMERGING BUSINESS, MR. LIAM CONNEALLY, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, CLLR. DAVID COLLINS, CATHAOIRLEACH, MR. JOSEPH COLLUM, VICE PRESIDENT, ENGINEERING AND GREEN ECONOMY, IDA IRELAND, NEW YORK

MONDAY, 16TH MARCH - MEETING WITH ENTERPRISE IRELAND

The meeting focused on Enterprise Ireland's *Get Exporting* programme and its role in supporting Irish companies entering the US market. The role of the Galway Local Enterprise Office was recognised in terms of providing supports to start ups.

Enterprise Ireland highlighted the practical assistance available to companies in areas such as US taxation, financial requirements, legal structures, and other essential guidance.

L-R: MR. LIAM CONNEALLY, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, CLLR. DAVID COLLINS, CATHAOIRLEACH, PRESENTING A GIFT TO ORAN BAMBRICK, SENIOR MARKET ADVISOR, ENTERPRISE IRELAND



MONDAY, 16TH MARCH - MEETING WITH THE GALWAY ASSOCIATION, NEW YORK CITY

The discussions centred around the work of the Galway Association with a general discussion around the governance and financing of US Irish Associations. A key focus of the



Association is its efforts to increase their younger membership numbers. The proactive efforts of Galway County Council reaching out and engaging was very much appreciated.

PRESENTATION TO MS. CATHERINE HOGAN,
GALWAY ASSOCIATION, NEW YORK, BY CLLR.
DAVID COLLINS, CATHAOIRLEACH

TUESDAY 17TH MARCH – ST PATRICK'S DAY EVENTS

- 8:00 a.m. Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral
- 11:00 a.m. March down 5th Avenue as part of the St. Patrick's Day Parade
- 6:00 p.m. Formal Dinner with Galway Association President and Past President.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY MASS
AT ST. PATRICK'S
CATHEDRAL





PRESENTATIONS TO MR. PAT LALLY (LEFT), RETIRED PRESIDENT, GALWAY ASSOCIATION, AND MR. BRIAN KELLY (RIGHT), PRESIDENT, GALWAY ASSOCIATION

GALWAY ASSOCIATION, NEW YORK, AT ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE



MR. LIAM CONNEALLY, CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND CLLR. DAVID COLLINS, CATHAOIRLEACH, PICTURED WITH MEMBERS OF GALWAY ASSOCIATION, NEW YORK

LAMA AWARDS

This year marked the 20th anniversary of the LAMA Awards. The awards were held at the Dublin Royal Convention Centre on 28th February 2026. Galway County Council won the following awards:

Best Irish Language Initiative – Scoil an Phiarsaigh September 2025

Best Community-Scale Enhancements – Ballynakill Community Development

Best Use of Technology & Innovation in Local Government – National Online Planning Portal



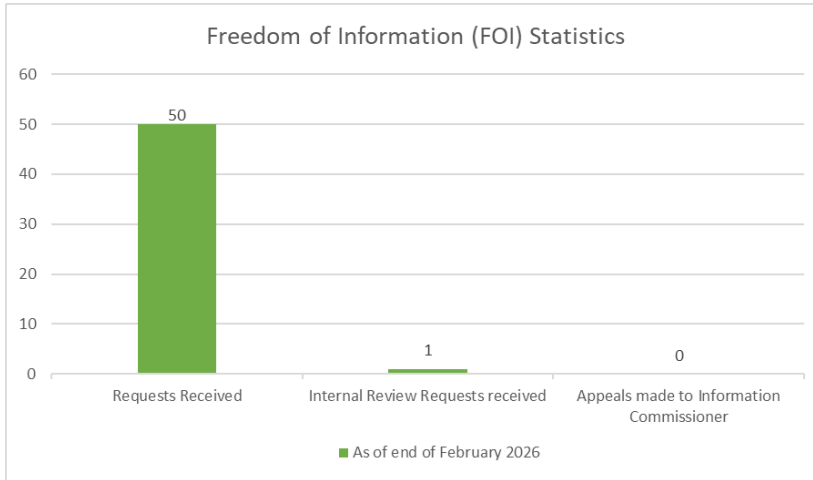
L-R: MR. DAMIEN MITCHELL, DIRECTOR OF SERVICES, CLLR. MICHAEL REGAN, MS. MELIOSA MCINTYRE, EXECUTIVE LIBRARIAN, MS. ELIZABETH KEANE, COUNTY LIBRARIAN, MS. BREEGE LYNN, ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER, CLLR. DAVID COLLINS, CATHAOIRLEACH, AND MR. LIAM CONNEALLY, CHIEF EXECUTIVE

L-R: MR. LIAM CONNEALLY, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, CLLR. DAVID COLLINS, CATHAOIRLEACH, AND CLLR. MICHAEL REGAN



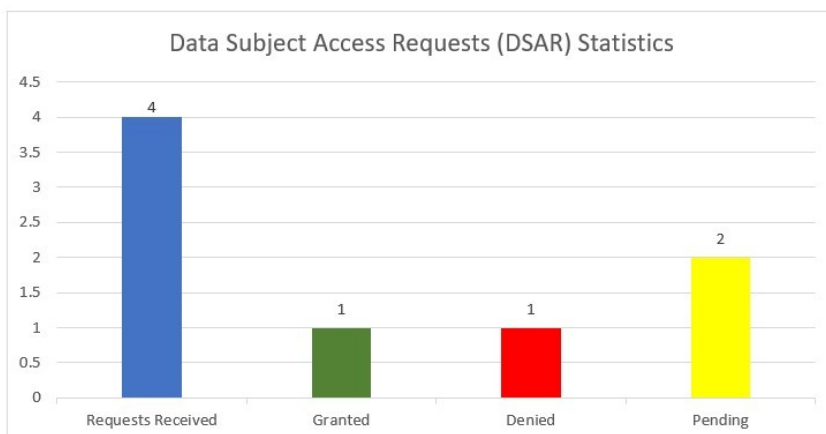
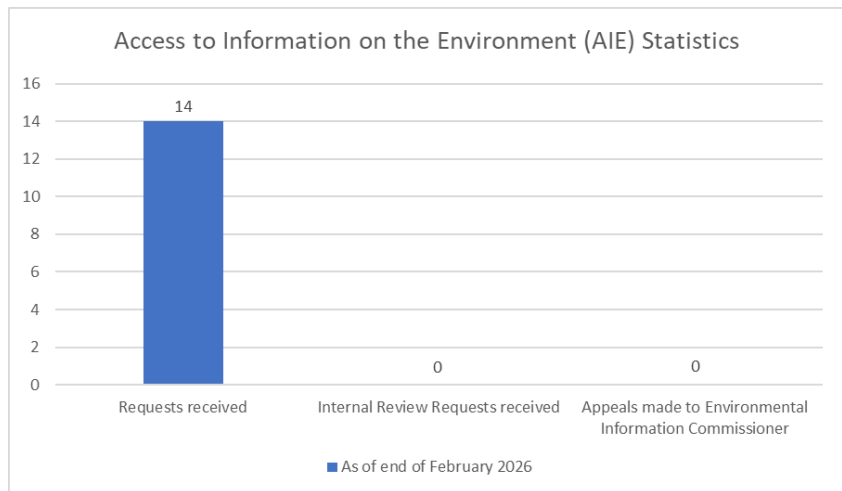
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION, ACCESS TO ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION & DATA PROTECTION

2026 YEAR TO DATE STATISTICS TO 28.02.2026



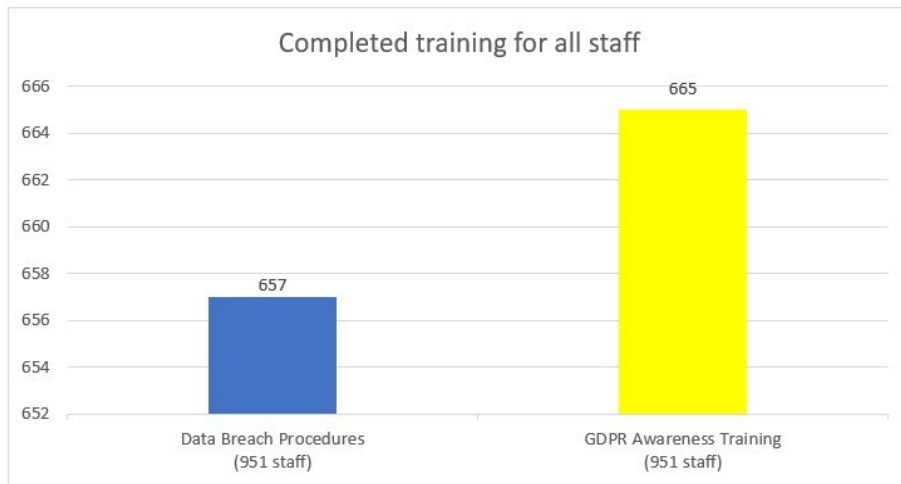
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON THE ENVIRONMENT



DATA PROTECTION

- 4 Requests received:
 - 4 Subject Access Requests
- 1 granted, 1 denied, 2 pending decisions.
- GDPR/Data Protection Training:
 - All staff are required to complete mandatory data protection training throughout the year covering GDPR awareness and data breach procedures. Additionally, two unit-specific courses have been developed for HR and IT teams.



RECREATION AND AMENITIES

COMMUNITY PLAYGROUNDS

It is intended to facilitate each Community Playground group with the opportunity to nominate a second representative to complete the required inspector training when their certification becomes due for renewal. The current round of community group inspection training expires in May 2026, with 15 inspectors due for renewal. With the addition of the newly nominated representatives, there will be a total of 30 participants in the May 2026 training cycle.

LEISURE CENTRES



Galway County Council own both the Tuam and Ballinasloe Leisure Centres. The daily management of same has been outsourced under a tendered licence agreement. In late 2024, a fresh tender for the running of the Leisure Centres was completed with Coral Leisure Management Limited, re-appointed effective 2025.

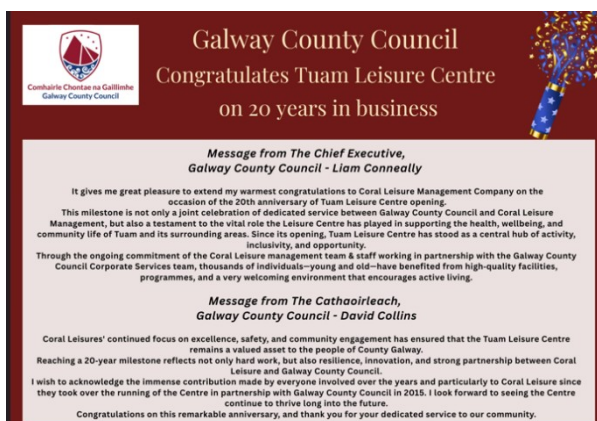
Later this month on March 22nd the Tuam Leisure Centre will celebrate its 20th year of Opening and in 2027, the Ballinasloe Leisure Centre will celebrate 25 years of Opening.

Each respective anniversary marks significant milestones for the Leisure Centres and the fundamental role they play in their local communities.

Over the last 3 years (2023-2025) Active members in the Tuam Leisure Centre have increased from 1,370 to 1,791 and Active members in the Ballinasloe Leisure Centre have increased from 520 to 703. This is a great achievement in a very competitive landscape.

The Tuam Leisure Centre look forward to welcoming Galway County Council staff and Elected Members to their celebrations between 11am and 4pm on Sunday March 22nd.

Galway County Council further look forward to working in continued partnership with Coral Leisure Management Limited on both Leisure Centres over the years ahead and particularly over the next 5 years as the Centres plan for reinvestment, renewal and reinforcing of their position, as the number 1 choice, for leisure centre-based activities.



CUSTOMER SERVICES

The Customer Services Action Plan 2025-2029 is now available on Galway County Council website.

SOCIAL MEDIA

OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITY

Followers		New followers	
SOCIAL NETWORK	#	SOCIAL NETWORK	#
Facebook Page	22,720	Facebook Page	195
LinkedIn Page	3,252	Instagram Business	61
Instagram Business	3,152	LinkedIn Page	38

Total posts on all Social Media Platforms for February 189, 44% of which were also posted in Irish. Our Customer Services team, part of Corporate Services, continue to diligently

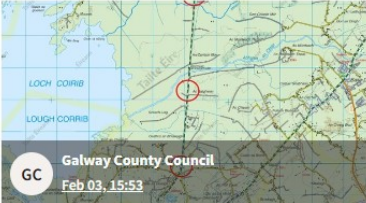
monitor and update the Council’s social media content daily towards enhancing our engagement with the Public.

*Posts Impressions - The number of times that posts on our Galway County Council Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn accounts appeared on someone’s screen. Content viewed includes posts, videos, and reels.

Posts		Post impressions	
SOCIAL NETWORK	#	SOCIAL NETWORK	#
Instagram Business	98	Facebook Page	452,645
Facebook Page	90	Instagram Business	49,776
LinkedIn Page	11	LinkedIn Page	4,286

FACEBOOK TOP THREE POSTS


Top posts



Galway County Council
Feb 03, 15:53

Please note the following temporary traffic management arrangements on the N84 Road, Galway due to planned surfacing works being carried out by John Madden & Sons Ltd on behalf of Galway County Council. Location: N84


12,708 follower views



Galway County Council
Feb 06, 15:18

Taoiseach Micheál Martin this week officially opened two new Galway County Council housing developments, bringing 74 new homes to Ballinasloe. The adjoining schemes, An Gort Fada (38 homes) and An Choill Fhada (36

12,216 follower views




Galway County Council
Feb 18, 13:57

Hedge cutting ends on 1 March. Ireland has one of the densest hedgerow networks in Europe, but cutting most hedgerows is prohibited in spring and summer months. The cutting stops in order to protect wildlife and the

6,253 follower views

INSTAGRAM TOP THREE POSTS


Top posts



galwaycountycouncil
Feb 20, 10:13

Status Yellow - Update: Thunderstorm warning for Clare, Kerry, Limerick, Galway Met Éireann Weather Warning
Thundery Downpours for a time Potential Impacts • Spot Flooding • Lightning damage • Difficult travelling


2,094 views



galwaycountycouncil
Feb 06, 15:18

Taoiseach Micheál Martin this week officially opened two new Galway County Council housing developments, bringing 74 new homes to Ballinasloe. The adjoining schemes, An Gort Fada (38 homes) and An Choill Fhada (36

1,510 views



galwaycountycouncil
Feb 13, 17:01

Status Yellow - Low Temperature/Ice warning for Ireland Met Éireann Weather Warning Temperatures falling between -1 and -3 degrees generally. Sharp frost and icy conditions. Potential impacts: -Hazardous travel

1,449 views

LINKEDIN TOP THREE POSTS

Top posts



Galway County Council
Feb 10, 13:50

Members of the Galway County Local Community Safety Partnership (LCSP) team were delighted to attend the first national gathering of LCSP teams hosted by the National Office for Community Safety in the Department of Justice,

1,018 impressions



Galway County Council
Feb 13, 16:07

Galway County Council is pleased to announce that six regenerative tourism projects in the Ballinasloe MD have secured new investment under Fáilte Ireland's Regenerative Tourism and Placemaking Scheme. Co-

889 impressions



EARCÚ!
Pleanálaí Cúnta

Sineadh Arís go dtí 4. n., 5 Márta 2026

Galway County Council
Feb 06, 15:02

<https://lnkd.in/e5yj3sPe>

318 impressions

IRISH OFFICE

Seachtain na Gaeilge takes place annually from 1–17 March, and this year Galway County Council played a leading role in promoting Irish-language events across the county. Activities were hosted in Áras an Chontae, local libraries, and schools, ensuring that communities throughout Galway could take part in the celebration of Irish culture and heritage.

The Council's Seachtain na Gaeilge programme was officially launched on Monday, 23 February. The event opened with vibrant and uplifting performances by Carmel Dempsey, Brenda Curtin, and Frankie Colohan, setting an energetic tone for the festivities ahead. Following the music, attendees were given an overview of the wide range of events scheduled to take place across the county during Seachtain na Gaeilge.

AONACH CEARDAÍOCHTA IN ÁRAS AN CHONTAE – CRAFT FAIR IN ÁRAS AN CHONTAE



To mark the opening of Seachtain na Gaeilge and to celebrate the beginning of Enterprise Week, the Irish Office and the Local Enterprise Office jointly organised a craft fair in Áras an Chontae from 2–4 March. Twelve local crafters participated, showcasing and selling a wide range of handmade products. Each crafter engaged with visitors using at least basic Irish greetings, adding to the cultural atmosphere of the event.

Feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive. The crafters expressed their appreciation for the venue and the support provided, and many indicated strong interest in seeing similar events held more regularly throughout the year.



LOCAL CRAFTERS AT CRAFT FAIR TO CELEBRATE THE BEGINNING OF SEACHTAIN NA GAEILGE AND LOCAL ENTERPRISE WEEK



During Seachtain na Gaeilge Galway County Council sponsored Stephen Mc Ginley (Juggle.ie) & storyteller/singer JulieAnne De Brún to perform at various schools in each municipal District of the county, which was greatly received by the schools. Some of the schools attended were Scoil Naomh Fhursa, Claran, Headford, Scoil Mhic Dara, an Cheathrú

Rua, Scoil Croí Naofa, Ballinasloe, Gaelscoil de hIde, Uran Mór.



PÁDRAIG PEARSE SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

On Wednesday the 11th March Gaelscoil De hÍde from Oranmore visited Áras an Chontae where they reminisced songs, poetry and music which was echoed throughout the building. This was followed by a presentation of Certificates to the awarding students of the Pádraig Pearse Gaeltacht Scholarships to second-level students from across County Galway. The scholarships support students in attending recognised Gaeltacht summer colleges, promoting the Irish language and cultural engagement among young people.

The Pádraig Pearse Gaeltacht Scholarships aim to:

- Support and encourage the use of the Irish language among second-level students.
- Provide financial assistance to enable students to attend Gaeltacht courses.
- Strengthen links between young people and Gaeltacht communities.
- Contribute to the Council's wider Irish-language promotion commitments.

The 2026 Pádraig Pearse Gaeltacht Scholarship awards continue to demonstrate strong interest and engagement in Irish-language learning across County Galway. The scheme remains an important element of the Council's cultural and linguistic support for young people.



MR. MÁIRTÍN Ó DONNCHADHA, OIFIGEACH FORBARTHA TEANGA, MS. EILEEN RUANE, DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND CLLR. MARY HOADE, LEAS CHATHAOIRLEACH, ALONG WITH THE RECIPIENTS OF THE PADRAIG MAC PIARAS SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, ÁRASAN CHONTAE

LAMA AWARDS

Scoil an Phiarsaigh, organised by Galway County Council, won the Best Irish Language Initiative award. The two-day event held in Ros Muc Co. Galway celebrates Pádraig Pearse’s connection to Ros Muc and his commitment to the Irish language, culture and education. Last year’s programme included panel discussions, traditional music and storytelling, as well as lectures examining Pearse’s influence on Irish literature, art and identity and his relevance to contemporary Ireland.



A huge congratulations to our colleagues in Galway County Council’s Applications that were shortlisted for the National Online Planning Portal and the interactive Social Housing Supply & Demand Dashboard and the Ballinakill Community Development, that received a Special Commendation in the Best Community-Scale Enhancements category. The award highlights small to medium projects such as playgrounds, greenways, heritage restorations and improvements to public amenities.

The three-week series will cover a broad range of topics, including sleep and healthy ageing, nutrition, pelvic health, exercise therapy, breathwork, resistance training, and general women’s health. By working with a team of community facilitators around the county, the programme will provide women with actionable guidance to support their physical and mental wellbeing at this important life stage.

This initiative has been developed in partnership with Healthy Ireland, the HSE, Forum Connemara, Comhair na nOileain, GSP and Family Resource Centres, across the county. The strong collaborative approach ensures that the programme is both inclusive and accessible, strengthening community engagement while supporting women’s health.



