



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

TUARASCÁIL BHAINISTÍOCHTA MANAGEMENT REPORT

Eanáir 2024
January 2024



LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (LCDC)

The Community Development Section will support a meeting of the LCDC in January 2024 to progress the following programme areas:

SICAP

As the procurement process for SICAP 2024-2028 has extended into Quarter 1 2024, the current programme has been extended for 3 months, and the LCDC will be required to assess and approve an implementation plan for this 3-month period, in addition to reviewing the progress achieved under the 2023 Annual Plan. The SICAP Sub-Committee will also meet to consider in detail the Annual Performance Review for 2023.

LOCAL ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME 2024

Galway County Council has received funding of €185,377.04 from the Department of Rural and Community Development under the Local Enhancement Programme 2024 (previously Community Enhancement Programme). This funding is comprised as follows:

- a) €145,220 in capital funding for carrying out necessary repairs and improvements to community facilities, energy efficiency type projects, purchase of equipment for community use, etc. In line with previous years, the LCDC will endeavour to allocate 30% of this fund towards small grants of €1,000 or less to maximise its benefit to small grassroots groups. Grants over €1,000 will be targeted at improving facilities in disadvantaged areas, projects which support improved access for people with disabilities/reduced mobility, enhancing community participation for other disadvantaged or marginalised groups, and improving energy efficiency of community facilities to reduce ongoing costs.
- b) €30,896.17 which is ring-fenced capital funding for Women's Groups such as Women's Sheds, Clubs, or other networks. This fund will support capital projects or equipment for these groups and will be allocated as equally as possible across all eligible groups. All Groups supported under this fund must have an appropriate organisational structure and/or be affiliated with an appropriate parent association, e.g., ICA, LGFA, Irish Girl Guides, etc.
- c) Galway County Council administration fee for the scheme - €9,260.86



The funding available under a) and b) will be advertised as separate funding schemes by end January 2024, with a closing date of early March 2024. Funding recommendations of the LCDC will be submitted to the Department of Rural and Community Development by end March 2024, for funding announcements by Minister Heather Humphries in April 2024. All capital projects will be required to be completed and grants drawn down by end of 2024.

HEALTHY IRELAND FUND

A meeting of the LCDC's Health & Wellbeing Sub-Committee will be held in January 2024 to agree a Workplan for the 2024 Healthy Ireland Fund allocation.

TUAM MENS SHED ACTIVATOR PROGRAMME

Healthy Galway County and Galway Sports Partnership were delighted to support Tuam



Mens Shed with a 6-Week Activator Programme in Tuam Stars GAA Club. This programme will provide the participants with the knowledge of how to use the Activator Poles safely and effectively and it is hoped to extend this programme into the community as part of a Healthy Galway County Project in the Palace Grounds where a FitSticks Trail has recently been installed.



LOCAL ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY PLAN

Following approval of the Socio-Economic Statement and draft High-Level Goals by the Economic SPC, the approval of the LCDC will be required in January 2024, prior to public

consultation progressing. In line with this a Request for Quotation (RFQ) process is underway to secure some external expertise in progressing the next stages of the plan.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT SCHEMES 2024

It is envisaged that the Community Support Schemes for 2024 will be advertised in mid-January with a closing date prior to end February 2024, to enable recommendations to be presented to the March Plenary Meeting.

SOCIAL INCLUSION

AGE FRIENDLY PROGRAMME

The Community Section now has full delivery of the English & Irish versions of the Directory of Services for Older People, and any agency or group can contact the team at 091 509 521 to arrange to pick-up a specified number of copies for their local groups at our Centrepont Offices. The Directory will also be circulated to older people via the Mobile Library and Community Gardai throughout January.

COMHAIRLE NA NÓG

A report on the 2023 activities of Comhairle na nÓg will be submitted to the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) following a review of all expenditure. A funding request for 2024, including proposed activities on “Mental Health & Addiction” which is the topic to be worked on by the County Committee and Steering Group over the year, will also be submitted in January 2024.

UKRAINE COMMUNITY RESPONSE FORUM

The Community Section continue to update the Ukraine Community Response Forum regarding the number of BOTP’s (Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection) accommodated throughout the County.