DEMENTIA CAFÉ INITIATIVE

The Memory Café initiative continues to strengthen community-based support for people living with dementia and their carers across Connemara. Monthly cafés currently operate in Clifden, Oughterard, Roundstone and Letterfrack, offering informal, welcoming spaces that reduce isolation and encourage meaningful social connection. Attendance remains consistently strong, demonstrating sustained community need and positive engagement.



A diverse programme of activities has been scheduled for 2026, offering a balance of creative, physical, sensory, and wellbeing focused sessions tailored to the needs of participants. Activities include arts and crafts projects such as making St. Brigid’s crosses, felt craft workshops, Jenga and aquapainting, Easter bonnet decorating, bird feeder and birdbox painting, reminiscence teas, musical memories, Irish music and dance, gardening, and Qigong chair exercises. Additional specialist inputs include talks from community physiotherapists on the importance of movement, HSE talks on 5 Ways to Wellbeing, chiropody information sessions, and music and song delivered by local musicians. This varied schedule ensures that cafés remain engaging throughout the year while supporting cognitive stimulation, dexterity, mood, and social participation.

A 2025 investment was also made by Healthy County Galway in dementia specific activity packs such as Aqua paint sets, puzzles, musical bingo, sensory items, reminiscence materials, and aromatherapy kits, ensuring that each café is equipped with creative and stimulating resources.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT CENTRES – RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Significant progress has been made in strengthening the Community Support Centre (CSC) network to improve local resilience during severe weather and emergency events.

Expressions of Interest have been sought from community facilities interested in acting as CSCs, with a strong response received. This process is supporting the development of a more structured and geographically balanced network across the county, aligned with vulnerability and coverage considerations. Premises eligible to be CSCs have been listed on the Council website and categorised by Municipal District, adding accessibility information and incorporating new centres on an ongoing basis. <https://www.galway.ie/en/community-tourism-arts/community-development/community-support-centres>.

An updated CSC operating procedure has been issued and reviewed by the Major Emergency Development Committee and the Local Coordination Group, clarifying roles, activation protocols, generator access arrangements and funding parameters, in line with national guidance. The CSC points of contact and elected members are to be invited on Thursday 26th March to an information session on the operating procedures.

In accordance with Circular EM 12/2025 on the installation of changeover switches for mobile generators, three Community Support Centres were designated for funded rewiring works to facilitate generator deployment. The centres identified were Clifden Town Hall, Seanscoil Shailearna, and Dunmore Town Hall. These facilities were selected based on geographic spread, suitability and their role within the emerging CSC network. The designated centres were contacted and requested to submit quotations for the necessary electrical works. Works, focused specifically on enabling safe connection of mobile generators via compliant changeover switches is underway.

Community facilities not included in the current funded rewiring allocation were advised of the availability of the Local Enhancement Programme (LEP) as a potential source of support for essential infrastructure upgrades, including rewiring works to facilitate generator use.

AGE FRIENDLY

The National Age Friendly Ambassador's Day 2026 took place in Tralee, Co. Kerry on March 4th. Galway County Council were represented by the Age Friendly programme manager and the Older Persons Council Chairperson. Key issues discussed at the event were age friendly workplaces, the role of the age friendly ambassador and media opportunities.

In relation to the Age Friendly Strategy work is ongoing since the strategy was adopted prior to Christmas and formally launched in January. Partners to actions in the strategy are being contacted and reminded of the commitments made in the strategy. This is happening internally within the Local Authority and with the external agencies who are members of the Age Friendly Alliance. The collective representative groups (namely the Local Authority Interdepartmental Team and the Age Friendly Alliance) will be convened in the course of April and May respectively to oversee and monitor progress on actions.



KIERAN COYNE, AGE FRIENDLY PROGRAMME MANAGER, AND MARY CRONIN, OLDER PERSONS COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON GALWAY COUNTY, WITH REPRESENTATIVES FROM AGE FRIENDLY GALWAY CITY AT THE AMBASSADORS EVENT IN KERRY

CATHAOIRLEACH AWARDS

Applications for the Cathaoirleach's Awards 2026 opened on March 18th. The awards are an annual initiative to acknowledge the commitment of individuals and groups who participate in community and voluntary activities in County Galway and to recognise the significant impact their actions have on the quality of life in their communities. The Awards are a joint venture between Galway County Council and the Public Participation Network, which has over 1,300 Member Groups carrying out a range of community and voluntary activities across the County. Nominations can be made by Individual members of the public or through community groups and voluntary organisations, by e-mailing a completed Nomination Form to awards@galwaycoco.ie before the closing date of April 10th 2026. Nomination Forms are available on www.galway.ie or by e-mailing awards@galwaycoco.ie

COMMUNITY SUPPORT SCHEME

Proposed recommendations are an agenda item on the March plenary meeting agenda. In the period after the March plenary meeting applicants will be notified of the status of their application upon consideration by the elected members.

COMHAIRLE NA NÓG/YOUTH

The next meeting of the Comhairle na nÓg steering group has been scheduled for March 24th. Developing the youth councils at municipal district level will be a key issue to be addressed in the coming months in addition to monitoring the progress of the agreed work programme. Attendance at CYPSC (Children and Young Peoples Services Committee) is ongoing and is temporarily being chaired by the Galway County Council representative on the committee until such time Tusla appoint a new area manager.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

TOWN AND VILLAGE RENEWAL SCHEME

Galway County Council has announced a Streetscape Enhancement Scheme for Killimor. This activity is funded by the Department of Rural & Community Development and the Gaeltacht

(DRCDG) under the 2025 Town & Village Renewal Scheme and as part of the roll-out of Our Rural Future.

The Scheme is to encourage residents, tenants and shop owners to engage in best practice in restoring shopfronts and in the presentation of properties which face the main street. In order to create a strong visual impact over a defined period of time, the Scheme has a focus on village centres, quality materials to enhance the identity and aesthetic of the village.



To launch the Scheme a drop-in information session was held with the Rural and Capital Delivery Team, from 4-6.30pm on 26th of February, followed by presentation and further one to one advisory clinics with potential applicants from 7-8pm in Killimor Community Centre. The event was attended by Cllr Jimmy McClearn, Project Team from Killimor Development Society Ltd, other community groups and over 40 residents attended over the course of the event. The Closing Date for Applications to the Scheme is April 24th 2026.



EÍMEAR DOLAN, AO RURAL TEAM, CLLR. MCCLEARN, MAJELLA MOYLAN SSO RURAL TEAM, RONAN MANNION, EXECUTIVE ENGINEER CAPITAL DELIVERY WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF KILLIMOR DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY LTD. AT THE LAUNCH OF THE STREETScape SCHEME, KILLIMOR COMMUNITY CENTRE, FEBRUARY 26TH 2026.

**GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL
POP - UP INFORMATION EVENT**

**Ahascragh
Streetscape Enhancement
Initiative 2025**
(Grant Scheme for Buildings - Up to 80% funding)

*Open to
business and
residential
properties -
find out if you
qualify!*

Where: Clan Colla
When: 19th March 2026
Time: 4pm - 7pm Presentation 6 pm

Why attend? Speak to Council Staff; find out how to submit your application and how to draw down your grant. See what terms and conditions apply.

Sample Eligible Works

- Green enhancement of entrances/ terraces with planting
- Painting of building/shop front in carefully selected colours which will complement the host building and streetscape.
- Mural (agreed in advance with Local Authority)
- Decluttering and repair of shopfronts. (Decluttering can include such works as removing unnecessary signs, fascias, awnings, etc.)
- Appropriate illumination and lighting of architectural features of buildings.
- Replacement of signage with traditional wooden fascia with wooden/hand painted lettering OR contemporary design
- Canopies/Awnings complementary to the materials of the shopfront and building (inclusion of street furniture).

Tel : (091) 509396/509266 Email : tandv@galwaycoco.ie

The Ahascragh Streetscape Scheme Launch is March 19th 2026, in Clan Colla in the village centre. The Scheme is promoted locally by the MD and Ahascragh Area Enhancement Company Ltd. The Scheme is to encourage residents, tenants and shop owners to engage in best practice in restoring shopfronts and in the presentation of properties which face the main street with a focus on a grant scheme for painting and decluttering or removal of vegetation in vacant properties. Ahascragh has seen large scale private investment in Ahascragh Distillery and public investment by the Council in new Housing, this initiative is to help continue this drive to improve the village which is part of the Just Transition area of Ballinasloe MD. In March 2026, local group have also completed the draw down of Grant Funding via the Rural Team Office, under the Project Development

Measure Town Centre First Suite of Supports 2024, which enable them to secured planning permission for a new build Community Centre at the site of the former derelict Hall which in early March was fully demolished and removed safely consolidating a number of years of volunteer work to make progress on the Hall. Fund raising continues with a view to making an application to a future Community Centre Investment Fund (CCIF).

CLÁR 2026 PROGRAMME

The Minister for Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht, Dara Calleary TD on 10th March 2026 announced an expansion of the CLÁR programme. For County Galway this involves inclusion of one additional Electoral Division, An Cromptán in Connemara Municipal District and Gaeltacht which incorporates An Cheathrú Rua and surrounding areas for the first time under the CLÁR Programme.

CLÁR (Ceantair Laga Árd-Riachtanais) is a targeted investment programme for rural areas that aims to provide funding for small infrastructural projects in designated rural areas that have experienced significant levels of de-population and/or socio-economic disadvantage and geographic remoteness. The funding assists in building the resilience of these rural communities and for 2026 it will continue to be rolled out over three Measures.

MEASURE 1 COMMUNITY AMENITIES AND FACILITIES

Applications are made directly to the Rural Team in Galway County Council who will be seeking Applications in the period March 31st to May 15th, 2026, via the SUBMIT Application Platform. Webinars on CLÁR are proposed for Tuesday March 24th and Tuesday April 14th, 2026, with promotion via County Galway PPN and in local media. Interested Organisations can contact clar@galwaycoco.ie

MEASURE 2 MOBILITY, CANCER CARE, COMMUNITY FIRST RESPONDER AND MEALS ON WHEELS TRANSPORT

Applications are submitted directly to the Department by May 22nd 2026.

MEASURE 3

Our Living Islands which is a key measure for County Galway, groups must also apply directly to DRCDG by July 3rd 2026. The Department is holding a Webinar March 25th 2026.

Interested organisations can register their interest at clar@drcdg.gov.ie.

CHANGES TO THE PROGRAMME FOR 2026

Development of community facilities and amenities including sports facilities, youth clubs, teenage spaces, playgrounds, sensory gardens, walking tracks and much more. There are new items eligible for support this year under Measure 1, including support for traffic safety measures with a particular link to community facilities or events, and for initiatives aimed at reducing light pollution in rural communities. Funding for Emergency Generators can be considered.

A ban is to take effect in 2031 that limits the materials used to refill Astro surfaces. For applicants considering submitting an application under the 2026 CLÁR programme for the development of, or works on, any type of Astro surface, they should in the first instance discuss these regulations with their contractor or surface supplier to ensure that their development is fully compliant with relevant legislation and is future proofed so as to ensure best value for money and longevity of the surface for users. The application form must clearly outline the need and rationale for the projects put forward. The local authority is advised to contact the Department in respect of any queries regarding project eligibility

For Emergency Generators, these must be mobile to allow for shared community use. There must be confirmation that the facilities that will use the generator have changeover switches in place and the cost of installing these switches in these facilities can be included as part of the generator project application

The following projects are ineligible under the CLÁR programme

- Footpaths
- Bus shelters
- Works to current school buildings which are not open to the public after school hours
- CCTV
- The purchase of land or buildings.

In May 2026, there will be a further eight projects due for completion under the 2024 CLÁR Scheme and ten projects are also live under the CLÁR 2025 Scheme with a completion date of May 2027 but half of these due to progress to completion by the end of 2026.

RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) is expected to open for applications in Q2 2026. In preparation, the Outdoor Recreation Team welcomes submissions for potential projects located within County Galway. Early identification of suitable proposals will support the development of a strong pipeline of applications and ensure that opportunities for external funding are maximised.

CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

CREATIVE IRELAND PROGRAMME

The current focus of Creative Ireland is the 2026 Cruinniú na nÓg programme. This year's event will take place on Saturday the 6th of June and preparations are already well underway. For the month of February, we ran an Open Call for facilitators. The response from this was fantastic with all eligible applicants receiving funding. At current tally we are funding 18 facilitators for a total of 43 events on the mainland. This is not including the events from Libraries which generally number between 6 and 10.

We have also successfully secured an additional €10,000 in funding to run a full programme of events as Gaeilge across the three Aran Islands. This is the third year in which we have secured funding, and the islands programme has only gone from strength to strength. We currently have a venue booked on each of the islands and are in the process of directly programming events for them. This is being carried out in consultation with the children, young people, and parents of the islands.

In 2025 we commissioned Branar to run a Youth Consultation with the young people who attend events at Brú Bhríde in Tuam. The results from that are informing our direct programming of events specifically for these young people.

We are also working with the Integration Team to programme events for young people living in the IPAS centres around the county so that every child in Galway County will get to take part in the National Day of Creativity for Children.

ARTS PROGRAMME



ARTS PLAN 2026-2030

The consultation phase of our Arts Plan is near completion. 108 people representing artists, arts organisations, community groups, elected members and members of the public attended 7 consultations with Arts Officer Sharon O'Grady and Consultant Jane Daly in Tuam, Ballinasloe, Loughrea, Athenry, Clifden, Online and Mick Lally Theatre. The sessions have been very informative and engaging with positive feedback on progress made over the lifetime of the current plan. To date we have received 192

responses to our online survey which closed on 09 March. A final series of one-to-one consultations will be completed this month.

ARTIST SUPPORT SCHEME 2026 RECIPIENTS

A peer panel of professional artists based in Galway County assessed applications and made funding decisions on 25 February. €33,860 was awarded to 13 artists. This funding will support their professional development and create further opportunities for them in the future. In the established artists category 48 artists were shortlisted and 10 were awarded support. In the early-stage artists category 8 artists were shortlisted and 3 were funded.

Congratulations to the successful Artist Support Scheme 2026 recipients: Aisling Conneely, Alison Mac Cormaic, Ari Bhatti, Fergal Scahill, Laure Legrand, Lorraine Stack, Máire Robinson, Maisie Lee, Moira Mahony, Peadar-Tom Mercier, Roisin Lowry, Ruth Smith and Shirley-Anne Godfrey. These artists are working in literature, music, theatre, traditional arts and visual arts across the county.

FUNDING APPLICATIONS: CULTURE NIGHT LATE

The Arts Office in partnership with Culture Works has applied for Culture Night Late 2026 funding to the Arts Council. We have been fortunate to receive Culture Night Late funding three years in a row. It is a highly competitive fund but are hopeful that the Arts Council will see merit in our exciting proposal to deliver an innovative and dynamic large-scale outdoor work in Ballinasloe.

APPLICATION SUPPORT

In March, the Arts Office has provided applicant support and letters of support and 7 artists and 1 arts organisation who have submitted applications for the following: Culture Ireland's EU Presidency Culture Programme, Arts Council's Arts Grant Funding, Arts Council Bursary Award, Arts Council Dance Artist Residency Scheme and Arts Council Touring Scheme.

FIS TV SUMMIT GALWAY

Now in its 9th year, FÍS TV Summit 2026 led by Ardán brings creatives from all sectors of the Irish TV industry together to listen, to learn, and to connect with each other alongside a carefully curated slate of local, national, & international guests and experts. The Arts Office attended day 2 of this event to gain an insight into Ireland's TV industry. Ireland blazes a trail with the world's first Tax Incentive for Unscripted Entertainment, alongside a consistent lineup of homegrown Irish drama reaching audiences across the world, the 2026 Summit will spotlight both scripted and unscripted worlds alike. From the ins-and-outs of commissioning to bold international co-pros, service deals, TV writing, music supervision, talent and skills pathways, cutting-edge vertical/ microdrama, and unlocking Section 481/



487A incentives and funding info, FÍS delivered a 360° look at the Irish TV Production landscape. Hosted by Ardán, UNESCO City of Film Galway's designation management company.

ARDÁN TEAM WITH GALWAY COUNTY ARTS OFFICER SHARON O'GRADY AND GALWAY CITY ARTS OFFICER RUTH MULHERN – PHOTO: ANDREW DOWNES

SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

FEDERATION OF IRISH SPORT VOLUNTEER IN SPORTS AWARDS

Galway Sports Partnership was delighted to attend the Federation of Irish Sport's Volunteers in Sport Awards on 26th February, a national celebration recognising exceptional volunteers who make sport possible in communities across Ireland. Hosted by the Federation of Irish Sport and supported by the Sport Ireland National Network of Local Sports Partnerships, the Awards honour outstanding individuals from every county for their contribution to sport and physical activity, reflecting the efforts of over 460,000 volunteers who support 1.47 million club members nationwide.

This year, Arun Babu (County Galway Cricket Club) was honoured as the Volunteer in Sport Award recipient for Galway, recognising his dedication, leadership, and commitment to developing cricket and wider community sport within the county. His contribution exemplifies the spirit of volunteerism that underpins the success of grassroots sport across Ireland.

In addition, Moyne Villa FC received a new regional award, acknowledging their outstanding leadership, compassion, and commitment to community wellbeing. This recognition reflects the club's exceptional voluntary efforts in supporting and uplifting their local community, particularly in the aftermath of Storm Eowyn, where their responsiveness and community centred approach demonstrated the true impact of sport beyond the playing field.



Galway Sports Partnership warmly congratulates both Arun Babu and Moyne Villa FC. Their achievements highlight the strength of volunteer led sport in Galway and the vital role volunteers play in fostering resilient, connected, and active communities.

ANDREW MC BRIDE GALWAY SPORTS PARTNERSHIP AND ARUN BABU, COUNTY GALWAY CRICKET CLUB.

PORTUMNA ACTIVATOR PROGRAMMES

Two Activator Pole programmes commenced on Wednesday, 4th March in Portumna Courthouse and ran for four weeks. The programmes followed the strong positive feedback received from the Activator Pole sessions delivered in November, as well as from the demonstrations provided by our Sports Inclusion Disability Officer Ellie Loftus at the Galway Rural Development and Portumna Active Retirement Health and Wellbeing Community Event earlier that month. Each session accommodated 12 participants and was delivered by Galway Sports Partnership tutor, Laura.



INCLUSIVE ON THE MOVE

The Inclusive *On the Move* programme, delivered in partnership with the Irish Wheelchair Association in Loughrea, continued on Thursdays and was facilitated by Galway Sports Partnership tutor Michael Callaghan. A total of 12 adults with varying disabilities participated in this gentle, chair based six-week programme, which was funded through the HSE.

GOOD 2 GO TRAINING BALLINASLOE

The Good2Go Older Adult and Disability Training programme, held in the Emerald Ballroom in Ballinasloe, concluded on Friday, 27th February. Approximately 20 older adults, support workers, and individuals working with people with disabilities participated in the five-week training, representing communities across Ballinasloe, Carrabane, Portumna, Lawrencetown, Loughrea, and Ballymoe.

The programme was funded through Healthy Ireland and aimed to empower participants to confidently lead activity sessions within their own groups. Ongoing support from Galway Sports Partnership will continue over the coming months, including follow up visits from the Development Officers and access to loan equipment to help groups get started with programmes.

Activities delivered during the training included social games, dance, seated exercises, and Activator Poles.

COMÓRTAS COISCÉIMEANNA OILEÁIN GHNÍOMHACHA (ACTIVE ISLANDS STEP COMPETITION)

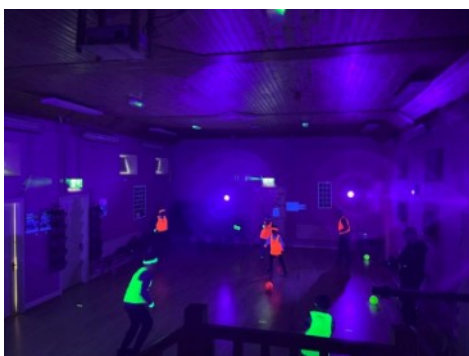
The Active Islands Step Competition concluded on 2nd March. A total of 245 participants across the four islands—Inis Bó Finne, Inis Mór, Inis Meáin and Inis Oírr—took part, competing to record the highest number of steps for their island.