TRAVELLER INTERAGENCY GROUP

Discussions will commence with Galway City Council in relation to establishing Terms of Reference for the City & County Traveller Interagency Group.



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION NETWORK

The PPN will issue a January 2024 newsletter updating communities on a range of matters of interest, including promoting upcoming funding opportunities such as the Community Climate Action Fund, Local Enhancement Programme and Community Support Schemes. The PPN Workers will attend a networking meeting to share information with the national network of PPN's and will host a PPN Secretariat Meeting on 16th January to commence the process of agreeing the 2024 Budget and Workplan.

GALWAY SPORTS PARTNERSHIP

SOUTH GALWAY OPERATION TRANSFORMATION

Galway Sports Partnership is delighted to support South Galway's Operation Transformation Programme by providing a 6 Week Outdoor Activator Walking Programme starting on 14th January from 10am-11am meeting at Gort Community Centre. For more information or to register contact eloftus@galwaycoco.ie



LETTERMULLEN INDOOR ACTIVATOR PROGRAMME



This is Galway Sports Partnerships first Indoor Activator Walking Programme in West Galway starting on Wednesday 17th January from 12:30pm-1:45pm in Comhar Chuigéal Teo, Lettermullen. Booking can be made via [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com)

A big thank you to the artists, arts organisations and community groups who worked with us in 2023. Arts Council awarded the Galway County Arts Office a 12% increase in funding for 2024 based on our extensive Partnership Application. As we look forward to 2024 unfolding, we are busy behind the scenes designing and delivering a series of open calls for artist residencies and funding opportunities.

SCHOOLS' MOBILE LIBRARY ART PROJECT

The Arts Office delivered a local and national PR campaign to spread the word about our wonderful Schools Mobile Library project. On 13th December we had a fun photocall with the students at St. Augustine's National School Clontuskert and Scoil an Chroí Naofa, Ballinasloe who helped artist Chris Judge come up with the art work for the van. It's great to see people's reaction to the van's new look as it visits the county's schools. [Click here](#) to read an article published in the Independent on 19th December. This PR campaign continues through January.



STAFF AND STUDENTS OF ST. AUGUSTINE'S NATIONAL SCHOOL CLONTUSKERT WITH LEAS CATHAOIRLEACH DR. EVELYN FRANCIS PARSONS



PRINCIPAL TEACHER KATE MURRAY, LEAS CATHAOIRLEACH DR. EVELYN FRANCIS PARSONS, MARIE MCAULIFFE SARAIVA, SHARLEEN MCANDREW AND AMIE LAWLESS



STAFF AND STUDENTS OF SCOIL AN CHROÍ NAOFA, ALLINASLOE WITH LEAS CATHAOIRLEACH DR. EVELYN FRANCIS PARSONS

INTERFACE: THE BRANCH, THE FORK, THE HARROW AT GALWAY ARTS CENTRE

On Friday 08th December Arts Officer Sharon O’Grady opened the group exhibition The Branch, The Fork, The Harrow at Galway Arts Centre. The exhibition features work by artists; Brett Sroka, Christine Mackey, Linda Schirmer, Noelle Gallagher, Helena Doyle, Sarah Roseingrave. Curated by Alannah Robins and runs until 28th January.

Interface is a studio and residency programme for artists, situated in in a former salmon hatchery in the Inagh Valley, in the heart of Connemara. The programme provides opportunities for artists in residence to explore intersections between scientific research and art. Within this programme there is a strong thread of ecological art, much of it centring around the ongoing restoration to native woodland of 37 acres of Sitka Spruce Forest which surround the hatchery building.

The Woodland Symposium is a collaborative project which facilitates artists in making an artistic response to this ecological activism. This exhibition brings together a group of artists and experts engaged in creating slow art which evolves with the changing ecology of the site.



INTERFACE ARTISTS, CURATOR ALANNAH ROBINS AND ARTS OFFICER SHARON O’GRADY ATTEND OPENING OF THE BRANCH, THE FORK, THE HARROW PHOTO: DELORES LYNE

NETTLE HORSE BY LITTLE JOHN NEE

The Arts Office is delighted to support Galway County based artist Little John Nee with their national tour of Nettle Horse. Little John will perform his latest 60min theatre and music performance at 11 venues in January and February, including a performance at Town Hall Theatre, Galway on the 18th January. Nettle Horse is a transformative theatrical odyssey weaving storytelling, original music, song, visuals, and satire, inviting you to step into a parallel universe and witness the magic of your own imagination.