Throughout the competition, participants logged more than 40 million steps, covering an impressive 30,000 km in total. The aim of the initiative was to motivate as many islanders as possible to walk regularly and to support increased daily physical activity across the communities.

Foirneann Team	Cáimseanna Iomlána Total Steps	Meáncháimseanna Láithriúla Average Daily Steps	Fad Iomlán Total Distance	Ball Foirne Team Members
Inis Bó Finne	5,250,094	7906	3,848km	29
Inis Mór	11,793,867	8,834	8,627km	46
Inis Meáin	14,618,635	8,277	10,494km	85
Inis Oírr	10,782,991	7978	7,899km	60

Le haghaidh tuilleadh eolais - For more information
coordinator@activeislands.ie

CLUB ÓIGE INIS MEÁIN – GLOW GAMES SESSION



As part of the Active Islands initiative, Glow Games equipment was purchased to support the rollout of Glow Games sessions across all island communities. Club Óige Inis Meáin made excellent use of the new equipment during the reporting period.

The Active Islands Coordinator attended the first session, where young people took part in an energetic game of dodgeball under UV lighting. The

club scheduled several additional Glow Games nights throughout March, allowing participants to continue engaging in fun, social, and active experiences.

In line with the initiative's shared resource model, the Glow Games equipment is scheduled to be transported to the next island once the Inis Meáin programme concludes, ensuring all islands have the opportunity to benefit from the activities.

SIEL BLEU EXERCISE CLASSES – ACTIVE ISLANDS PROGRAMME

Siel Bleu exercise classes were delivered every Wednesday morning throughout March on Inis Mór, Inis Meáin and Inis Oírr as part of the Active Islands programme. The sessions aimed to provide accessible, evidence based physical activity opportunities for older adults and individuals seeking to improve their functional fitness, mobility and overall wellbeing.

Led by trained Siel Bleu instructors, the classes focused on safe, low impact exercises designed to enhance strength, balance, coordination and confidence in daily movements. By delivering these sessions within island communities, the programme

supported equitable access to health promoting activities and encouraged sustained participation in regular physical exercise.

The initiative also aligned with broader community health objectives by promoting active ageing and fostering social engagement among participants, contributing to improved quality of life across the island communities.

WOMEN IN SPORT WEEK 2026

Women in Sport Week took place from 2–8 March, coinciding with International Women’s Day. The national campaign celebrated the contribution of women and girls in sport, highlighted the work of Sport Ireland and partners, and showcased programmes funded through the Women in Sport initiative. The 2026 theme, **“Same Energy,”** encouraged equal support and recognition for women’s sport across all communities.

Throughout the week, Galway Sports Partnership delivered a diverse programme of activities across the county, including orienteering, Buggy Buddies sessions, Parkrun events, Inclusive Pilates, Swimmin’ Women sessions, cricket, social golf, and the HER Timeout basketball programme. Targeted initiatives included HER Moves school and weightlifting programmes, Indoor Activator Poles, and specialised workshops such as Coaching Teenage Girls and a menopause-focused Edufit session.

We also delivered a four-week Inclusive Pilates and Strengthening Programme for Women. The programme was tailored for women aged 18 and over with a disability and focused on improving mobility, strength, and overall wellbeing in a supportive environment.

The week concluded with International Women’s Day events, including weightlifting and indoor rowing tasters at the University of Galway and a Sauna & Dip in An Spidéal. Overall,

the programme demonstrated strong participation and effective collaboration with clubs, NGBs, and community partners.



SWIMMING WOMEN

BUGGY BUDDIES SALTHILL





Galway Sports Partnership launched the Girls Off Grid initiative at Presentation College Athenry as part of the ESF+ Social Innovation in Sport project. The programme was developed to address key challenges faced by teenage girls, including high levels of

cyberbullying, reduced physical activity, and the need for confidence-building opportunities. Using an “Off Grid” model, mobile phones are set aside in favour of DSLR cameras, creating a supportive space to develop new skills, improve wellbeing, and encourage movement. Workshops are delivered by professional tutor Brad Anderson, with activities centred on nature-based photography and peer interaction.

Participants play an active role in shaping the programme, contributing to logo design and helping to select weekly physical activities. The first workshop demonstrated strong engagement, with girls naturally incorporating movement into photography tasks. The programme is being documented by Vanessa Lawrenson and the bigO communications team, who will produce a short film capturing its progress and impact.

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

REGIONAL DISCOVERY TOUR

The East Galway Activator organised an intercounty event recently with East Galway, Roscommon, Longford, and Westmeath on 12th February which was a huge success. There were over seventy attendees on the day, with excellent engagement and participation throughout. The feedback was incredibly positive. The day provided a fantastic opportunity for participants to connect, strengthen relationships, and gain a deeper understanding of what our region has to offer.

Experiences like this highlight the real power of collaboration. The better we understand our local stories, assets, and experiences, the more effectively we can promote and grow our



region together. We will continue to build on this momentum with the next event taking place in May.



ATTENDEES GATHERED AT AHASCRAGH DISTILLERY AS PART OF THE REGIONAL DISCOVERY TOUR

DISCOVERY TOUR

Tourism Network:
East Galway, Roscommon,
Longford & Westmeath

Date: Thursday
12 February 2026

Morning Session for East Galway & Roscommon

Collection Points	Morning Venues
Mini bus departure times: 9.15 Roscommon Town 9.15 Ahascragh Distillery, Galway	Luan Gallery, Athlone, Westmeath Sean's Bar, Athlone, Westmeath

Morning Session for Longford & Westmeath

Collection Points	Morning Venues
Mini bus departure times: 9.00 Longford Town 9.00 Moate, Westmeath	Rathcroghan Visitor Centre, Tulsk, Roscommon Suck Valley Way, Athleague, Roscommon

Joint Afternoon Session: Ahascragh Distillery

Arrival 12.20	Departure 15.15
'Marketing on a Shoestring' delivered by Niamh Creaven- Connaughton, Araya Marketing	Ahascragh Distillery Tour Lunch & Networking

[Regional Discovery Tour Reel.mp4](#)



ALL FOUR ACTIVATORS REPRESENTING EAST GALWAY, ROSCOMMON, LONGFORD AND WESTMEATH

FREE TRAINING FOR EAST GALWAY TOURISM BUSINESSES

As part of Local Enterprise Week, and in collaboration with the Local Enterprise Office, the Activator has organised a complimentary 3-hour Digital Marketing & AI Training Workshop exclusively for tourism businesses in East Galway.

The workshop will focus on practical strategies to help businesses strengthen their online present and competitiveness.

Participants will gain insight into

- Attracting more visitors through social media
- Create engaging content easily
- Use AI Tools to save time and look more professional online

Demand for the workshop was exceptional strong, with all places fully booked shortly after registration opened.

Galway
...Let's talk business

Digital Marketing & AI Training for Tourism Businesses - 6th March 2026 - ONLINE

A Free practical 3-hour workshop designed specifically for tourism businesses in East Galway – B&Bs, hotels, tour operators, restaurants, attractions, and more. Learn to showcase your business on social media, tell the stories that inspire visitors to book, and use some of the latest AI tools to save time and look more professional online.

BIA INNOVATOR CAMPUS



Last week BIA Innovator Campus and Galway County Council, hosted the 5th Regional Stakeholder Group meeting as part of the Slowdown Interreg Europe project.

With stakeholders joining both in person and online, the meeting marked an important step as the project moves from interregional learning to structured policy improvement.

A key focus was employing how Sibiu's Local Gastronomy Points model could be adapted for

Galway, highlighting opportunities around seasonal food experiences, small-scale enterprises and stronger rural – urban connections while also identifying practical considerations for implementation.

Also presented was a proposed pilot concept 'The Galway Hiking Place' designed as a small-scale, evidence-based test to inform future policy decisions within the Galway Tourism Strategy.

As slowdown progresses, stakeholder input will continue to play a central role, from refining policy roadmaps to contributing to monitoring, evaluation and potential pilot testing.

INTEGRATION

Information clinics for Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection and International Protection Applicants continued across the 8 IPA and 29 BOTP accommodation centres in the County.

The Integration team manage the Ukraine Response and the Offer a Home Programme, working with the International Organisation for Migration to manage 172 Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection across 56 OAH properties.

Weekly online meetings in preparation for our Galway County Africa Day event in Tuam on May 9th continued, with sub-groups taking responsibility for catering, entertainment and communication.

We said goodbye to our colleague, Integration Support Worker Janet Kehelly, who left to join St. Vincent de Paul on a part-time basis. Janet made a massive contribution to the Integration Team, covering centres in the Connemara, Oranmore/Athenry Municipal Districts, and organising many successful community events. We wish her all the best for the future. Recruitment for this post and for a third Integration Support Worker is ongoing. These posts are funded by the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration.

Meanwhile TJ Hughes, Integration Support Worker, attended train the trainer workshops in the EU funded Supportive Spaces Project. The project will see the UN Refugee Agency

(UNHCR) Ireland develop and deliver a trauma informed practice training programme to Ireland's International Protection Accommodation Service (IPAS) at the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration, and to staff of Accommodation Centres.

LOCAL COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

The second meeting of the newly established Galway County Local Community Safety Partnership (LCSP) took place on the 11th February, working towards a new approach to community safety across the county.

Members were briefed on the draft Galway County Council Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy 2025-2030, which sets out a more proactive approach to preventing and managing anti-social behaviour in Council properties and estates. The strategy is expected to be presented at a plenary meeting of Galway County Council in the coming months.

The meeting included an outline of the structure and roles of the LCSP subgroups, which cover youth engagement, education, drug prevention and substance misuse support and a dedicated Anti-Social Behaviour Action Group for the Ballinasloe Area.

A working group has also been formed to prepare Galway County's statutory Local Community Safety Plan, a three-year strategy that will address safety concerns beyond policing, including anti-social behaviour, environmental issues and community wellbeing. As part of the plan's development, the public are being encouraged to complete the National Office of Community Safety questionnaire, available on the Galway County Council website at galway.ie. Responses will inform both the national Community Safety Plan and Galway County's own plan.

Galway County Council in collaboration with the LCSP have established a dedicated Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Action Group for the Ballinasloe area. This new subgroup has been formed in response to ongoing community concerns and will play a key role in collaborative actions to reduce and prevent anti-social behaviour in the Ballinasloe Municipal District. The subgroup will begin meeting in the coming weeks to set its work programme, identify priority issues, and outline specific actions for early implementation. Regular updates will be shared through the LCSP and Galway County Council communication channels.

LCSP Chair Cllr Andrew Reddington thanked members and agencies for their continued involvement, by saying "I wish to acknowledge the Partnership members, agencies and community representatives for their continued commitment to making Galway County a safer, more connected county. I am looking forward to building on this collaborative momentum throughout 2026."

LCSP Coordinator Marie Nicholson said the creation of the subgroups was a significant step: "The establishment of our subgroups marks an important step in strengthening community safety across Galway County. By bringing together the right expertise and lived experience,

each subgroup will be able to focus deeply on the issues that matter most to our communities.”

The Partnership will draw up a three-year safety plan for the county, coordinate new initiatives, engage with residents and contribute to the work of the National Office for Community Safety. The National Office will provide training and support and will oversee the Community Safety Fund, which uses proceeds of crime to support local projects.

In line with national guidance, the LCSP confirmed that one meeting per year will be open to media attendance. This year’s public meeting will take place in June.

TUAM MD DRINKING BYE-LAWS

Public drinking in Tuam MD, particularly within parks and commercial areas, has been identified as an ongoing issue, giving rise to concerns in relation to public safety, amenity, and litter. While national legislation provides enforcement powers to An Garda Síochána, these powers are largely reactive and generally apply once behaviour has escalated, limiting opportunities for early intervention and prevention. In response, it is proposed to review and progress the Municipal District of Tuam (Control of Consumption and Possession of Alcohol in Public Places) Bye-law. The draft bye-law would prohibit the consumption of alcohol, or possession with intent to consume, in designated public places. Enforcement measures would include the use of fixed-payment notices and powers for An Garda Síochána and authorised persons to direct individuals to desist and to confiscate alcohol where appropriate. Exemptions would apply in respect of major events and licensed outdoor seating areas.

The draft Drinking Bye-law was presented to the Tuam MD Members on Monday 9 March at the Tuam MD Municipal District Meeting. The draft bye-laws will be available for public inspection during a four-week consultation period from Wednesday, 18 March 2026, to Friday, 17 April 2026 in the Tuam Municipal District office and the Tuam Library. The Public Notice will be published in local newspapers on the 18 March, stating the intention to make a Bye-law. Members of the public may make submissions or observations in writing or by email to communitysafety@galwaycoco.ie which will end on the 24 April. The bye-Law will be presented to the Tuam MD on the 8 June, including any submissions received, for adoption and may be adopted with or without consultation related amendments. Expected commencement of the bye-law is Tuesday 7 July.

LIBRARY SERVICES

BALLYBANE LIBRARY



As part of our Family literacy campaign, we ran some craft sessions in the library during this midterm break for families. These hearts are some of the results of lively endeavors.

In conjunction with the Galway Childcare Committee and The Early Childhood Education and Care department at ATU, we facilitated an Early Years Dance and Movement session with Monica Munez. We hosted two well attended sessions for local preschools and parent groups.



EARLY YEARS DANCE AND MOVEMENT

IRELAND READS



Ballybane Library collaborated with Galway City Partnership for a Bilingual Storytime in English/Japanese for Ireland Reads on the 28th of February. Stories were read by Mika, an intern with GCP. There was a large crowd in attendance, and they thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

BILINGUAL STORYTIME IN ENGLISH/JAPANESE

Our afternoon Ireland Reads event involved a beautiful poetry reading by Rita Ann Higgins who was joined by writers from the Ballybane creative writers' group who read some of their work to great applause. We had an audience of approximately 45 people in attendance. We also had a lovely recital by Aine Murphy of her winning Irish poetry entry to our Summer Stars competition in 2025.

BALLYBANE CREATIVE WRITERS' GROUP
AND POETRY READING FEATURING RITA
ANN HIGGINS



AINE MURPHY READING HER
WINNING IRISH POEM, SUBMITTED TO
THE SUMMER STARS WRITING
COMPETITION

CLIFDEN LIBRARY

The sun is shining in Clifden, and our daffodils are growing in our flower box outside. Clifden is coming out of hibernation and getting ready for the season ahead. The library has been busy with lots of new young members with the youngest being 5 months old. She was very impressed with our board book selection. Our chess club continues every Saturday with a great friendly group of children.

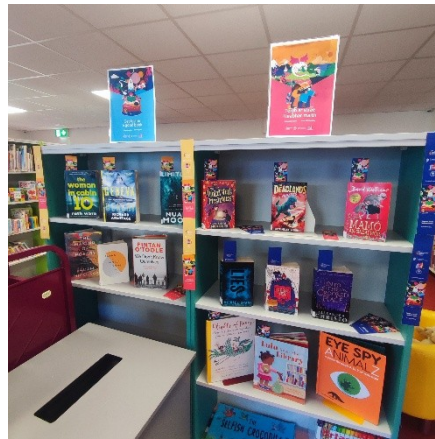
We had a fantastic visit from Clifden playschool. The 16 children really enjoyed exploring the library, playing with the toys, and looking through the books. We were delighted to welcome them and look forward to many more visits. We also have a great selection of art to decorate our walls created by some young visitors.

There was love in the air on Valentine's Day. Library patrons engaged with our Valentine display, and they were inspired to choose one of our selected titles.

GRETB Digital Skills drop-in clinics continued to be very popular on Mondays in the library. This has been a very helpful service for many people.

We received a great selection of Healthy Ireland books, and these are proving very popular. We have a wonderful exhibit on Local Heroes and Age Friendly Galway supplied us with helpful directory of services and free posters listing emergency contact details.

We created a display for Ireland Reads to inspire our borrowers to 'Get Lost in a Book' this February.



BOOK DISPLAYS FOR VALENTINE'S DAY AND IRELAND READS DAY



LOCAL HEROES' EXHIBITION

SELECTION OF HEALTHY IRELAND BOOKS AND COLOURFUL ART FROM CLIFDEN PRESCHOOL



EUROPE DIRECT @ BALLINASLOE LIBRARY

Over recent weeks, Ballinasloe Library and Europe Direct Ballinasloe delivered a diverse and engaging programme of events for the community, spanning creative workshops, digital support, heritage talks, outreach activities, and family celebrations.

AIR CLAY CRAFT WORKSHOP – FEBRUARY 13TH

Ballinasloe Library hosted a lively Air Clay Craft Workshop that brought together enthusiastic young creators. Participants enjoyed exploring air-dry clay and produced an array of imaginative artworks. The session was full of fun and creativity, with the library looking forward to offering similar hands-on workshops in the future.





EXHIBITS FROM THE AIR CLAY ART WORKSHOP

SMARTPHONE & I.T. SUPPORT SESSIONS – EVERY FRIDAY

The library continued its successful drop-in Smartphone and I.T. Support sessions in



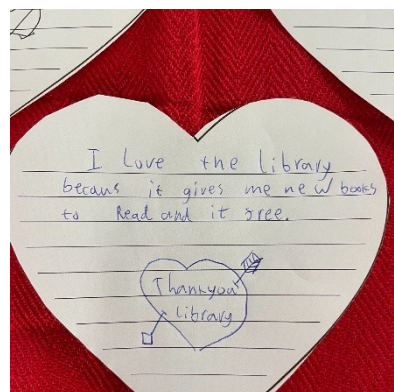
partnership with Login I.T. Training. Attendees received friendly, practical one-to-one assistance with smartphones, tablets, and computers. The relaxed format enabled visitors to ask questions at their own pace and build confidence in their digital skills.

SMARTPHONE & I.T. SUPPORT

“I LOVE MY LIBRARY BECAUSE...” VALENTINE’S ACTIVITY – FEBRUARY 14TH



To celebrate Valentine’s Day, the library invited young visitors to share heartfelt messages about what they love most about their library. Children contributed colourful, thoughtful notes highlighting new books, cosy



reading corners, and the warm, welcoming atmosphere. The display created a joyful celebration of the library’s role in their lives.

EUROPE DIRECT & GALWAY PUBLIC LIBRARIES POP-UP AT ATU GALWAY CITY – FEBRUARY 26TH



Galway Public Libraries and Europe Direct Ballinasloe delivered an energetic outreach event at their pop-up stand in ATU Galway City. Staff engaged with many students and university staff, providing information on services, resources, and upcoming programmes. The event strengthened connections with the student community and broadened awareness of available supports.

POP-UP STAND AT ATU, GALWAY

IRELAND READS: STORYTIME & FACE PAINTING – FEBRUARY 28TH



STORYTIME AND
FACEPAINTING
FOR IRELAND
READS DAY

As part of Ireland Reads, the library hosted a vibrant Storytime and Face Painting morning that drew a fantastic turnout of excited children and families. Engaging stories and colourful face-paint designs—created by Rachel from Fierce Fun Faces—filled the space with creativity, laughter, and excitement. The event showcased the community spirit at the heart of Ireland Reads.



TOWN TALKS: BADHÚN – CONSERVATION OF THE BALLINASLOE BAWN WALLS – FEBRUARY 28TH

As part of Ballinasloe and District Heritage Society's Spring 2026 'Town Talks' series, Ballinasloe Library had an informative session titled *Badhún – A Summary of the Conservation Project on the Ballinasloe Bawn Walls*. Speakers Bernie Doherty, Fiona Maguire, and Trevor Wood presented the history, research, and conservation work undertaken across 2024–2025. Delivered in collaboration with the Ballinasloe & District Heritage Society, the event was well attended and highly valued by local heritage enthusiasts.



BADHÚN-THE CONSERVATION PROJECT ON BALLINASLOE BAWN WALLS

GALWAY CITY LIBRARY



Artist Aisling Newe launched her new art exhibition on Saturday 7 February. Aisling is a visual artist who works with turf to create artworks that are unique to the Irish landscape.