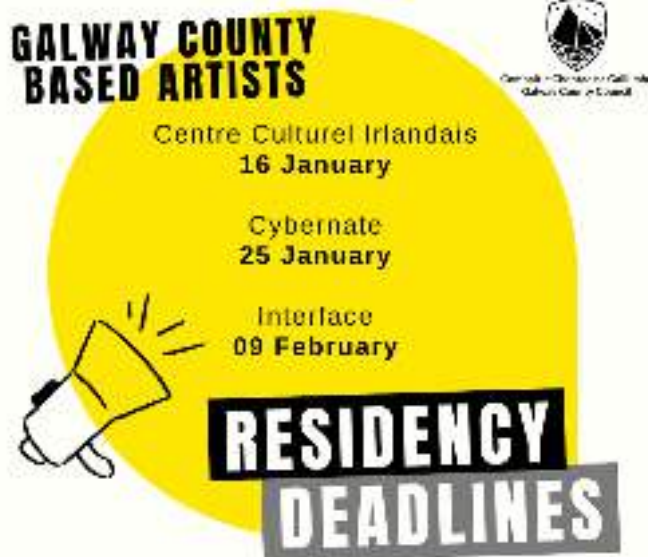


POSTER IMAGE OF
NETTLE HORSE BY
LITTLE JOHN NEE

2024 ARTIST RESIDENCIES

In partnership with Centre Culturel Irlandais, Culture Works and Interface Galway County Council Arts Office has 3 open calls for 2024 artist residencies open in January and February. Galway County artists are invited to apply for:

2024 ARTIST RESIDENCY DEADLINES



**GALWAY COUNTY
BASED ARTISTS**

Centre Culturel Irlandais
16 January

Cybernate
25 January

Interface
09 February

**RESIDENCY
DEADLINES**

Galway County Council

Centre Culturel Irlandais - Deadline 16 January

A one-month residency in Paris for artists working in any artform. [Click here for info](#)

Cybernate Deadline 25 January

A six-month programme for artists by Culture Works who specialise in Digital Arts. [Click here for info](#)

Interface

Deadline 09 February

A two-week residency for artists who explore intersections between scientific research and the arts. [Click here for info](#)

2024 OTHER FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

This month the Arts Office will announce dates and details of Open Calls for our annual funding opportunities supporting artists, arts organisations and community groups:

Community Support Scheme 2024: – Up to €3,000 for arts organisations and community (Arts Act Grants) groups.

Artist Support Scheme 2024: Up to €3,000 for professional artists.

Artists in Schools Scheme 202: €1,800 for professional artists.

CREATIVE IRELAND

2023 was a great year for the Galway County Council Creative Ireland programme. Additional funding streams enabled us to support projects specifically geared towards our ageing community. These were extremely well received and highlighted to us the hunger for more projects in this area.

INCREASE IN FUNDING FOR 2024

Towards the end of 2023, Creative Ireland announced a 10% increase in core funding. This brings our funding for 2024 up to €177,419.

The Culture Team will meet at the end of January to discuss the Creative Ireland funding priorities for 2024. The Culture Team has a number of ideas/projects in development, and we look forward to planning an engaging and dynamic year of creativity across the county.

ADDITIONAL FUNDING SECURED FOR YOUTH CONSULTATION

In December 2023 we successfully applied for an additional €4,000 from Creative Ireland. The purpose of this is to run a series of Youth Consultation sessions in line with Foróige's 'Voice of the Child' guidelines on each of the Aran Islands to ascertain what creative events they would like to see taking place during Cruinniú na nÓg. We have engaged Branar, a bi-lingual child centred theatre group, to facilitate the sessions and report their findings. This is due to a request from the department for an increase in Cruinniú na nÓg engagement on the islands. It will also help us to increase the number of Irish language events taking place during Cruinniú 2024.



BIA INNOVATOR

On the morning of the 26th of January, the official launch of the BIA Innovator campus will take place in Athenry. It will be attended by An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar. Later that day there will be an Artisan Food Fair and Digital Exhibitor Food Trail. This is supported by Galway County Council Creative Ireland funding and will consist of a total of 16 artisan food vendors providing samples as well as guided tours of the campus.