LAUNCH OF AISLING NEWE'S ART EXHIBITION

ARTIST AISLING NEWE



AUDIENCE ATTENDING MUSIC UNVEILED

On 24 February, Galway City Library hosted Music Unveiled, a collaboration with Music Connects, the University of Galway's Music Department and the Con Tempo quartet. The event was filmed and is available to view on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/CZLYPDBGCxg?si=FuaT3SEd7c2xjll>



On 26 February, Ukrainian students from the GRETB Galway Adult Basic Education Service attended a presentation on the English-As-A-Second-Language resources which are available from Galway Public Libraries.



UKRAINIAN STUDENTS FROM GRETB GALWAY ADULT BASIC EDUCATION SERVICE

For Ireland Reads Day on 28 February, participants at Foróige’s table-top role-playing session took the opportunity to share some of the books they enjoy reading.

FORÓIGE STUDENTS AND STAFF SHARING THEIR READING CHOICES FOR IRELAND READS DAY



HEADFORD LIBRARY

On Saturday, 28th February 2026, Headford Library hosted a busy drop-in event to celebrate Ireland Reads Day.

The event was well-supported by local representatives, with Cllr. Andrew Reddington and Cllr. Mary Hoade in attendance. A highlight of the morning was a special storytelling session where Cllr. Andrew Reddington read a story to the gathered families.

The library was a hub of creativity, offering a diverse range of hands-on activities designed to appeal to both children and adults:

Bookmark Making: Children enjoyed designing and decorating their own unique bookmarks to take home.

Aspiring young artists had the chance to create their own comic book stories, exploring visual storytelling. A dedicated area for colouring provided a relaxing space for children and for the grown-ups, a "book tasting" session was organized, allowing them to sample different genres and discover new authors.

The day was a resounding success, drawing a large crowd and highlighting the library's role as a vital community space. By combining storytelling and creative crafts, the event successfully promoted the joy of reading for everyone in the Headford community.



CLLR. MARY HOADE, JANE BANE, BRANCH LIBRARIAN AND CLLR. ANDREW REDDINGTON, MARKING IRELAND READS DAY IN HEADFORD LIBRARY

DISPLAY FOR IRELAND READS DAY



LEABHARLANN NA CEATHRÚN RUA

AN CEART CHUN LÉITHEOIREACHT

CLUB LEABHAR

Tháinig an Club Leabhar le chéile arís ar 26 Feabhra, agus bhí siad ag plé an leabhar “Mo Scéal Féin” le Gearóid Willie Ó Flatharta. Bhí an t-údar é féin ag an gcruinniú freisin! Bhain na baill uilig sult as an léamh. Bhí neart ceistanna acu do Ghearóid chomh maith. Bhí naonúr i láthair. Beidh cruinniú acu arís ag deireadh mí Márta. Thug sé cuntas soiléir don thréimhse a chaith Gearóid ar na misiúin i Meiriceá Theas.

CUAIRTEANNA EILE Ó SCOILEANNA & GRÚPAÍ ÁITIÚLA

Cuireadh tús maith leis an bhliain nua an mhí seo caite, agus lean sé sin do mí Feabhra. Bhí cuairteanna againn ón mbunscoil áitiúil agus ón gClub Suaimhneas. Ghlac na scoileanna speisiailta agus na heagraíochtaí cúraim cuairteanna rialta ar an leabharlann freisin: iad ag léamh, ag spraoi agus ag baint úsáid as na ríomhairí. Tá an-tóir ar an mbord céadfach i gcónaí!

SCILEANNA DON SAOL

CÚNAMH LEIS AN TEICNEOLAÍOCHT

Thosaigh na seisiúin cabhracha an mhí seo, buíochas le comhoibriú idir an leabharlann agus an GRETB. Bhí Bridgie

McTavish anseo gach Máirt an mhí seo agus í ag tabhairt moltaí agus cabhair don té a bhí ag lorg cúnamh leis an teicneolaíocht. Leanfaidh na seisiúin ar aghaidh an mhí seo chugainn.

RIGHT TO READ

BOOK CLUB

The Book Club came together again on 26 February to discuss “Mo Scéal Féin” by Gearóid Willie Ó Flatharta. The writer himself attended! All members enjoyed the book as it gave a clear account of Gearóid’s time on the missions in South America. They had plenty of questions for Gearóid as well! There were nine people in attendance. They will have their next meeting at the end of March.

VISITS FROM SCHOOLS AND OTHER GROUPS

We had a great start to the year last month, and this continued for the month of February. We had visits from the local primary school and from the Suaimhneas Club. The special schools and local care groups also visited the library: to read, to play and to use the computers. The sensory table is as popular as ever!

SKILLS FOR LIFE

HELP WITH TECHNOLOGY



The help sessions started this month, thanks to a collaboration between the GRETB organization and Leabharlann na Ceathrún Rua. Bridgie McTavish was here every Tuesday this month, giving tips and advice to those who wanted help with technology. The sessions will continue next month.

TAISPÉANTAS DO LÁ FHÉILE BRÍDE- DISPLAY FOR ST. BRIGID'S DAY

TAISPÉANTAS DO ÉIRE AG LÉAMH- IRELAND READS DAY



LOUGHREA LIBRARY

February was a vibrant and engaging month at the library, filled with energy, creativity, and community spirit. Across a wide range of programmes—from school visits to family activities, book clubs, and age-friendly initiatives—the library continued to serve as a welcoming hub where people of all ages could explore, learn, and connect.

RIGHT TO READ: BRINGING STORIES TO LIFE FOR LOCAL SCHOOLS

Throughout the month, the library was delighted to welcome several classes from St. Ita's National School as part of the Right to Read initiative.

The excitement was palpable as:

- On Thursday, February 5th, 28 enthusiastic 5th-class students arrived, eager to discover new books and learn more about library services.
- The following day, Friday, February 6th, the library hosted 25 pupils from 4th class, who enjoyed browsing the shelves and chatting about their favourite reads.
- On Thursday, February 12th, another lively group—25 children from 3rd class—visited, bringing great energy and curiosity.
- The month rounded out on Friday, February 27th, with a second visit from St Ita's 4th class, again welcoming 25 students.

Each visit provided an opportunity to share the joy of reading, highlight library resources, and build a lasting connection with young readers.

BOOK CLUB MOMENTS

The Loughrea Library Monthly Book Club gathered on Tuesday, February 24th from 1.00–2.00pm. Eight committed members attended, engaging in lively conversation and thoughtful discussion. As always, the group enjoyed exploring different perspectives and delving deeper into their chosen title for the month.

FAMILY TIME AT THE LIBRARY

Families continued to enjoy a warm welcome at the library throughout February.

On Thursday, February 5th, toddlers and their parents took part in a cheerful Storytime and LEGO Duplo session. The morning was filled with laughter, imagination, and colourful building blocks.



LEGO DUPLO SESSION

Two engaging Saturday events brightened up mid-month family visits:

- On Saturday, February 7th, the library hosted its first Board Game Saturday Afternoon, with families gathering for friendly competition and fun challenges.
- On Saturday, February 14th, creativity took centre stage with a Valentine's Day craft table, where children and parents created cards and decorations in a warm, festive atmosphere.

IRELAND READS DAY – A CELEBRATION OF READING FOR ALL

One of the month's biggest highlights was Ireland Reads Day on Saturday, February 28th. The library transformed into a lively activity hub, offering:

- LEGO and Duplo free play
- A bookmark-making craft station
- A library scavenger hunt featuring book characters
- A selection of board games

The response was outstanding—over 100 children and parents participated in activities throughout the day. It was a joyful celebration of reading, creativity, and community involvement.

BOARD GAMES IN LOUGHREA LIBRARY



AGE FRIENDLY INITIATIVES: SUPPORTING LIFELONG LEARNING AND SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

The library's age-friendly programmes continued to flourish in February.

Each Friday of the month, the Digital Skills Drop-in Clinic provided one-to-one guidance for community members wishing to improve their digital confidence

Participants appreciated the relaxed atmosphere and the personalised assistance tailored to their needs.

The Weekly Adult Craft Group also remained a popular and sociable event, meeting every Thursday from 11.00am to 1.00pm.

Attendance remained steady, all enjoying the chance to learn new techniques, share ideas, and unwind in creative company.

A major new success was the launch of the first Community Social Morning on Thursday, February 26th, running from 10.30am to 1.00pm.

The event welcomed 20 attendees and created a warm, friendly environment where people could enjoy tea and coffee, read the newspapers, play cards or board games, or simply chat and connect with others. The positive atmosphere and strong attendance marked a very promising start to this new initiative.



COMMUNITY SOCIAL MORNING

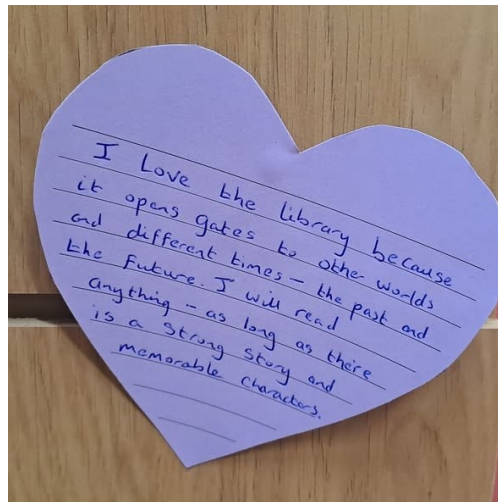
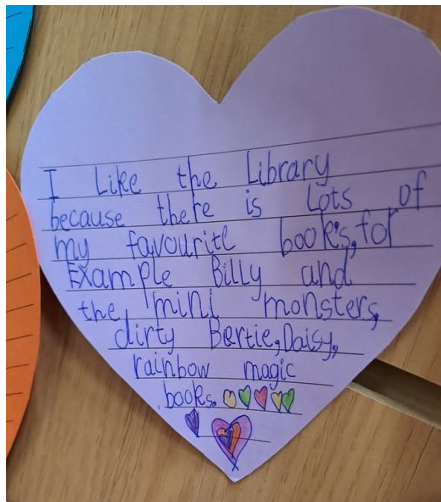
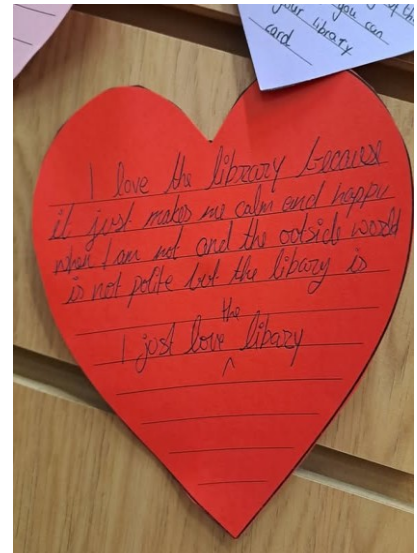
ORANMORE LIBRARY

VALENTINE'S DAY ARTS AND CRAFTS AT ORANMORE LIBRARY





As part of our Valentine's Day celebrations, we asked people to tell us why they love the library. We had some wonderful responses.



Patrons at Oranmore Library had the opportunity to take a chance at falling in love with a book in disguise during Valentine's. Thanks to Stephen Glennon who is on work experience with us for creating this display.

BLIND DATE WITH A BOOK IN ORANMORE LIBRARY





Beautiful photo of the sunrise over Oranmore Library taken by one of our patrons, Mo Street, on the morning of February 17th while on her way to work. This photo got a great response on social media!

ORANMORE LIBRARY AT SUNRISE

Ireland Reads Day was very busy at Oranmore Library. We had great engagement with the Arts & Crafts, Chess and LEGO. 304 people visited Oranmore Library on Ireland Reads Day.



ACTIVITIES FOR IRELAND READS DAY

PORTUMNA LIBRARY

February was a wonderfully vibrant month in Portumna Library, filled with activity, community spirit, and plenty of creativity. Our Ciorcal Comhrá sessions continued every second Tuesday, offering over an hour of *craic, comhrá agus tae*. The group remains a

warm, age-friendly space where Irish speakers of all levels feel welcome, and it's enjoyed by all who attend.

Our Adult Book Club met to discuss *The Other Side of the Bridge* by Mary Lawson, a title that proved particularly popular with readers and sparked lively conversation. To better accommodate participants, we also moved our Scrabble for Adults sessions from mornings to Thursday afternoons—an adjustment that has already suited more of our regulars.

The Community Jigsaw Puzzle Table was another ongoing hit throughout the month. With a 1,000-piece puzzle on the go, visitors delighted in adding a few pieces whenever they popped in. Alongside this, we continued to offer a variety of daily activities for all ages, including puzzles, wordsearches, and colouring sheets.

Fridays remained especially busy with Freeplay LEGO and DUPLO, and Storytime whenever staffing levels allowed. These sessions always bring great energy and joy to the library.

February also saw a special Valentine's Day workshop, organised with help from Sharleen in HQ and facilitated by Laurie from The Learning Garden on Friday the 13th. The event was a great success, enjoyed by everyone who attended. As a sweet bonus, thanks to a generous donor, visitors on Valentine's Day itself—falling on a Saturday this year—were offered a complimentary rose.

Our ever-popular Games Shelf continued to bring people together, offering a simple but meaningful way for borrowers to connect. We also welcomed regular weekly visits from the Portumna Hub branch of Ability West, whose members and staff are always a pleasure to host.

Students from the local Youthreach L.C.A. group also made excellent use of the library's resources throughout the month, coming in to research and work on their various projects.

To celebrate Ireland Reads Day on Saturday 28th February, we held a lively Pop-Up "Design & Make Your Own Bookmark" workshop for all ages. The activity attracted steady engagement all day long and brought great creativity into the building.

All in all, February was a busy, heart-warming month in Portumna Library—a wonderful reminder of the value of having a free, welcoming community space where anyone can drop in without an appointment, enjoy an activity (or simply relax), and recharge themselves—and their devices!

TUAM LIBRARY

Tuam Library enjoyed a vibrant month of activity, with our regular events continuing to draw great interest. Our weekly Rhyme Time sessions, Saturday Free-Play Lego, and Thursday-morning craft group all ran as usual, and our three book clubs gathered once again throughout February. The monthly breastfeeding support group met on February 12th, while our popular 'Soundbites' music session returned on February 26th, welcoming 17 attendees.

Digital skills classes were successfully re-established on February 6th and will run for eight weeks, facilitated by Niall Dempsey of GRET. Staff member Margaret Garvey continued her valued outreach work, completing five book drops to housebound members during the month.

School engagement remained strong: we welcomed six primary school groups and six groups from St Jarlath's Secondary School. Ability West visited on three occasions with small groups of young adults with intellectual disabilities. Parents Plus Tuam held their first library session of 2026 on February 10th, with 12 children and their parents taking part.

An exhibition of artwork by children from Little Stars Preschool was installed on February 28th. A launch event celebrating their creativity will take place on Saturday, March 7th.



Tuam Library also marked *Ireland Reads* with a joyful morning of Lego activities followed by a special author visit from Katherine Scanlon, who shared her book *Clipper the Hurl's Amazing Adventure* with attendees.

AUTHOR KATHERINE SCANLON READING FROM HER BOOK 'CLIPPER THE HURL'S AMAZING ADVENTURE'

DISPLAY FOR IRELAND READS DAY



WESTSIDE LIBRARY

Westside Library continued to experience strong footfall throughout February, supported by a busy schedule of regular programming. In addition to the fifteen ongoing weekly and monthly events facilitated by staff and community groups, we welcomed a new weekly craft group, *The Westside Belles*. This group focuses on sustainable fiber crafts—particularly



tapestry and needlework—and was established by participants of the *Mapping 1925: A Cultural Tapestry* project, which concluded in December 2025. The completed tapestry, now displayed in Westside Library, continues to attract interest, and the group welcomes new members.

School visits also remained consistently popular, with strong engagement from local primary schools.

STAFF MEMBER JOAN WITH A CAPTIVE AUDIENCE

EXHIBITIONS



Two exhibitions were hosted in the library during February.

The first, by Galway-based painter Vanya Savov, showcased her distinctive visual practice shaped by her upbringing in Bulgaria's Rose Valley and her ten years living on Ireland's West Coast. Her work explores the interplay between East and West and the meeting point of realism and

abstraction.

LAUNCH OF VANYA SAVOV'S ART EXHIBITION

The second exhibition, "The Cost of Breathing", is presented by *Cystic Fibrosis Ireland* in collaboration with *Trevor O'Donoghue Photography*. This thought-provoking photography exhibition confronts the emotional and financial challenges faced by individuals living with Cystic Fibrosis. Each piece communicates an emotional truth through the use of colour, and symbolism inspired by the chakra system.

The exhibition will remain on display at Westside Library until 8 March, after which it will move to Ballinasloe Library.



ART EXHIBITION 'THE COST OF BREATHING'

IRELAND READS DAY

Ireland Reads Day was celebrated nationally on 28 February, encouraging readers of all ages to “get lost in a good book.” Throughout February, library staff curated a series of themed book displays to promote a wide range of genres.

On Ireland Reads Day itself, staff hosted a *Book Prescriber* session for children aged 5–12, helping young readers discover their next great read.



BOOK DISPLAYS AND THE 'BOOK DOCTORS' RECOMMENDING GOOD READS TO CELEBRATE IRELAND READS DAY

EVENT WITH THE IRISH HEART FOUNDATION

Westside Library was pleased to host the Irish Heart Foundation for the launch of My Heart Health: A Helpful Guide to Taking Care of Your Heart, a new resource developed to improve public awareness and understanding of cardiovascular disease—one of Ireland’s leading causes of premature death and disability.

The guide was produced in partnership with Galway City Council and Healthy Galway City and was co-designed with local community groups to ensure it reflects the needs and experiences of people across Galway. Deputy Mayor of Galway, Cllr. Alan Cheevers launched the guide in Westside Library.

During the event, the Irish Heart Foundation introduced the guide as a practical tool to help individuals take proactive steps in managing their heart health. The resource is now available through the Irish Heart Foundation and can be accessed online via irishheart.ie.



This initiative was supported by the Adult Literacy for Life Strategy Collaboration and Innovation Fund 2025 and Galway and Roscommon ETB, further strengthening community-focused health literacy efforts in the region.



LAUNCH OF 'MY HEART HEALTH: A HELPFUL GUIDE TO TAKING CARE OF YOUR HEART'

ENVIRONMENT

WASTE MANAGEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE

GORT CIVIC AMENITY SITE

A public works contract for €496,763 has been signed for the development of a fourth Civic Amenity facility in the County, to be located one kilometre from Gort Town and the R458. The contract has been awarded to Ballinasloe-based Kenny Civils & Plant Ltd who will commence work in the coming weeks, and the facility is due to be operational by the end of the year and will operate under an EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) licence.

Welcoming the new Civic Amenity Site, Cathaoirleach David Collins said; “The new Civic Amenity Facility will make it easier for households to recycle, reduce waste, and play their part in protecting our environment.” Liam Conneally, Chief Executive of Galway County Council said the contract marked, “an important milestone in delivering improved recycling infrastructure for the people of Gort and the wider South Galway area.” “It will also contribute to higher recycling rates and reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill, a key aim of the National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy 2024 to 2030.” Eileen Ruane, Director of Services with Galway County Council, added, “The completion of this new Civic Amenity Facility in Gort by year’s end will ensure that, for the first time, there is a Civic Amenity site serving each region of the county.” “This represents a strategically important step in delivering balanced, countywide access to essential waste and recycling infrastructure.”



AT THE CONTRACT SIGNING FOR GORT CIVIC AMENITY L-R: CLLR. PAUL KILLILEA CATHAOIRLEACH LOUGHREA MUNICIPAL DISTRICT; LIAM CONNEALLY CHIEF EXECUTIVE; MIKE MELODY SENIOR EXECUTIVE ENGINEER; CLLR. DAVID COLLINS CATHAOIRLEACH, ANGELA GALLIGAN ASSISTANT ENGINEER; BRIAN KENNY DIRECTOR KENNY CIVILS & PLANT LTD

ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING & ENFORCEMENT

RMCEI

Work continued on submission of annual environmental returns to the EPA. This was completed at the end of February and covered reported on work carried out in 2025.