IMAGE OF BIA INNOVATOR CAMPUS

2024 BURSARY APPLICATIONS

Applications for the 2024 round of Creative Ireland bursaries will open in late January (exact date TBC) and run until late February with assessment due to be complete by the 8th of March. The maximum grant amount will be €10,000 and the minimum €2,000.

TOURISM

TOURISM STRATEGY 2023-2031.



After the adoption of the first ever tourism strategy for County Galway at the November plenary meeting, plans are now underway for the Strategy to be formally launched in February/March with the location and date to be confirmed.

Project management is also underway for an implementation plan on the strategy, this will seek to stimulate tourism development throughout Galway, enhancing it in areas that are already strong and nurturing it in areas that are less mature from a tourism perspective with a commitment to delivering economic, social, cultural, and environmental benefits to

diverse locations and communities. The plan will inform the tourism team of the actions and tasks required to achieve the strategic goals in the strategy, a print version will be published in the first quarter of 2024.

JUST TRANSITION FUND



This is a Fáilte Ireland Funding Scheme for regenerative tourism projects in the Midlands. This scheme was launched by Fáilte Ireland as part of EU Just Transition Fund Regenerative Tourism & Placemaking Scheme. The scheme aims to transform tourism across 8 counties in Ireland’s Hidden Heartlands and Ireland’s Ancient East by

diversifying the local economy and providing new employment opportunities for workers and communities that were heavily dependent on peat. The Investment Grant-Aid Scheme for Private & Community SMEs is the first part of the up to €68 million Regenerative Tourism & Placemaking scheme to be delivered by Fáilte Ireland, as part of the EU Just Transition Fund (EU JTF)

The Tourism Officer is currently working on the Just Transition Fund project in conjunction with Failte Ireland to identify, fund and develop a tourism attraction in the Ballinasloe municipal district.

BLUEWAY FEASIBILITY STUDY

The Great Western Blueway Feasibility Study is a collaborative project between Galway City Council, Galway County Council and Mayo County Council. Galway City and County Tourism Officers are currently managing the research phase of the ‘Corrib’ Blueway project and supporting community and local consultation with key individuals and groups.

The feasibility study has been signed off and agreed by Galway City and County Tourism Officers last week.

CLIFDEN DESTINATION TOWN

The Destination Town project for Clifden is developed in line with the Rural Regeneration Development Fund programme. Clifden Destination Town funding was allocated through the ‘Destination Towns Capital infrastructure Programme’.



Galway was granted €500,000 by Fáilte Ireland with Galway County Council match funding €166,000 to boost the attractiveness and tourism appeal of the town.

The Tourism Officer is currently working on the 1st drawdown from Fáilte Ireland on this project to reflect the spend for 2023.

TOURISM WEBSITE

Galway County and City Tourism Officers are collaborating on a new Tourism Specific website for Galway that will also highlight the new Galway Tourism Brand, more details will follow in due course.

ADVERTISING



Due to the excellent feedback and the successful editions in 2023 we will continue to invest in a County based marketing spread with 'This is Galway'. We have highlighted areas like Kinvara, Gort and Moycullen we will continue to showcase what County Galway has to offer and will be focusing on east Galway for 2024.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT GRANTS

Applications for Community Support Grants for 2024 will be available and advertised next week, closing date will be **20th February 2024**.

Regional Festivals Funded by Failte Ireland	Amount Granted
2023	18,000
	8 Granted
Economic Grants including Festival funding	Amount Granted
2023	Total Funding 69,250
Festivals & Events	48 Granted
Economic Initiative	11 Granted

Total funding allocated for 2023 Regional, Economic and Festival & events is **€87,250.00**



SHARED ISLAND

The Shared Island AgriFood Infrastructure Enabling Growth in terms of it's current phase concluded in December 2023. This was an initiative of Galway County Council (lead) partnered with Leitrim County Council and Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council to develop Excellence Centres in Food Innovation and Agritech. Funded as a feasibility assessment with maximum funding of €250,000 under the Shared Island Development Funding Scheme, the project supports the progression of new joint investment projects by cross-border Local Authority partnerships that can link funding streams from North and South and deliver shared regional development goals. We would like to thank all stakeholders for their input through the process. From an elected member perspective, we would like to acknowledge the input of the Cathaoirleach (Cllr Michael Maher earlier in 2023) and Cllr Liam Carroll since as well as Cllr Mary Hoade when she was a member of the Economic Development and Enterprise SPC. The feasibility study report is available on request.