AGRICULTURE

A Webinar was delivered by Teagasc on nutrient management plans. Guidance was delivered on nutrient management plan requirements and a walkthrough of the Teagasc NMP online platform.

CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT

The quarterly Western LA liaison meeting took place online and included LA Support & Coordination Team Updates and LA Water Action Plan update. The LA Water Action Plan when finalised will be an annual plan that will dictate proposed catchment management work for the year ahead, including actions and timeframes for completion. The Western Regional Operational Committee meeting covered the following:

- LAWPRO national updates
- EPA WFD characterisation 2026
- Catchment community fora
- Nature based solutions update
- Updates from committee members

ENFORCEMENT

On-going enforcement of an unlicensed facility concluded with the upgrade of wastewater treatment plant and inspection to issue a Section 4 Discharge Licence.

A case being taken by Galway County Council against an unauthorised garage was listed for hearing in Loughrea court but was adjourned until the following month. This is in relation to an untreated wastewater discharge to groundwater in close proximity to a small group water scheme well.

BATHING WATERS

A bathing water workshop took place in the Midlands Park Hotel, Portlaoise with topics covered including the following:

- Bathing water profiles and risk assessments
- Best practices in managing bathing waters
- Prior warning notices and short-term pollution incidents
- Predictive modelling and investigative monitoring for bathing water incidents

A meeting also took place with the HSE to discuss the Bathing Water season for 2026, with focus on the water sampling programme.

LITTER & WASTE

Seven fines were issued by our community warden service for offences under the Litter Pollution Act 1997 As Amended. Fifteen fines have been issued year to date with 3 paid in full and the remainder being processed through the system. Five cases have been referred to the Law Agent to initiate legal proceedings (these cases relate to 2025 offences).

We had two cases under the Litter Pollution Act before the courts during the month of February. In Tuam District Court, the case was struck out with no order as waste has now been removed, and the Defendant has retained the services of an Authorised Waste Collector. In Galway District Court, Judge Harris convicted and fined the Defendant €600 with 4 months to pay and awarded costs in the amount of €300 with 4 months to pay.

Staff attended a Construction & Demolition waste conference in Tullamore.

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS & EDUCATION

GREEN SCHOOLS

Green Schools visits were conducted in Belclare NS, Killure NS, Kiltormer NS, Killeeneen NS, Carabane NS, Glebe NS, Northampton NS, Garafrauns NS, Glinsk NS, and Oughterard NS.



NATIONAL TREE WEEK



National Tree Week took place from 8 - 15 March.

Galway County Council in conjunction with the Tree Council of Ireland and Coillte, distributed 600 saplings to schools and voluntary groups throughout the county.

WATER SAFETY

BEACH LIFEGUARD RECRUITMENT 2026

Galway County Council is progressing with the recruitment of Beach Lifeguards for the 2026 Bathing Season. We have received a large number of applications for over 50 available positions, reflecting strong interest in the service. The pool test for shortlisted candidates will take place on 7 March 2026. All candidates must complete a series of assessments demonstrating basic lifesaving skills, rescue techniques, and required fitness levels for operational duties in the upcoming bathing season. Only candidates who successfully meet the required standards during the pool test will progress to the next stage of the recruitment process.

DOG CONTROL

PROMOTION OF RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERSHIP

737 dog licences were purchased during the month of February, 501 of which were purchased at the local post office which remains by far the most popular method of purchasing dog licences at present. Licencing compliance is tracking slightly higher in 2026 than at the same stage in 2025, with a 4% increase in licences purchased year to date. Licencing campaigns were carried out by our dog warden and community warden service in the Gortacleva, Na Forbacha and Athenry town areas of the county during the month of February.

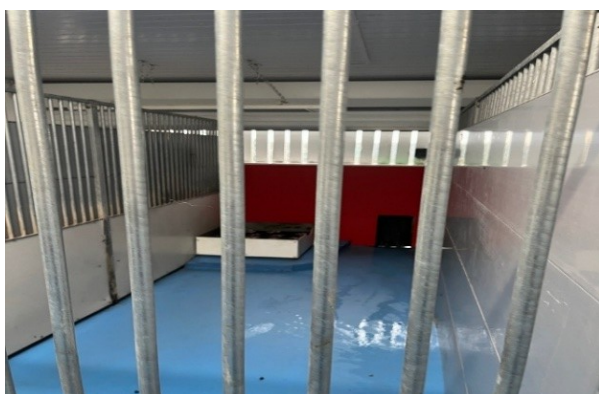
DOG CONTROL & ENFORCEMENT

Seven fixed penalty notices were issued for offences under the Control of Dogs Act 1986 as amended by the dog warden service during the month of February. Eighteen fines have

been issued year to date, with 1 fine paid in full and a further 5 fines issued being paid through agreed payment plans with the Council. Galway County Council Dog Warden service had two cases before the district courts in Tuam and Doire an Fheich on the 10th and 17th February respectively. In regard to the case in Tuam, the matter was further adjourned to the 12th May 2026 to allow for the defendant's new solicitor to review the evidence relating to the case. At Doire an Fheich, the matter was adjourned to the 21st April 2026 to give the defendant an opportunity to put measures in place ensure that their dog is kept under effective control going forward and with a commitment to pay the fine handed down in full. These measures will be reviewed by the dog warden service in the coming weeks and must be to our satisfaction. The fine issued has subsequently been partially paid by the defendant with a commitment that all monies owing will be paid before the court hearing of the 21st April next.

DOG SHELTER

11 dogs have gone through the dog warden service during the month of February. There have been some upgrade works carried out to our shelter over the last number of weeks with funding provided by the DAFM's Dog Control Initiative 2025. These works included sheeting works to the inside and outside of 6 kennels as well as sheeting to the outdoor pens. The sheeting within the shelter has made a huge difference in respect of improving insulation and comfort for the dogs as particularly during periods of high winds and poor weather, a draught was coming into the kenneling area which resulted in the heating having to be left on for longer periods to keep the dogs warm. The sheeting installed prevents draughts coming through the walls and will result in savings around electricity long term. As we bring some of the bigger dog breeds to the outdoor pens, the sheeting in the outdoor pens adds to their wellbeing and acts as a barrier to prevent any fighting as on occasion when such breeds view each other in close proximity, it can lead to increased stress. Veterinary standard non-slip Bedding has also been procured which can stand up to much more chewing than other traditional beddings and has a deep pile for heat retention which keeps the dogs warm. The bedding is both non-irritant and non-allergic as well as machine washable.



SHEETING IN KENNELING AREA

SHEETING IN THE OUTDOOR PENS



SHEETING INSTALLED OUTSIDE THE MAIN KENNELLING AREA

HOUSING

VACANT HOMES

VACANT PROPERTY REFURBISHMENT GRANT

The Croí Cónaithe Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant continues to see significant interest in 2026:

- 685 Applications submitted to date
- 486 Applicants who received Initial Approval (value of €28,101,361.30 in Total)
- 127 Paid (value of €6,961,360.70 in Total)

EXPANSION OF VPRG PROGRAMME

The Department of Housing has confirmed the continuation and expansion of the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant (VPRG) as part of the national housing plan *Delivering Homes, Building Communities*. The updated programme will run to 2030, targeting the activation of an additional 20,000 homes through vacancy supports. Key changes for local authorities are:

1. EXPANSION OF VPRG PROGRAMME

- Government approved the extension of the VPRG to 2030, along with additional annual funding of €100,000 per local authority to support administration and delivery.
- Enhancements include supports for converting entire former commercial or public buildings, with top-ups of €20,000–€40,000 depending on the number of residential units created.

2. NEW 'VACANT ABOVE THE SHOP' GRANT

- A new grant targeted at bringing vacant floors above commercial premises back into residential use.
- Funding of up to €95,000 for a single unit, with additional top-ups for multi-unit conversions
- Recognises added costs such as fire separation and independent access.

3. NEW EXPERT ADVICE GRANT (€5,000)

- A grant of up to €5,000 (or 67% of report cost) to support feasibility and technical assessments for Above-the-Shop conversions and commercial-to-residential projects.
- Available where two or more residential units are proposed or for over-the-shop conversions.
- Reports must be prepared by a registered architect, engineer, or surveyor acting as an assigned certifier.

4. VPRG FOR WHOLE-BUILDING COMMERCIAL CONVERSIONS

- Enhanced top-ups on the standard €50,000/€70,000 grant where two or more residential units are being created from a full commercial building conversions.
- Maximum top-up of €40,000 per building.
- A single grant applies per building, with a charge placed on the entire building and clawback linked to number of units and timeframes.

5. ADMINISTRATIVE AND DELIVERY IMPLICATIONS FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES

These enhancements are expected to:

- Increase the volume and complexity of VPRG applications.
- Require stronger technical assessment capacity for commercial and mixed-use properties.
- Expand vacancy-activation outputs in local Housing Delivery Action Plans.
- Strengthen alignment with the housing plan's target to activate vacant properties at scale.

TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION PROGRAMME

Galway County Council continues to progress the refurbishment, extension and redevelopment of Traveller Specific Accommodation in the County. The refurbishment of Gortbride, Loughrea, is underway which involves the refurbishment of 7 houses, including



the preparation of 2 vacant houses for re-tenanting. The green area at the estate has been refurbished and replanted with support from Dormant Accounts Funding.

GORTBRIDE, LOUGHREA

Works were completed recently at Ballygar, a project involving 13 houses and included roofing of some properties, major refurbishment of all properties and upgrading of wastewater facilities.

Funding is in place for the refurbishment and energy efficiency upgrade of 6 houses in Ballydavid, Athenry and the major refurbishment of a property in Mountbellew.

ROOFING OF HOUSE AT TRAVELLER SPECIFIC ACCOMMODATION AT BALLYGAR



HOUSING MAINTENANCE

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Galway County Council completed energy efficiency upgrade works on 100 properties in 2025 and it is expected that a further 100 houses will be upgraded in 2026, depending on the funding allocated. Energy efficiency upgrades are currently ongoing in 2 large estates in the County – Hymany Park in Ballinasloe and Parkmore in Tuam.



HOMELESS

Homelessness unfortunately reached another record high with 17,112 recorded nationally as homeless in January 2026. The lack of availability of affordable rental properties which can be funded under the HAP scheme is of concern. There are 54 adults and 33 children registered as homeless who have housing needs in County Galway.

Current placement of homeless people with housing needs in the County.

Accommodation Type	Number of households
Men's hostel	6
Women's hostel	3
Private Emergency Accommodation – Families	18
Private Emergency Accommodation – Singles	3
Community Based Housing (shared)	26
Youth Housing (shared)	9

There are 6 families awaiting access to suitable emergency accommodation. It is particularly challenging to locate suitable emergency accommodation for larger families.

The number of Notices to Quit is increasing daily with 135 Notices to Quit on hand at end of January 2026.

A submission has been made to the Department of Housing by the Regional Lead (Galway City Council) following consultation with Galway County Council for funding for 3 additional emergency accommodation facilities. The Department's preference is for less reliance on emergency accommodation and increased housing options

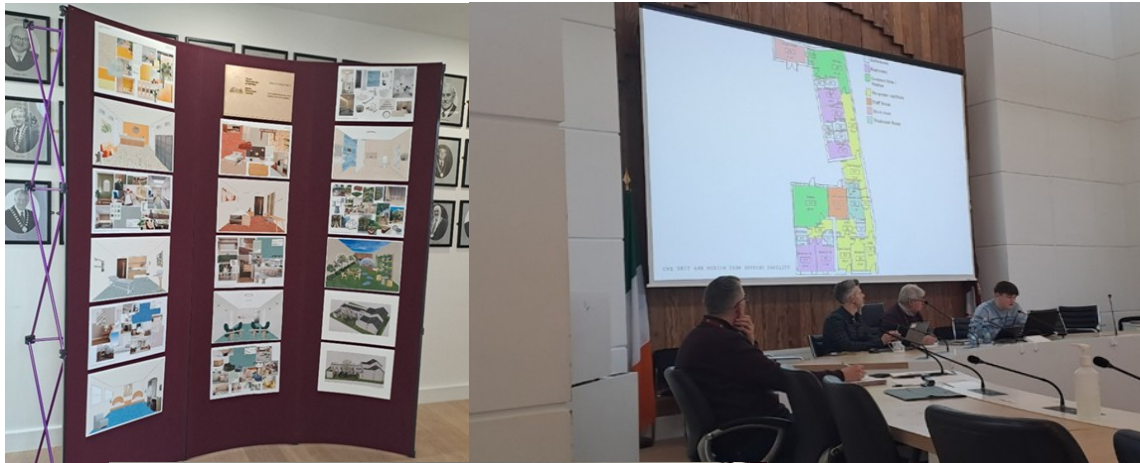
These numbers can and do change daily as people's circumstances change.

MEDIUM TERM SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION/COLD WEATHER RESPONSE FACILITY

The development for medium-term 24/7 co-living supported accommodation in Tuam alongside a Cold Weather Response facility is progressing.

Students from Atlantic Technical University who are completing a degree in Interior Design developed a design for the interior layout, materials, furniture and lighting of the facilities. These designs will support the clients by providing a safe, healthy, comfortable and functional place to improve their quality of life whilst they are in difficult situations. A presentation at the Housing Strategic Policy Committee by the students was well received and included 3d modelling and identification of appropriate products and colour palettes. These proposals have been adopted by the developer for inclusion in the development.

It is anticipated that construction on the site will commence in late 2026.



PRESENTATION BY INTERIOR DESIGN STUDENTS, ATU

LOCAL AUTHORITY HOME LOANS

The Housing Home Loans team has held successful fortnightly information sessions on the Local Authority Home Loan and the Local Authority Purchase and Renovation Loan schemes in Áras an Chontae. The information sessions provided one to one guidance and clarity in relation to the criteria applicable to housing loan applications and the process involved. These sessions will increase awareness of the availability of the loan and reduce the number of invalid applications received.

Further information sessions on housing loans are arranged in the Council offices in Ballinasloe and Gort. Further sessions will be arranged in all Municipal Districts in the coming months.

Information regarding The Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant (used alongside the Local Authority Purchase and Renovation Loan) and Housing Adaptation Grants for Older People and Disabled People will also be available at these sessions. All information sessions are advertised on social media, with an information brochure on loans published and available at all Municipal District offices.



HOUSING LOAN INFORMATION SESSION

LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING RENTS

The Rent Review Team, which was established in late 2024, are currently in the process of reviewing all Rent Accounts back to the date of the previous County-wide rent review which was carried out between 2017 and 2019. To date, 1,009 rent reviews/assessments have been finalised. Of the identified 95 RAS tenancies 34 reviews have been completed along with the review of 975 Local Authority tenancies.

A total of 900 HAP tenancies are also under review, with 298 HAP reviews completed to date.

A review of Galway County Council's Differential Rent Scheme which was implemented in 2017 is underway. It is intended to implement a new Differential Rent Scheme by June 2026.

CAPITAL BUILD PROGRAMME

PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE, FIRE & EMERGENCY & CLIMATE CHANGE

TAKING IN CHARGE

The Taking in Charge target for 2026 - 8 estates Taken in Charge and/or for Bond Release.

The Table A hereunder outlines output for 2026.

Table A – Taking in Charge

<i>Estates Taken in Charge</i>	1
<i>Estates pending Ratification of Minutes</i>	1
<i>Estates for consideration at next MD meeting</i>	0
<i>Bond Release (Estates not Taken in Charge)</i>	0
Total	2

In addition to the above, the following is position @ 05/02/2026

Applications received	3
Estates – advertised for Taking in Charge	0
Estates – Works Complete	3
Estates – TIC Led Estates – Works in Hand	25
Estates – Developer led Estates –	32
<i>Bond Claims</i>	3

The taking in charge of an estate is a process and at times can be quite protracted.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

SAFETY (HAZARD) ALERTS

Two Safety Alerts were issued during the period:

- Excavators used as Cranes
- Lifting operations – External Fatality Case

Please note: The lifting-operations alert refers to a fatality reported nationally within the sector, not an incident within Galway County Council. The alert has been circulated solely for awareness and learning purposes.

All Safety Alerts, including previously issued notices, are available on the Health & Safety section of the Intranet/SharePoint for reference and action by all relevant staff.

WORK AT HEIGHT – FALL PREVENTION CAMPAIGN

Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council
Supports

**The All-Island
Work at Height Campaign**

Falls are Preventable,
16th February – 1st March 2026

Working at Height, Working Together

On the island of Ireland in the last 10 years (2016–2025), there were
68 fatalities
in the construction industry
as a result of working at height.

Galway County Council supports this campaign
by asking all operational teams to

- ✓ Take time to plan work at height.
- ✓ Review risk assessments.
- ✓ Use the right equipment.
- ✓ Stop work immediately if conditions are unsafe.

HSA hseni CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY FEDERATION Social Injuries Ireland

Help Us Save Lives

The joint HSA, HSENI and CIF All Island falls-from-height campaign ran from 16th February to 01st March. The initiative focused on reducing the rising number of serious incidents and fatalities caused by falls, particularly in the construction sector, but relevant to all workplaces. To support the campaign, all relevant departments in GCC were asked to share campaign messages and materials through toolbox talks. The campaign was also highlighted at the recent H&S Seminar.

ANNUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY SEMINARS – OUTDOOR WORKERS



The first of the three annual seminars for outdoor workers took place on 26th February 2026 – in the Loughrea Hotel & SPA, with over 120 attendees.

The event was opened by the Chief Executive and included presentations from:

- Urban Search and Rescue,
- The Road Safety Authority
- Pro-Training - Mental Health First Aid

The session was well received, with positive feedback from attendees

A Reminder of the remaining two H&S seminars dates:

- Thursday 19th March – Connemara Coast Hotel, 9am-2pm (Registration from 8:30am)
- Wednesday 25th March – Ballinasloe Shearwater Hotel, 9am-2pm (Registration from 8:30am)

QUADRA - INTERNAL AUDITS

The 2026, ISO45001 Internal Audit Schedule 2026 has now been published and is available on the Intranet/SharePoint

HEALTH CHECKS 2026

Health Checks for all staff will take place across the county beginning in April/May 2026, delivered by Medmark Occupational Healthcare.

- Dates and Locations will be confirmed and shared shortly
- Booking details will be provided in advance of each session
- All staff will be encouraged to participate in the rollout

More details will follow once the schedule is finalised.



ORANMORE TO TRAIN STATION ACTIVE TRAVEL SCHEME

Section 38 Consultation for the Oranmore to Train Station Active Travel Scheme was published on the 20th of February. The final date for submission of comments and observations is 13th March 2026.



Oranmore to Train Station Active Travel Scheme

R338 Coast Road, Oranmore, Co. Galway

Consultation Period Extended to 13th March 2026

NOTICE – SECTION 38

BALLINASLOE ACTIVE TRAVEL SCHEME



NOTICE – SECTION 38

Ballinasloe R446 Bridge Street Junction to Harris Road Junction Active Travel Scheme, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway

The NTA has approved consultation materials for Section 38 Planning for Ballinasloe Active Travel Scheme, which is now scheduled to commence on the 13th of March 2026.

LOUGHREA ACTIVE TRAVEL SCHEME

Topographical surveys and traffic count surveys have been scheduled to commence in March 2026.

PEDESTRIAN CROSSING IN PORTUMNA

Works commenced on the Pedestrian Crossing on St. Joseph's Road in Portumna on 16th February. The works are envisaged to be completed by April.

PEDESTRIAN CROSSING IN ORANMORE, LIDL



In early February safety improvement works were completed at the entrance to LIDL, including tightening of the access junction and footpath buildout.

BEFORE: CROSSING 11M WIDE, NO TACTILE, POOR INTERVISIBILITY BETWEEN PEDESTRIANS AND CARS EXITING LIDL.



AFTER: NEW FOOTPATH BUILDOUT EXTENDING BEYOND WALL IMPROVED INTERVISIBILITY BETWEEN PEDESTRIANS AND CARS EXITING LIDL AND REDUCED THE CROSSING WIDTH TO 7.5M. BUFF COLOUR TACTILE PROVIDED.

ACTIVE TRAVEL & SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL (SRTS) PROGRAMME UPDATE



R1 SRTS

Scoil Íosa, Oranmore – Construction works are progressing on site.

WORKS UPDATES

- Works resumed on site on Mon 9th March. (Photo attached from Monday)
- Proposed order of works (subject to site constraints) is as follows:
 - Complete Beech grove junction footpath tie-ins,
 - Beech Park junction tightening & raised crossing
 - Hazel Court Junction & Raised crossing including front of school
 - Toucan crossing and tie-ins to existing cycle track facility



DESIGN UPDATES

BEECH GROVE JUNCTION (95% COMPLETE)

- Post works survey has taken place to verify that the junction has been built in accordance with the design.
- An independent Road Safety audit (Stage 3) will take place in all areas of the project once all the works have been completed.

BEECH PARK JUNCTION & HAZEL COURT JUNCTION (DUE TO COMMENCE)

Following recent engagement with Beech Park residents, the consultants have reviewed the junction layouts on Beech Park & Hazel Court junctions and introduced modest adjustments to the widths and radii to align with the larger number of residential houses within in comparison to Beech grove. These refinements continue to comply fully with the recommended standards while ensuring that the key safety objectives are maintained, including moderating vehicle speeds at junction entries and exits and providing priority for vulnerable road users.

CALASANCTIUS COLLEGE & GAELSCOIL DE HIDE

Separate tenders for both closed end Feb, appointment of contractor for one or more schemes possible.

R2 SRTS

SCOIL NA BHFORBACHA

S38 Planning, completion of report and CE Order expected to fulfil Phase 4 requirements.

SCOIL SAILEARNA, INDREABHÁN

NTA Gateway 3 approval has been secured. Phase 4 Section 38 public consultation is scheduled for 6 February.

SCOIL CHROI NAOFA, ATHENRY

S38 public consultation scheduled for 6th March.

GORT COMMUNITY COLLEGE

S38 public consultation scheduled for 6th March.

WALKING CYCLING INDEX

Walking Cycling Index for the Galway Metropolitan Area was launched 3rd March 2026

The Walking Cycling Index for the Galway Metropolitan Area was launched 3rd March 2026. The survey shows strong public backing for expanding walking and cycling infrastructure across the Galway Metropolitan Area.

The findings come from an independent, demographically representative survey of 1,100+ residents aged 16+, covering Oranmore to Bearna and north to Baile Chláir.



- 64% of residents support increased investment in cycling.
- 66% support additional investment in walking and wheeling.
- Support for safer cycling facilities is particularly high: 82% favour protected cycle tracks physically separated from traffic and pedestrians, even if this reduces road space for other vehicles.

These results indicate sustained public demand for improved active travel infrastructure and strong acceptance of reallocating road space to achieve it.

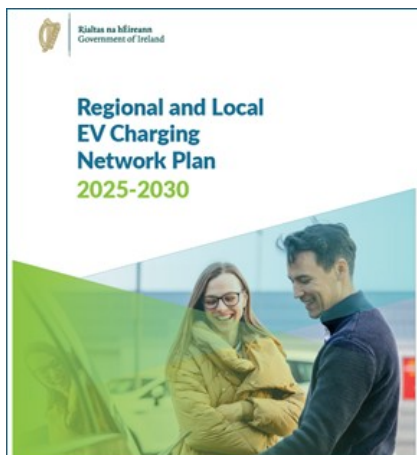
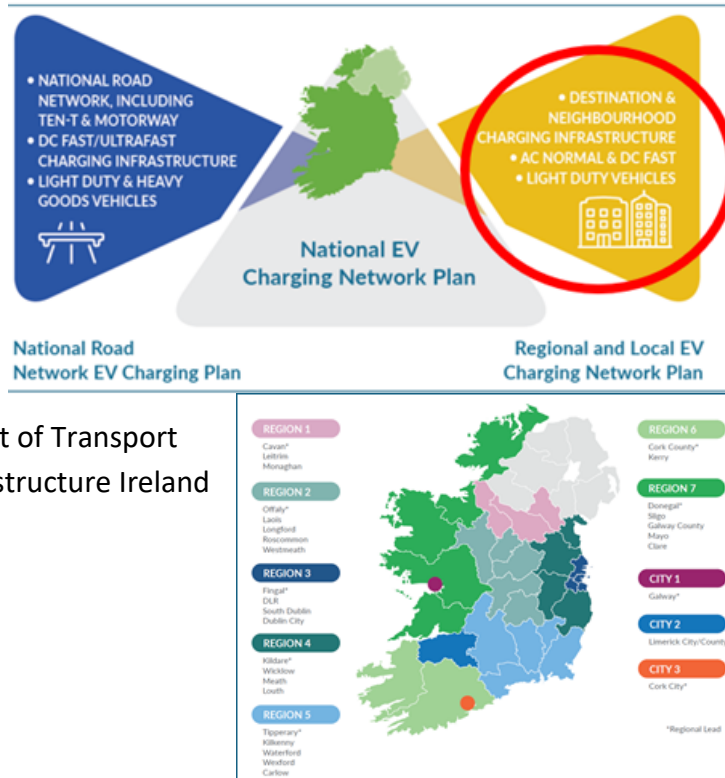
EV CHARGING INFRASTRUCTURE (ZEVI)

Zero Emission Vehicles Ireland (ZEVI) was set up in 2022 to develop and roll out Electric Vehicle Charging

Infrastructure across

Ireland. This will include installation of new public EV charging hubs and the upgrading of existing EV charger locations. ZEVI is

currently part of the Department of Transport but is moving to Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) by end of March 2026.



LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD AND DESTINATION ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY FOR COUNTY GALWAY



One of Zevi's key overarching goals, which is fully aligned with Climate Action Plan 2025 objectives and Alternative Fuel Infrastructure Regulations (AFIR) targets, is to achieve a target of having 30% of Ireland's

private car fleet be electric by 2030. Another notable ZEVI objective is to provide EV charging infrastructure (to include ultra-fast charging) for every 60km of motorway by 2030.



ZEVI is now actively working directly with local

authorities including Galway County Council, and other key stakeholders such as Electric Ireland, Bord Failte, to plan, develop and implement EV charging infrastructure across the region. This EV charging infrastructure delivery will focus on 3 key EV charging scenarios for public use:

1. Neighbourhood Charging - will provide charging for EV owners without access to a driveway. EV charging hubs will be located in public spaces and will facilitate convenient slower off peak EV charging
2. Destination charging - will provide for EV charging while EV users are on the go or staying at a particular destination (shopping centre, hotel, tourist attraction). These may be a combination of fast and ultra-fast charging points depending on user need.
3. Multi-User Need Charging - will provide a combination of both slow and fast EV charging to facilitate both the neighbourhood-type user who wants slower, overnight charging to a destination-type user who needs faster charging while using a local shop or service.

ZEVI has recently published a Regional and Local EV Charging Network Plan 2025-2030 from which Galway County Council is developing its own county-specific Local EV Charging Strategy and Plan. Galway County Council is currently working as part of a regional grouping which includes Counties Clare, Sligo, Mayo and Donegal to develop a County-specific Strategy. One of the unique geographical and user need aspects of this regional grouping is the Wild Atlantic Way (WAW) which connects more remote and less populated locations along the Atlantic seaboard while also experiencing a significant and fluctuating seasonal demand.

Additional information may be found at <https://www.zevi.ie/publications>.

The development of this EV Charging Strategy for Galway County is currently underway – it is anticipated that there will be a draft available in Q2 2026. There will be dedicated Briefings for elected members and SPC teams at Galway County Council which will then be followed a period of public consultation after which the EV Charging Strategy for County Galway will be finalised before moving to the Delivery stage of the project.

SUMMARY OF GRANT ALLOCATIONS FOR ROADS 2026 TO DATE

NATIONAL TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

- €2.1 Million for Active Travel
- €0.5 million for the bus stop programme

TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE IRELAND

- €2.36 million for Greenways and National Roads Active Travel
- €11.38 million in Capital Protection and Renewal
- €4.71 million for the Construction of new roads
- €1.2 million for maintenance protection and Renewal

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT

- €41.41million for Protection and Renewal Allocation
- €4.63 million for New Roads/Road Improvement Allocation

- €1.42 million for Local Improvement schemes
- Including €250k for the Islands

LOCAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEME (LIS)

Galway County Council welcomes the national increase in Local Improvement Scheme (LIS) funding to €17.55 million for 2026, as well as the early launch of the programme which supports more timely delivery of works this year.

Galway County Council received €1,170,380 for 2026 and a further €250,00 was ringfenced for the islands, a total of €1,420,380.

Galway County Council previously had a calling for LIS applications in 2024, and we also continue to hold applications carried forward from the previous round. In total, the Council currently has 225 applications on hand.

The Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht has set a return deadline of close of business on 25th March 2026 for a priority list which is currently being created for consideration under the 2026 allocation.

Recently, we are seeing an increase in the number of applications with estimated costs in the region of €200,000–€300,000. To put this in context, a single project of this scale can be equivalent to the full annual LIS allocation for an entire Municipal District. As a result, even where funding is increased nationally, the delivery capacity per MD is effectively constrained by the number of large-scale applications currently in the system. These higher-cost schemes, while often fully justified due to road length or condition, have a significant impact on overall programme throughput. The presence of several such applications within the same MD may limit the number of schemes that can be advanced in any given year and will contribute to longer waiting periods for applicants, especially where large projects rank highly in the priority list.

Due to the high volume of applications relative to the available national allocation, it is important to highlight that many applicants will still face significant waiting periods before their road can be considered for funding. This is consistent with previous years of the scheme, where demand has exceeded the annual budget. Galway County Council will continue to assess all applications in line with national guidelines, prioritise schemes fairly and transparently based on the agreed criteria, and keep applicants and Councillors informed on progress as the 2026 process advances.

COMMUNITY CLIMATE ACTION

COMMUNITY CLIMATE ACTION FUND

Galway County Council received the highest number of applications in the country for the 2nd round of the Community Climate Action Fund. The applications were assessed in February, and recommended projects were put forward to the Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment for final approval.



This fund provides 100% project funding to support community-led initiatives that build low-carbon, sustainable communities across the county. Communities are currently implementing projects under the 1st round, including the recent installation of 4 water refill stations by Maree Community Development.

The comprehensive outreach programme was continued in February. Tina Ryan, Climate Action Coordinator joined young representatives from World Vision Tanzania and Youth Work Ireland Galway on a panel at the recent National Youth Climate Assembly. They were also joined by Astrid Puentes Riaño, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to a Healthy Environment. The event was organised by the SAUTI Youth Project from Youth Work Ireland Galway.



Tina Ryan also participated as a judge in ATU's Big Nutrition Debate in February, an event which included a focus on evidence-based nutrition practice in the context of sustainability challenges.

ENERGY MANAGEMENT

The Climate Unit continues to work towards establishing an ISO 50001 accredited Energy Management System within the organisation. “Significant Energy Users” have been identified as part of this process including Fleet, Public Lighting, Leisure Centres and other large buildings. NSAI have been appointed to certify the Energy Management System and auditors will be undertaking a Stage 1 audit in March.

UPCOMING CLIMATE ACTION EVENTS

OILEÁIN ÁRANN CLIMATE ENGAGEMENT EVENTS



The Climate Unit has provided funding support to the Comharchumann Fuinneamh Oileáin Árann for upcoming climate engagement events with Jacinta Barrins, giving communities an opportunity to further develop a shared vision for the future while deepening their understanding of climate action. Events will take place on Inis Óirr - 5th March; Inis Meáin - 6th March and Inis Mór - 27th March.

MOUNT LUCAS RETROFITTING RIG

Galway County Council, in collaboration with Mount Lucas Construction Training Campus, will welcome the arrival of this innovative training facility to An Cheathrú Rua (27th April to 1st May) and Clifden (5th to 8th May). The mobile unit will provide an opportunity for members of the local community to access accredited training and practical demonstrations right on their doorstep.

FIRE & EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

OPERATIONS

Delivery is expected shortly of a new rescue boat to cover the area north of the Salmon Weir in Galway City. The boat has been funded externally and will initially be operated by GFRS and Galway Civil Defence. Negotiations with the OPW are at an advanced stage in relation to mooring the operationally ready boat at the Salmon Weir (cost to be borne by Galway City Council). This resource will significantly improve the safety of GFRS personnel and the public in an area that has seen a significant increase in incidents over the last number of years.



NEW RESCUE BOAT - SAMON WEIR

CAPITAL PROJECTS

LOUGHREA FIRE STATION

A mini-competition for the appointment of a Main Contractor was issued via e-tenders on

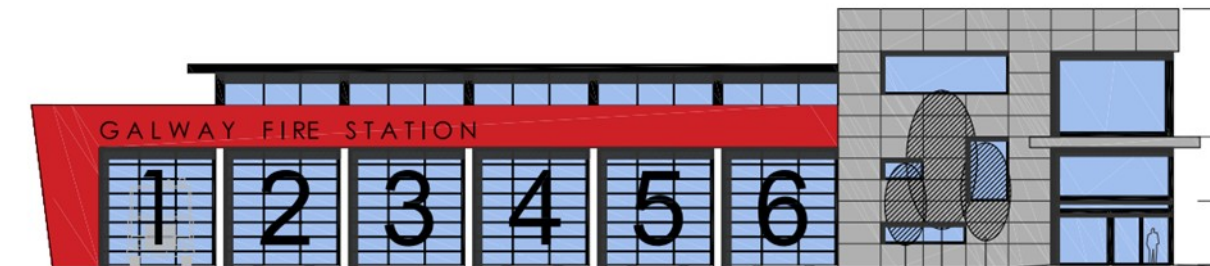


the 30 January 2025, with a deadline of the 06 March 2026. The deadline was extended by one week until 13 March 2026. It is hoped to appoint the Main Contractor in mid-April 2026.

PROPOSED NEW FIRE STATION LOUGHREA

HEADQUARTERS AND GALWAY CITY FIRE STATION

A request for permission to appoint a design team was submitted to the NDFEM and additional information requested was submitted. A decision is still awaited. Discussions are ongoing in relation to environmental issues and variations to the City Development Plan with the next meeting scheduled for mid-March 2026.



PROPOSED NEW HEADQUARTERS AND CENTRAL FIRE STATION GALWAY CITY

PREVENTION

The information in the following is based on the February 2026 figures. The Fire Authority received 24 Fire Safety Certificate applications and issued decisions on 11 applications. 19 Disability Access Certificate applications were received, and decisions made on 2 applications. 5 new licences were issued in February, and 21 inspections were conducted.

TRAINING

NATIONAL URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE (USAR) PROJECT

To date 13 personnel have undertaken the USAR 1 Technician Course at the Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service Learning and Development College, Cookstown. To date 11

personnel have undertaken the USAR 2 Technician Course (2 weeks) at the Merseyside FRS Learning and Development College, Liverpool. A further 2 students are scheduled to attend the USAR 2 Technician Course in Liverpool in April 2026 and it is hoped to get an additional 4 places on Upcoming USAR 1 Technician Courses. Specialist training will also commence in mid-2026.

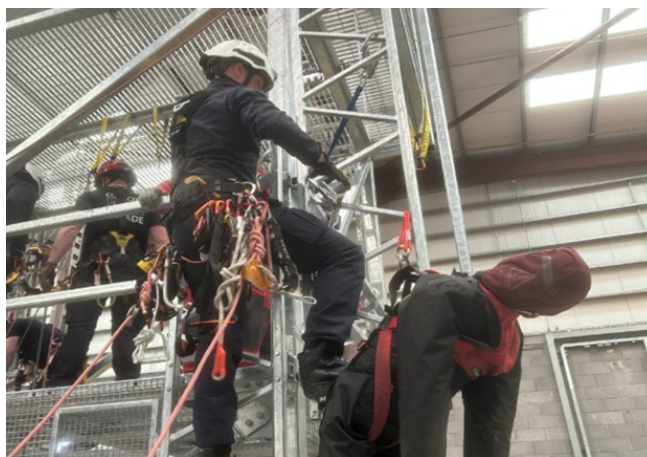
GFRS conducted the first ever national USAR Rope Access and Confined Space Rescue 1 Course at Carnmore from the 02nd to 06th March 2026. GFRS have also produced national guidance and training documentation for rescue from height and confined space rescue which is being reviewed at the next national USAR project meeting at the end of March 2026. Additional USAR RACSR 1 courses will be conducted in Q3 and Q4.

USAR specialist equipment and vehicle deliveries are scheduled to commence in early Q2 2026 with an anticipated go-live date of November 2026. GFRS have placed a contract for the supply of remotely operated vehicles and sensors. Further national contracts for rescue

from height and confined space rescue equipment will be placed by the end of March.



NATIONAL USAR RACSR 1 COURSE TRAINING AT CARNMORE



COMPLETED TRAINING

GCC ANNUAL SAFETY SEMINAR

- Attendees: 1 x senior officer and 1 x full time junior officer.
- Location: Loughrea Hotel and Spa.
- Purpose: GFRS gave an overview of the fire service national capacity development programme. In particular an overview of the new USAR and High-Capacity Pumping Hubs to be based in Galway City

NATIONAL URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE 1 COURSE

- Attendees: retained & full-time fire service personnel.
- Location: Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service Learning & Development Centre, Cookstown, Co. Tyrone.
- Purpose: to assist fire authorities in developing and updating their ability to manage an incident involving significant structural collapse. This module provides the attending personnel with the initial core skills and knowledge necessary to effectively use USAR tools and equipment at such incidents.



URBAN SEARCH & RESCUE TRAINING BUILDING

NDFEM URBAN SEARCH & RESCUE 2 COURSE

- Attendees: 2 x retained & 2x full-time fire service personnel.
- Location: Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service Learning & Development Centre, Liverpool, UK.
- Purpose: to assist fire authorities in developing and updating their ability to manage an incident involving significant structural collapse and other USAR type incidents. This module builds on the initial core skills and knowledge acquired by learners on the corresponding Technician 1 course.

NDFEM COMPRESSED AIR FOAM SYSTEM COURSE

- Attendees: full time fire service personnel.
- Location: Tullamore Fire Station.
- Purpose: The aim of the course is to assist fire authorities in developing and updating their ability to deliver operator training for compressed air foam systems, through the provision of a course for instructors who are involved in providing training locally to brigades.

C CLASS DRIVING LICENCE TRAINING

- Location: Galway city.
- Details: training delivered to firefighters so that they will be deemed competent to drive C Class category vehicles (e.g. fire appliances).
- Attendees: 1 x retained firefighters



ND FEM MANAGING FIRE SERVICES INCIDENTS MODULE 1 COURSE

- Attendees: 1 x acting Driver Mechanic
- Location: Tullamore Fire Training Centre.
- Details: 5-day training course
- Aim: to assist fire authorities in their ability to deliver efficient, effective and safe services by developing fire service officers with the relevant and necessary skills and knowledge. This course facilitates the participants to effectively develop and fulfil the command and officer-ship roles assigned to them at small-scale fire service incidents.

ACCREDITED QQI USING BREATHING APPARATUS INITIAL WEARERS COURSE

- Attendees: 7 x GFRS retained firefighters, 2 x Leitrim retained firefighters, 1 x Sligo fire service retained firefighter, 2 x Cavan retained firefighters.
- Location: Sligo Fire Training Centre.
- Details: 10-day training course.
- This was a GFRS led training course on behalf of LASNTG.
- Aim: to provide the learners (trainee firefighters) with the skills, knowledge and competency necessary to wear Breathing Apparatus. This course is intended to develop the learners in the discharge of their roles as firefighters and to assist their Fire Authority in its function as a fire and rescue service.