TOWN & VILLAGE RENEWAL SCHEME

Creggs Rural Development Committee completed the drawdown of €90,000 funding it received under the Town & Village Renewal Scheme in January 2024. The project aimed to build on the development plan for the village to enhance the streetscape, improve signage, improve disabled access and the safety of road users. The project provided new windows, doors, floors, and the addition of 3 co-working desks at the CS Parnell Heritage Centre in Creggs, a remote working hub. Environmental improvements include the provision of a drinking water fountain for good quality drinking water and reduced plastic use. New concreted areas adjacent to the GAA Club have resulted in a lower use of pesticides to control weeds. The provision of a new bicycle parking stand has helped to promote use of cycling among school students.

The demonstration of the village's actions in terms of climate control through water conservation and active travel measures were instrumental in ensuring that the village won the national award for Biodiversity and Climate Control in the Pride of Place Awards 2023 announced in Armagh in November.



PICTURED AT THE CS PARNELL HERITAGE CENTRE IN CREGGS ARE JOHN WATERS, SENIOR STAFF OFFICER, RURAL AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, CARMEL O'ROURKE AND SEÁN BEIRNE FROM CREGGS RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE AND ÉIMEAR DOLAN, ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER, RURAL AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT.

OTHER INITIATIVES

COOP4RURALGOV

In 2022 Galway County Council was successful in securing funding for a rural proofing project looking at cooperation for sparsely populated rural, coastal and mountain focused governance.

The Rural Proofing Project is predicated on the Local Economic and Community Plan (countywide). Through this Plan, it is anticipated that good practice examples may emerge as part of the LECP implementation plan, the implementation piece will commence when the Local Economic & Community Plan is adopted in 2024.

The Coop4RURALGov project will improve "governance" capabilities in its scope and area of influence by measuring the expected impact on rural and coastal areas of measures adopted in the LECP that will contribute to physical, financial, institutional, social, environmental, and other benefits to a society, community, or group of people through one or more development interventions. The LECP, as a statutory process, will facilitate the delivery of agreed key actions while fulfilling governance responsibilities. The other partners represent communities and municipalities based in Spain (lead), Bulgaria and Estonia.

There have been two meetings of the partners so far with both hosted by the lead partner in Pamplona, Spain. The European Interreg project 'Coop4RURALGov. Rural Proofing. Cooperation for better sparsely populated rural, coastal and mountain focused governance' held its kick-off meeting in Pamplona on 26 and 27 April, with the presence of representatives from the countries that are part of it: Estonia, Bulgaria, Ireland, and Spain.



The project partners met again in Pamplona the week of 16-22nd October, in a meeting framed within the Presura 2023 'Amanecer Rural' Fair, which took place from 20-22 October in the capital of Navarre, each partner participated in a panel of the event's programme.