CLASS PHOTO OF TRAINEES & INSTRUCTIONAL TEAM WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE USING BREATHING APPARATUS INITIAL WEARERS COURSE

PHOTO OF TRAINING EXERCISE DURING THE USING BREATHING APPARATUS INITIAL WEARERS COURSE



ACTIVITIES

Units provided medical/first aid cover at various events across the City and County in support of their communities.

Galway County Council chaired the first Major Emergency Management Voluntary Emergency Services Group (MEMVESG) in Galway. This group includes all voluntary response groups in our MEM Region of Galway, Mayo and Roscommon. Galway Civil Defence were represented by their Civil Defence Officer and Assistant Civil Defence Officer.

Three volunteers from Galway Civil Defence assisted in delivering scenario-based training to first Year Medical students at the University of Galway, Medical Building, University Hospital, Galway.

Galway Civil Defence received an award from the HSE Mid-West Region, along with Civil Defence Units and other services from the region, for providing assistance during the Severe Weather Events of January 2025. Galway assisted by transporting dialysis patients from the Tipperary area to University Hospital Limerick. Civil Defence Units across the effected region experienced extraordinary demand on its services.

TRAINING

One volunteer is in the final stage of qualifying as an Emergency Medical Technician with Civil Defence. The final phase of training was completed at the Civil Defence College, Roscrea, followed by placements with the National Ambulance Service and in the Emergency Department at UHG. This is an intensive programme that required significant weekend training at various locations.

One volunteer completed a four-day Bicycle Operator Instructor Course at Ratra House, Phoenix Park, Dublin. This qualification will allow training to commence for volunteers in Ballinasloe, Loughrea and Galway City, where bicycles can be advantageous for operations in specific areas and events.

Two Floodwater Responder Instructors were recertified by Rescue 3 in Glendalough, Co. Wicklow, as part of the national three-day recertification programme. All our instructors are now recertified for the next two years.

A presentation was delivered to volunteers by An Garda Síochána covering Child Protection, CISM, the Civil Defence Volunteer Charter, Crime Scenes and Narcotics. Sixty volunteers from across the five Galway Civil Defence Units attended this very informative and educational session. The presenting Garda is also a member of Galway Civil Defence and is extremely familiar with Civil Defence policy and planning.

Three instructors recertified in “Food Safety and You” training with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI), bringing all instructors into line with the national recertification requirements in this discipline.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & ENTERPRISE

LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE GALWAY

LEO Galway is the first stop shop for anyone seeking information or advice on starting, growing, or expanding a business in both Galway City and County.

This month LEO Galway continued to support small and micro businesses through their range of financial/soft supports and advisory services outlined below:

TRAINING COURSES & PROGRAMMES

SHORT TRAINING COURSES

To assist the small business community in meeting the challenges of the business world, LEO Galway provides a wide range of high-quality training supports which are tailored to meet specific business requirements.

MARCH SCHEDULE:

3rd March	Managing cashflow for your business
4th March	AI Tools For Business
10th March	Presentation & Pitching Skills for Your Business
12th March	Grant Aid and Funding 101 Workshop
18th & 25th March	How to Create a Podcast
31st March	Understanding Financials for Business Planning



BUSINESS ADVISORY CLINIC

Our business advisory sessions enable clients to speak with one of our business advisors who will offer general advice to help on starting a new business or expanding on an existing business. Our advisor will discuss LEO related supports, training, mentoring and any other relevant services that may be available to aspiring or existing business promoters.



A business advisory is a free 30-minute consultation and runs weekly throughout the year. Our sessions are both in person and by phone. Please keep an eye on our website for the next upcoming available dates.

MENTORING



Our mentoring programme is designed to match up the knowledge, skills, insights, and entrepreneurial capability of experienced business practitioners with clients who need practical and strategic one to one advice and guidance. The mentor contributes independent, informed observation and advice to aid decision making.

The Mentor Programme is open to both new and existing businesses located within the Galway region. Areas of mentoring include business strategy, financial planning, market research, marketing & promotion, distribution, exporting, production planning, social media. A mentoring session consists of 3 hours support from the mentor.

START YOUR OWN BUSINESS PROGRAMME (SYOB)

LEO Galway organizes a SYOB programme monthly with up to 16 participants on each programme. The March SYOB evening programme commenced on 2nd of March 2026 and will finish on March 26th. We will be running our next Start Your Own Business course in April.

IDEA TO IMPACT

LEO Galway is currently running an Idea to Impact programme (formerly known as Lean Launch). This programme is designed for individuals at the early stages of developing a business idea or those seeking guidance to increase customers and sales. Participants receive expert support in conducting practical market research and real-world sales activities to determine the viability of their concept.

Market research is a critical component of any successful enterprise, and this hands-on programme ensures that participants gain the insights needed to validate their ideas and make informed decisions about their business potential. The current programme started in October 2025 and will continue until April 2026.



THE STRATEGIC GROWTH PROGRAMME FOR BUSINESS LEADERS

The Strategic Growth Programme is a dynamic 12-month programme designed for ambitious business leaders seeking to accelerate growth. Limited to just 12 participants, it combines expert-led workshops, personalised strategy sessions, and practical implementation support. The first phase focuses on building strategic foundations, while the second drives execution through peer accountability and collaboration.

By the end of the programme, participants will have strengthened their strategic capabilities, scaled their ventures, and joined a powerful network of growth-focused leaders. This programme started in November 2025 in the Galway County Council offices.

UPCOMING EVENTS

STUDENT ENTERPRISE PROGRAMME FINALS

The Galway County Final of the Student Enterprise Programme will take place on March 12th, 2026 at the Clayton Hotel, Galway. This event marks the conclusion of the county-level competition in which second-level students showcase the mini-enterprises they have developed throughout the academic year. The Galway County Final serves as a significant platform for celebrating innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship among young people in the region. The event also highlights the ongoing commitment of the Local Enterprise Office Galway to fostering enterprise education and encouraging future business leaders. County winners will progress to the National Final, scheduled for May 7th, 2026, where student teams from across Ireland compete for national titles. The programme, involving over 30,000 students annually, is recognised as Ireland's largest student enterprise initiative and aims to foster practical entrepreneurship skills among young people.



PAST EVENTS

LOCAL ENTERPRISE WEEK 2026

Local Enterprise Week 2026 took place from March 2nd to 6th. The week brought a diverse range of events and training opportunities aimed at supporting entrepreneurs, startups and established SMEs across the county. This year's offerings placed a strong emphasis on Lean, Working in a Multi-Generational Workplace, AI, Digital Capability and includes a Pop-Up Gaeltacht and Craft Fair and much more. Events were delivered across both city and county along with online events. The following in person events took place:

GOOGLE X EVENT - LOCAL ENTERPRISE WEEK NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT

The Google X Event, held as part of Local Enterprise Week, is a national development summit designed to empower Irish SMEs to accelerate growth through the strategic use of artificial intelligence. Hosted at Google's Foundry in Dublin, the summit brings together industry experts, business leaders, and innovation specialists for a day of keynote talks, practical workshops, live AI demonstrations, and peer-to-peer learning. The event equips businesses at all stages of their digital journey with the insights, tools, and confidence needed to harness AI for sustainable, long-term growth.



STEPHANIE COLOMBANI (LEO GALWAY) ATTENDED GOOGLE X EVENT AT THE FOUNDRY, GOOGLE IRELAND, GORDON HOUSE, BARROW STREET, DUBLIN 4

LUNCH & LEARN EVENTS IN TUAM, CLIFDEN & BALLINASLOE

LEO Galway hosted Growth and Networking Lunch and Learns across three locations in Galway including Tuam, Clifden and Ballinasloe. This event highlighted the LEO services and supports available to those looking to start or grow their business in Galway. The public got the chance to meet the LEO Galway team to discuss their business needs.



EOIN CONNAIRE (LEO GALWAY), URSULA KELLY (CORMAC TAGGING), SARAH ROARTY (ACTION TUAM) AND SANDRA REGAN (LEO GALWAY) AT THE GROWTH & NETWORKING LUNCH AND LEARN IN TUAM

EOIN CONNAIRE & MAIREAD HERLIHY, LEO GALWAY, LYNN DONNELLY, BALLINASLOE ENTERPRISE HUB, GORDON O'CONNOR & COLM HEALY, MACANTA NUTRITION





ATTENDEES ENJOYING THE GROWTH & NETWORKING LUNCH AND LEARN IN BALLINASLOE ENTERPRISE HUB



DIARMAID O FÁTHARTA AND FINBAR MCHUGH WITH EOIN CONNAIRE (LEO GALWAY) AT THE LUNCH AND LEARN AT THE WOODFIELD HOTEL, MAIN STREET CLIFDEN, CO. GALWAY ON 5TH MARCH 2026.

POP-UP CRAFT FAIR: SEACHTAIN NA GAEILGE

This three-day took place from March 2nd to 4th in Galway County Council. The event brought talented local makers, food producers, and crafters from across Galway together, highlighting the richness of our creative community and the vibrancy of the Irish language. Visitors browsed unique handmade goods, enjoyed locally produced food, and met the entrepreneurs behind some of Galway's most exciting small businesses, all in a welcoming, bilingual environment.



MAIRTIN O'DONNCHADHA, LIAM CONNEALLY CHIEF EXECUTIVE GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL, LAURA MAYEM MARIA HEENAN, MAIRIN NI DHONNCHA, DAVID COLLINS CATHAOIRLEACH OF GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL, THOMAS PÓL, MAEVE GALLAGHER, SARAH NILAND, AINE NI DHROIGHNEAN, SEAN MAHONEY, MARTHA BEGLEY SHADE AND KEELAN SHADE.

MIND THE GAP: THRIVING IN A MULTI-GENERATIONAL WORKPLACE:

This event took place on March 3rd in Portershed, Galway and was facilitated by Sinéad D'Arcy of Future Roots. It focused on moving beyond stereotypes to understand the values, motivations, and working styles of each generation. It provided practical ways individuals and organizations can bridge generational differences, leverage diverse strengths, and create teams that work better together. Topics included reviewing the different life stages, experiences and expectations which shape the way people communicate, make decisions, and collaborate at work, and where friction (and opportunity) can arise. The event included a panel discussion featuring voices from Gen X, Millennial and Gen Z perspectives.



MICHAEL FITZGERALD (ONEPAGECRM), CAROLINE MCDONAGH (HEAD OF ENTERPRISE, LEO GALWAY), SINEAD D'ARCY (FUTURE ROOTS), MARIE DONNELLAN (PLATFORM94), MAIREAD HERLIHY (LEO GALWAY) & ORLA CANNEY (OCC CONSULTING)

LEAN FIRST: YOUR FOUNDATION FOR SMARTER, DIGITAL READY WORK

This event took place on March 5th, at the BIA Innovator Campus in Athenry, Co. Galway. It focused on how digital tools and AI were transforming business operations, highlighting the importance of Lean thinking as the essential first step before adopting new technologies. Delivered by experienced Lean consultants, the workshop guided SMEs through strengthening processes, identifying inefficiencies, exploring practical digital and AI tools, and learning from real SME case studies that demonstrated time savings and reduced rework.

The event was aimed at owners, managers, and teams within small and medium-sized enterprises. The session required no prior Lean or technical knowledge and provided participants with clearer insights into their operations, quick-win improvements, and a roadmap to support future digital readiness through the LEO Lean for Business programme.

SELLING AT SCALE FOR AMBITIOUS SMES

This workshop took place on March 5th in Platform 94, Galway and was delivered by Dr. Maria Coakley through the Skillnet Innovation Exchange. It supported SMEs seeking to move from founder-led or ad-hoc sales to a scalable, repeatable, value-driven sales process. The interactive session introduced practical tools and frameworks on pipeline management, forecasting, repeatable sales processes, account management, sales-marketing alignment, and building high-performing sales teams. The event was aimed at SME founders, CEOs, and

sales leaders; the workshop equipped participants with clear frameworks and an action plan to strengthen their sales systems and support sustainable growth.

DIGITAL FUTURES (& LAUNCH OF TUAM STRATEGIC PLAN 2025 – 2030):

This event took place on March 6th in the Ard Rí House Hotel, Tuam. The session introduced participants to the unique capabilities that AI could offer their businesses and included insights from Danny McCoy on the impact of digital innovation. Attendees explored the practical applications of leading AI tools, including ChatGPT, Google Gemini, Microsoft Copilot, Claude, and Perplexity, gaining an overview of how these technologies could support and enhance business operations.



LIAM CONNELLY, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL, KENNY DEERY, WESTERN REGIONAL ENTERPRISE PLAN PROGRAMME MANAGER, CAROLINE MCDONAGH, HEAD OF ENTERPRISE, LEO GALWAY, DANIEL HARDIMAN, BOARD MEMBER, ACTION TUAM, URSULA KELLY, CHAIRPERSON, ACTION TUAM AND CORMAC TAGGING, MANAGING DIRECTOR, CLLR. OLLIE TURNER, GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL, LIAM HANRAHAN, DIRECTOR OF SERVICES, GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL

WOMEN EMPOWERING WOMEN: CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY:

The International Women's Day event took place on March 6th at the Salthill Hotel, in partnership with Network Galway. The morning offered an opportunity for connection, conversation, and networking among women from across Galway's business community. The special guest, Dr. Ruth Mackey, Co-founder, Chief Science Officer, and COO of Mbyronics Ltd, shared insights from her work in optical hardware for space-based internet infrastructure and her academic background in physics and adaptive optics. The event also featured a fireside chat, Women Leading the Way, during which speakers Cróna Esler, Tara Canning, and Elma Carew discussed their professional journeys, experiences in communications, health and wellness, and HR leadership, and offered



practical guidance for women in business. This event provided an engaging and inspiring celebration of women's leadership and achievement.

ELMA CAREW, FRACTIONAL HR PARTNER, CRÓNÁ ESLER, CRÓNÁ ESLER PR & COMMUNICATIONS, STEPHANIE COLOMBANI, LEO GALWAY, TARA CANNING, DR. CLARES APOTHECARY & CLINIC, RUTH MACKEY MBRYONICS LTD, AND SHARON KELLY, PRESIDENT OF NETWORK GALWAY

DESIGN MINGLE

Design Mingle took place on February 13th in CREW. This event featured award-winning creative producers Luke and Jake Morgan of Morgan Brothers, a West-of-Ireland production company specializing in film, animation and music.

Morgan Brothers are known for ambitious yet emotionally grounded work that centers on love, character and authentic storytelling. They are proudly bilingual and passionate about the Irish language, creating Irish stories for the world through music-driven, emotionally resonant narratives often infused with comedy.

Their short film, *The Boat*, executive produced by Brendan Gleeson, was Academy Award-qualified and won the Grand Prix Best Irish Short at Cork International Film Festival and Best Irish Short at Foyle Film Festival. Their Irish-language feature, *Froggie*, premiered at Galway Film Fleadh, screened at Santa Barbara International Film Festival, and won Best Film at Worcester Film Festival.



PARTICIPANTS ENJOYING DESIGN MINGLE

LUKE & JAKE MORGAN (MORGAN BROTHERS)



SOCIAL MEDIA STATISTICS:

Facebook:

8.6k likes

Reach year-to-date: 20.5k

LinkedIn:

1.3k followers

Reach year-to-date: 2.1k

Instagram:

3.7k followers

Reach year-to-date: 8.7k

X (Twitter):

5913 followers

HEALTH TECH CAMPUS – FEASIBILITY APPLICATION

The life sciences working group of the West Regional Enterprise Plan have held several meetings since June 2025. One clear objective of this group is to understand industry needs within the sector and work to addressing those needs. One established need to propel Ireland and Galway forward is the delivery of a Campus. It was agreed at a meeting in County Hall on October 29th last that Galway County Council would lead an application to Enterprise Ireland for feasibility funding to scope this. Below is an extract from the application:

‘The goal is to investigate the commercial case and develop a roadmap for creating a future-focused Health Tech Campus to address the needs of existing indigenous Irish tech startups, and future-proof our thriving ecosystem in anticipation of emerging projects (e.g. from BioInnovate, ARC Hub). A world class Centre of Excellence will attract and serve as a collision space for start-ups and established companies – both from Ireland and overseas – who seek access to Galway’s renowned MedTech ecosystem, facilities and expertise. MedLink Galway further connects professionals, researchers, and entrepreneurs, reinforcing the region’s international reputation as a centre of MedTech innovation’.



An application seeking €50,000 in funding was approved by Enterprise Ireland on 17th February 2026 with matched funding of €12,500 provided by Galway County Council. This will allow the working group under industry Chairperson Dave McKernan and Regional Enterprise Plan Programme Manager Kenny Deery progress with this project over the coming six months.

VIADUCT INTERREG EUROPEAN PROJECT HOSTED IN COUNTY HALL AS PART OF THE WEST REGIONAL ENTERPRISE PLAN WORK PROGRAMME.

Cathaoirleach David Collins and CEO Liam Conneally played host to the Viaduct Interreg project group including representatives from Spain, Romania, France, Lithuania, Italy, Finland and Ireland through the Western Development Commission.



The VIADUCT Interreg project, which sits within the Western Regional Enterprise Plan as a policy influencer, aims to boost the creation and growth of technology-based spin-offs by valorising public research across Europe. With a €1.8 million budget and seven regional partners, it addresses key barriers like low entrepreneurial culture and limited funding by improving policy instruments. Through

inter-regional learning, workshops, and expert advice from the Association of European Science and Technology Transfer Professionals (ASTP), the project facilitates knowledge transfer and sustainable business models. Key achievements include refining regional strategies and enhancing support mechanisms, such as innovation vouchers and dedicated transfer staff, to turn public research into market ready ventures.

This two-day event showcased PorterShed, Platform 94, University of Galway, BioInnovate and the Atlantic Technological University. Fourteen policy outcomes have been agreed which will help influence National Enterprise Policy through the Regional Enterprise Plans.



REGENERATION SCHEMES

ATHENRY

ATHENRY LIBRARY

The Regeneration Team have completed the design for the potential redevelopment of the Local Area Office site into a community library. The facility will provide conferencing suites, study and reading areas, maker spaces, and a full range of contemporary library services.





PORTUMNA

ABBEY STREET DEVELOPMENT SITE

The Regeneration Team have completed the design for the potential development of the site as a Centre for Excellence for the Visual Arts. The development would include rentable accommodation, galleries and exhibition space, learning facilities, sculpture and creative studios, along with the renovation and adaptive re-use of the protected structures fronting onto Abbey Street.



HERITAGE OFFICE

DOCUMENT THE FOOD HERITAGE OF KILLIMOR

Angela Geoghegan and Nuala McGann have spent the past seven years researching and compiling a book on the food heritage of the parish of Killimor. Throughout the project, they have worked closely with the Heritage Office of Galway County Council, who supported the

research and development of the publication. Their work involved gathering photographs, documents, oral histories and local records, and organising this material into a detailed and comprehensive book that reflects the unique food traditions of the parish. They have shown



great dedication and care in ensuring the accuracy and quality of the material. Their commitment has ensured that an important part of Killimor's heritage will be preserved for future generations. It is hoped that the book will be published in the coming months.

ANGELA GEOGHEGAN & NUALA MCGANN
COLLECTING AND DOCUMENTING THE FOOD HERITAGE
OF KILLIMOR. PHOTO CREDIT: MARIE MANNION

MEETING OF GALWAY COUNTY HERITAGE & BIODIVERSITY FORUM

The County Heritage and Biodiversity Forum met on 2nd March in the Council Chamber to review progress across a wide range of heritage, biodiversity, conservation, and community-led initiatives. The meeting included a detailed presentation by Tomás MacConmara, MacConmara Heritage Consultants on the recent countywide oral heritage audit and its ten-year strategic plan, highlighting significant collections, preservation needs, and opportunities for public access and long-term governance. Updates were provided on the delivery of 2025 heritage projects, ongoing conservation works, and multiple funding applications submitted for 2026 programmes. The Forum also reviewed preparations for major upcoming events, including the National Famine Commemoration in May and the county's contributions to the EU Presidency Culture Programme later in the year. Reports from members outlined active work underway in archaeology, environmental protection, biodiversity, research, education, and community engagement. The meeting concluded with confirmation of the remaining Forum dates for 2026.

TOMÁS MACCONMARA GIVING A PRESENTATION
TO GALWAY COUNTY HERITAGE AND
BIODIVERSITY FORUM ON THE ORAL HERITAGE
AUDIT FOR COUNTY GALWAY. PHOTO CREDIT:
MARIE MANNION



HERITAGE COUNCIL COMMUNITY GRANTS SCHEME 2026

The Heritage Office continues to actively support community and voluntary groups preparing applications for the Heritage Council's Community Heritage Grant Scheme, providing guidance,

project advice, and letters of support to strengthen submissions. The scheme offers grants ranging from €500 to €25,000, with most awards typically falling between €10,000 and €15,000, and supports approximately 150 organisations annually on a competitive basis. Eligible project types include conservation works, biodiversity initiatives, digital heritage projects, oral history and archival recording, specialised equipment purchases, surveys and management plans, and workshops or training events that build heritage skills. This broad remit allows communities to undertake projects that preserve, document, celebrate, and enhance local heritage, with the Heritage Office playing a key role in helping groups develop high-quality, deliverable proposals that meet national criteria. The closing date for this grant funding stream is 20 March 2026. For more information please see: <https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/funding/community-heritage-grant-scheme-2>

MEETING OF THE GALWAY COUNTY ICAN GROUPS IN ÁRAS AN CHONTAE TO REVIEW THE NEWLY UPDATED WEBSITE AND PROJECT UPDATES



A meeting took place in G01, Áras an Chontae of Galway County, Irish Community Archive Groups in County Galway and the National Museum of Ireland in relation to reviewing the newly updated websites and projects and initiatives being undertaken by the groups. In attendance were members from Maigh Cuillin Heritage, Baile Chláir Heritage Group, Milltown Heritage, Moylough Heritage, Killereerin Heritage, Skehana Heritage, Abbey and District Heritage, Woodlawn Heritage and Galway County Community Archaeology Project.

MEETING OF THE GALWAY COUNTY ICAN GROUPS IN ÁRAS AN CHONTAE TO REVIEW THE NEWLY UPDATED WEBSITE. PHOTO CREDIT: MARIE MANNION

PLANNING

COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN/DEVELOPMENT PLAN VARIATION

CE Report on submissions received for Variation No. 1 was considered and agreed by Members on 16th February 2026. Variation No. 1 came into force on 16/02/2026.

At this stage, it is expected that the CDP Review will commence in June 2026.

CDP MONITORING REPORT

Currently being drafted by Forward Planning Team.

MONITORING OF GALWAY COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2022-2028

Ongoing monitoring of planning permissions, in particular with respect to residential planning applications. Policy objectives also actively being monitored.

RZLT (RESIDENTIAL ZONED LAND TAX)

Galway County Council has published two separate maps regarding RZLT in 2026: the annual final map and the draft annual map.

1. The Annual Final Map -Published on the 31/01/2026

Scoped-in sites mapped in the annual final map will be liable for RZLT from the 1st of February 2026.

Landowners liable for RZLT will be able to register with Revenue from January 2026. Landowners will be required to make an annual return to Revenue and pay any RZLT liable by the 23rd of May 2026.

If the landowner feels the economic activity that is taking place on their land does not reflect the current zoning, they may seek a rezoning of their lands (Rezoning Request). Such requests must be made to Galway County Council by the 1st of April 2026. Rezoning requests may provide an opportunity for an exemption from the RZLT on the Final Map.

2. The Annual Draft Map - published on 1st February 2026

Scoped-in sites mapped on the annual draft map will not be liable for RZLT until 2027.

Submissions can be made on the annual draft map to exclude or include parcels from being liable to RZLT for 2027 by 1st April 2026.

Submissions on the Annual Draft Map may be made as follows:

In writing and addressed to: "RZLT", The Planning Department, Galway County Council, Áras an Chontae, Prospect Hill, Galway, H91H6KX

or

- By email to: rzlt@galwaycoco.ie;

or

- Online by visiting: <https://consult.galway.ie>;

not later than 1 April 2026.

VACANCY SURVEY

Vacancy survey is now underway.

URDF

Carpark design options and associated construction costs currently being considered by consultants and Forward Planning Team. Discussions with the NTA with respect to the carpark design have also taken place.

Funding options for the construction of the carpark are being explored.

Final Business Case for main rail works contract are currently being considered by the Department.

URDF Call 4 expected to be announced shortly

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

In person meeting and site visit with consultants Grant Thornton and Gravis Planning took place on Monday 02 March 2026. In person stakeholder engagement took place on Tuesday 03rd March. Stakeholder workshops scheduled for 23 March 2026.

BRIARHILL URBAN FRAMEWORK PLAN LANDS

Works under way to agree City/County Position Paper with respect to Eastern Environs LTP and Area Based Transport Assessment.

JOINT RETAIL STRATEGY

JRS now endorsed by both Local Authorities.

DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTIONS

Review of Development Contributions Scheme has commenced. Awaiting feedback with respect to spending priorities for each Directorate.

CAHEROYN URBAN FRAMEWORK PLAN (ATHENRY)

Works progressing to deliver draft Caheroyn Urban Framework (Athenry). Discussions ongoing with Irish Rail regarding dis-used level crossing.

BIODIVERSITY

BIODIVERSITY EDUCATION & AWARENESS: WORLD BOOK DAY BARN OWL EVENT AT ORANMORE LIBRARY

As part of World Book Day celebrations, the Galway County Council Biodiversity Office, in partnership with the Galway Library Service, delivered a children's biodiversity education event at Oranmore Library for 2nd and 4th class pupils from Scoil Iosa. The event was

formally opened by the Cathaoirleach of Galway County Council, Cllr David Collins, who welcomed the young people to the library and marked the importance of reading and learning within the library setting. The event centred on a reading of *Golden Wings – A Tale of an Irish Barn Owl* by author Susan O'Donohoe, combining storytelling with age-appropriate ecological learning and creative engagement.

Pupils from 2nd class also shared their own barn owl drawings during the session, enhancing participation and learning outcomes. Liz Kane from the Galway Library Service presented prizes to the students, recognising their engagement and creative contributions. The event was supported by Aisling Mitchell and the staff at the Oranmore Library branch, whose assistance was central to the smooth delivery of the event.

The initiative promoted awareness of Ireland's native biodiversity, with a particular focus on the barn owl, a red-listed species. Older pupils engaged with the factual section of the book, which explores barn owl ecology, behaviour and conservation challenges. The event also highlighted links between biodiversity, heritage and the built environment, reinforcing the role of planning and conservation in supporting protected species.

This event, and the reprint of *Golden Wings*, was supported by the Local Biodiversity Action Fund from the National Parks and Wildlife Service.



PHOTOS: STUDENTS FROM SCOIL IOSA, ORANMORE LEARNING ABOUT BARN OWLS WITH GOLD WINGS AUTHOR SUSAN O'DONOHUE AS PART OF WORLD BOOK DAY CELEBRATIONS.

HOP TO IT COMMON FROG SURVEY – COUNTY GALWAY (2026)

The Biodiversity Office issued a public press release in March 2026 to support the Irish Peatland Conservation Council (IPCC) Hop To It Frog Survey and encourage public participation across County Galway. The campaign seeks to address a significant data gap, as only five frog records were submitted from County Galway in 2025, limiting understanding of the local status of the Common Frog.

The press release highlights the importance of citizen science in building robust biodiversity datasets and positions the Common Frog (*Rana temporaria*) as a key biological indicator of environmental health. The species is Ireland’s only native frog and is legally protected under the EU Habitats Directive and the Wildlife Acts, as well as being listed as Vulnerable at a European level.

Galway County Council is supporting the IPCC in promoting the 2026 Hop To It Frog Survey, which records sightings of frogspawn, tadpoles, froglets and adult frogs. Members of the public are encouraged to submit records directly to the IPCC or via the National Biodiversity Data Centre, strengthening both local and national biodiversity monitoring.



RTE 100 News Sport Entertainment Business Lifestyle Culture Gaelige | Player

News > Connacht > Politics Regional Ireland Middle East Climate Nuacht World Progr

'Hop to it' - people urged to record frog sightings in Co Galway

Updated / Tuesday, 3 Mar 2026 11:35



The common frog is legally protected under the EU Habitats Directive and Irish Wildlife Acts (stock image)

By Teresa Mannion
Regional Reporter

Galway County Council's Biodiversity Office is asking members of the public to help record sightings of the common frog across Co Galway.

This initiative contributes to improved evidence-based decision-making, supports national conservation efforts, and aligns with the Council’s role under the Ceangal Programme in raising public awareness and collecting biodiversity data at county level. The campaign also reinforces the value of community engagement in monitoring environmental quality and biodiversity trends across Galway.

This resulted in coverage by various media outlets including RTE News and an interview on Galway Bay FM.

WEST CONNACHT ISLANDS INVASIVE SPECIES ERADICATION PROGRAMME (2025–2027)

As part of Phase 1 of the Invasive Species Eradication Programme on the West Connacht Islands, the Biodiversity Office delivered a programme of community and school-based engagement on Inishbofin focused on awareness-raising, data sharing and local participation in invasive species management. The programme forms a joint initiative between Galway County Council and Mayo County Council Biodiversity Offices, in partnership with the ACRES West Connacht Cooperation Project.

Targeted engagement on the island included collaborative sessions delivered by creative artist Little John Nee and Biodiversity Officer Rosina Joyce with the local school, using

creative approaches to introduce invasive species issues in an accessible and locally relevant way. This was complemented by a public community meeting on invasive species held at the Inishbofin Community Centre in February 2026, delivered jointly by Galway County Council and members of the ACRES West Connacht CP team. The meeting provided practical information on invasive alien species affecting the island, shared findings from recent invasive plant surveys and mapping, and created an opportunity for residents to contribute local knowledge to the development of an island-specific Invasive Species Management Plan.

Engagement was supported through collaboration with Inishbofin Development Company and was aimed at gardeners, farmers, landowners and other residents with an interest in biodiversity and land management.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ON INVASIVE SPECIES IN INISHBOFIN.

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT UPDATE

ATHENRY MUNICIPAL DISTRICT UPDATE

During the last month, the operational focus centred on the maintenance of ancillary elements of the road network, including sign replacement, hedge trimming, and the opening of water tables, among other routine activities.

However, over this period the district also experienced an unprecedented volume of potholes, primarily due to the prolonged spell of wet weather. As a result, a significant portion of resources was redirected towards reactive maintenance, with crews prioritising the repair of defects across the network to ensure roads remained safe and passable.

An update on other works are as follows:

PAVEMENT WORKS/ROAD WORKS PROGRAMME.

Since mid-February, we have received confirmation of our Regional and Local Road Grant Allocations for the year ahead. On this basis, the 2026 Roads Programme is currently being prepared by the Municipal District Technical Staff, with all roads identified to date being for

potential inclusion. The completed programme will be presented to the Elected Members at the end of March.

As part of the 2026 road programme an early-start road was identified in Kiniska, and resurfacing works have already commenced. These works are being progressed in advance of the pavement overlay scheme planned for the N83 in mid to late March.

Several outstanding NOM projects and other various minor work projects have also been completed over this period. A sample of these are as follows



COMPLETION OF SETTING BACK WALL @ CLOCMAL.



KERB REALIGNMENT, FUREYS CROSS.

NEW FOOTPATH @ COILL CLOCHA JUNCTION, ORANMORE



ENTRANCE IMPROVEMENT WORKS @ LIDL, ORANMORE

SIGNAGE REPLACEMENT, CARNMORE



DRAINAGE WORKS @
MONIVEA

TREE FELLING
OAKWOOD
ORANMORE



BALLINASLOE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT UPDATE

During February 2026, MD crews were focused on maintenance of public roads in terms of Drainage – opening water tables, pothole repair, and hedge and verge cutting.

Ballinasloe MD technical team have been preparing contract documentation in advance the procurement process for the primary elements of the roadworks programme. Tenders were received on 11th February 2026 for the Roads Recycling Contract. A Request for Tenders for Road Pavement Overlays was published on 17th February 2026 with a Closing date for Return of Tenders of 11th March 2026. Work is on-going on the Tender for Restoration Maintenance (RM) Surface Dressing Contract.

Tree maintenance works to trim back trees were completed in Ballinasloe Town within the Fairgreen along the Dunlo Road and along the Poolboy Cottages road beside Bethany Park.

Inlay RI works were completed at Kilgarve Gardens, along a section of the local tertiary road where drainage improvement works were completed in 2025.

The new Urn Plot at Creagh Cemetery was completed in February 2026.

The play area at Hymany Park was cleaned by Galway County Council direct labour on behalf of the Galway Rural Development.

THE FOLLOWING ARE EXAMPLES OF WORKS UNDERTAKEN IN FEBRUARY 2026



RESURFACING
WORKS AT
KILGARVE
GARDENS,
BALLINASLOE

REHABILITATION
OF A TARMAC
PLAY AREA AT
HYMANY PARK
ESTATE,
BALLINASLOE



BEFORE
CLEANING OF
THE HYMANY
PARK PLAY
AREA



AFTER CLEANING OF THE HYMANY PARK PLAY AREA

NEW URN PLOT AT CREAGH CEMETERY



CONAMARA MUNICIPAL DISTRICT UPDATE

2025 ROADS PROGRAMME - COMPLETION OF OUTSTANDING JOBS

Bridge Street in Clifden town recently underwent restoration improvement works, which consisted of inlaying 60mm AC20 Binder course with 40mm SMA Surface course over. Works also included restoration of all road markings and the re-setting of all ironworks in a mastic surround. The window for completing this work closed quickly last winter due to inclement weather and the onset of the Christmas period. We decided that the works would have caused too much interruption and interference for local businesses during this critical

period in the calendar, and so the works were deferred until February 2026.

McGraths Limestone Ltd, acting as PSCS carried out the works and also undertook surfacing works nearby at Salt Lake Bridge on the R341. Funding for Salt Lake bridge came from the Additional Restoration Improvement Programme announced by the Department in September/October 2025.





BRIDGE ST. CLIFDEN
INLAY PROJECT 2025
(RESTORATION
IMPROVEMENT
PROGRAMME)



ADDITIONAL RESTORATION IMPROVEMENT
PROJECT 2025 - SALT LAKE BRIDGE, R341,
CLIFDEN



LIS 2025 - COMPLETION OF OUTSTANDING JOB

Similarly to the Restoration Improvement programme, the inclement weather from early October 2025 caused delays to other programmes of work, notably the Local Improvement Scheme Round 2 Funding which was announced late in the year. One deferred job, Gowlaun Road LIS, located off the Glann road in Oughterard was recently completed in February.



GOWLAUN RD LIS
(OUGHTERARD AREA,
OFF THE GLANN ROAD)

DRCD FUNDING – CAPITAL WORKS ON THE ISLANDS

The MD received confirmation in February of funding from the Department of Rural & Community Development for two projects on Inis Mór, Oileán Árann. One of the projects is worth over €330,000 and consists of repair to the perimeter wall of Reilig Chill Éinde. The other project relates to safety works at two locations in Corrúch and Mainistir, where no edge protection currently exists for road users as a result of storm damage.

There are two projects on Inis Bofin that are currently being assessed for funding by the Dept. Surfacing works to Pier Road and the construction of a new wall and pedestrian route west of the Pier. It is hoped that funding will be confirmed so that these two projects can be delivered this year. A branding and signage project is currently being developed for the 3 Aran islands and Inis Bofin, in conjunction with the Department.



REILIG CHILL ÉINDE PERIMETER, INIS
MÓR - PERIMETER WALL REPAIR
PROJECT

PRIMARY FOCUS OF ACTIVITY

The Annual Roads Programme is scheduled for presentation to the elected members later this month. The Annual Roads Programme is comprised of all the road grants i.e. National, Regional and Local Roads, Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience, Bridges, Low-Cost Safety Improvement, Drainage etc.

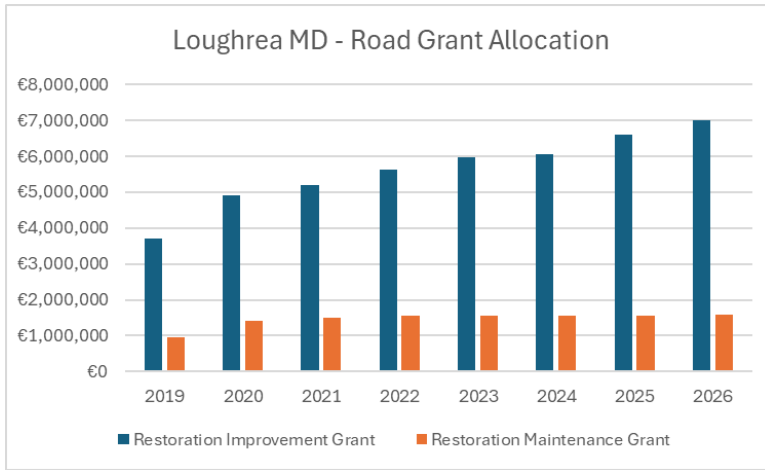
As per recent years, and in order to gain as competitive rates as possible, we have tendered a certain element of these works (Restoration Improvement Grant - Bound Inlay and Overlay) as early as possible. In this regard, we have notified the elected members that that the following roads are being included in this tender competition.

1. L-4502 - Pollnagarragh West - Caher Peak-Manin
2. L-4101 - Garraun Lower
3. L-4219 – Killogilleen
4. L-85314 – Kinincha
5. R-349 - Tallyho Cross to Carrownamorrissy – Rathgorgin
6. R-355 – Balinlug
7. R-356 - Eyrecourt to Banagher
8. R-353 – Knockmoyle
9. L-4314 – Kilmurry
10. L-8795 – Srah
11. L-4302 – Fahy

All of the above roads have already been listed on the current 3-year programme for completion in 2026 or 2027. Several early start roads have also been identified, and preparatory works have already commenced where appropriate.

12. L-8190 Bushfield, Loughrea
13. L-8191, Moyleen, Loughrea
14. L-8759, Capira, Portumna
15. L-8737, Cappagh to Ballycrissane, Portumna
16. L-8516, Derrynacarna, Gort
17. L-8567, Gortroe to Lavallyconor, Gort

2026 budget allocations have been announced and the trend for increased expenditure on our road network continues.



Operationally, we continue to complete any outstanding projects from 2025 and address NOM funded projects. Hedge cutting, drainage maintenance, road repairs and all other routine maintenance works are continuing.

A SAMPLE OF WORKS ON-GOING IS AS FOLLOWS:



RECONSTRUCTION OF A PARAPET WALL AT NUTGROVE



FOOTPATH REPAIRS, BRIDE STREET, LOUGHREA

PEDESTRIAN CROSSING REPAIRS, R380 GORT ROAD, LOUGHREA





REINSTATING YELLOW BOX AT THE JUNCTION OF BRIDE STREET AND MOORE STREET, LOUGHREA.

LOCALISED ROAD WIDENING AT GORTADRAGAUN.



REPAIRS TO N67, KINVARA.



INSTALLATION OF SOAKPIT, KILLEENEEN.



ROAD MARKING ON THE L-4300.

TREE POLLARDING, BARRACK STREET, LOUGHREA.



TUAM MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

Minister of State Sean Canney turned the sod to mark the start of the long-awaited safety improvement road scheme in Kilbannon recently. He was joined by Cathaoirleach of Tuam



MD Cllr Karey McHugh Farag, pupils from St Benins National School, staff of Galway County Council, Councillors and local residents along with members of the contractor Jons Civils.



Jon Civils commenced the scheme on 23rd February and carried out initial site clearance, fencing and set up the site compound.



EMERGENCY PAVEMENT REPAIR WORKS WERE CARRIED OUT ON THE N17 NORTH OF MILLTOWN



Works have started in Corner Chapel; to carry out drainage works, remove debris and make the area safer.

Mise, le meas,

Eileen Ruane

Eileen Ruane
Deputy Chief Executive
Galway County Council

16th February 2025