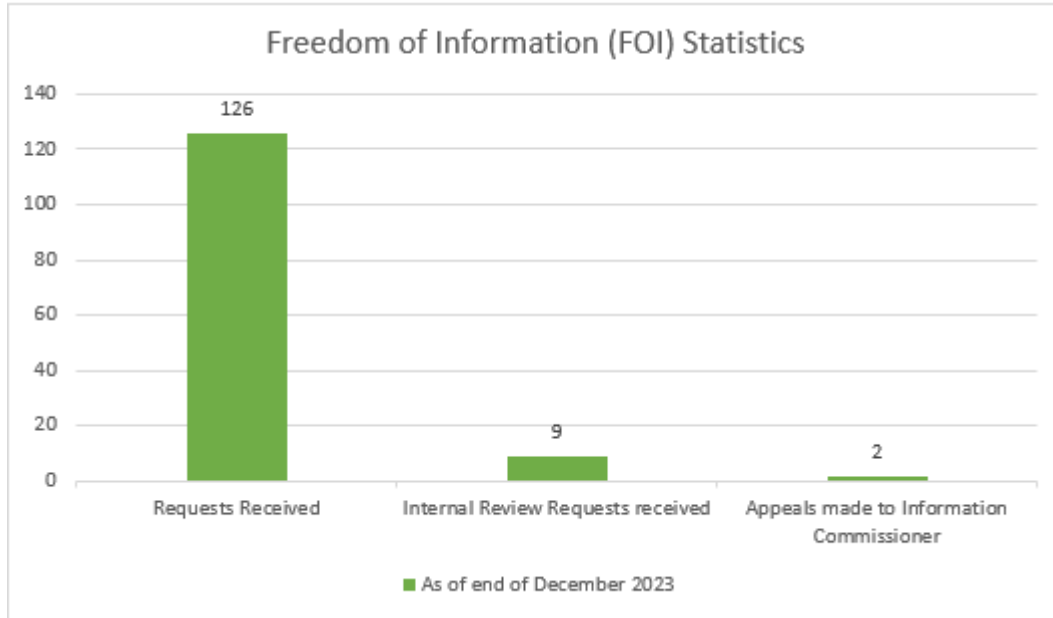
The working sessions during the day, were supported by presentations and documentation from experts in the field, aimed to illustrate the magnitude of the challenge faced by the project and to address the variety of solutions offered by the participating regions.



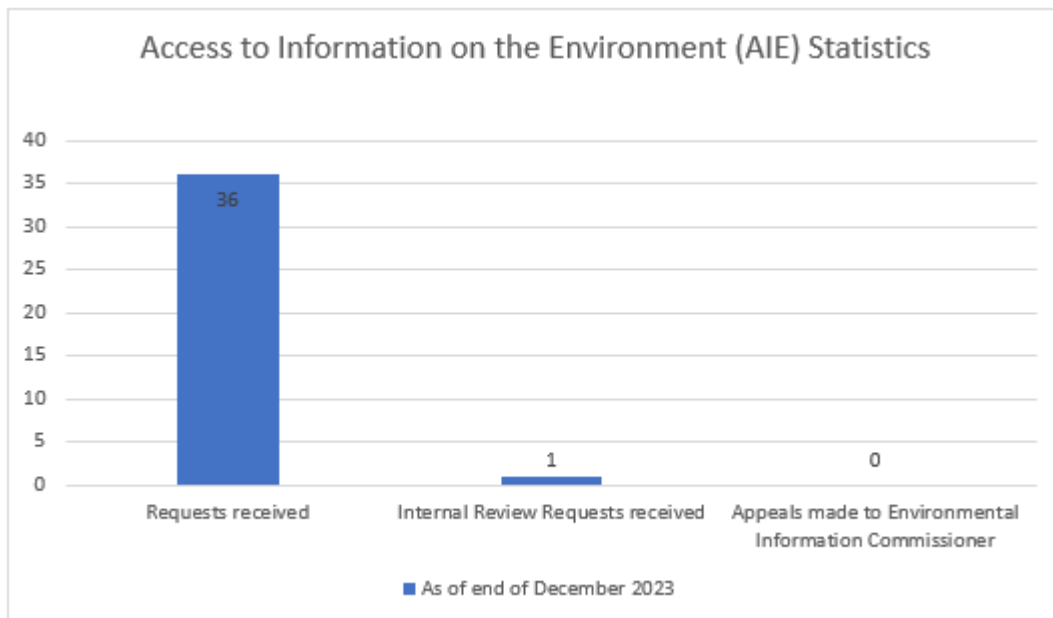
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION, ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON THE ENVIRONMENT & DATA PROTECTION

2023 YEAR TO DATE STATISTICS TO 31.12.2023

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION



ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON THE ENVIRONMENT



DATA PROTECTION

- 18 Data Access Requests -
 - 14 Data Subject Access Requests -
 - 4 Third Party Access Request, e.g., Gardaí
- GDPR/Data Protection Training
 - Online Induction Training & GDPR Staff Awareness Training issued to all new staff.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Galway County Council's Customer Service team monitors and updates the Council's social media platforms with creative content to enhance engagement with the public and maintain an awareness of the work of the Council.



Social Media Report – December 2023

Overview of Social Media Activity

This increase is over a three-month period from 1st October 2023, until 31st December 2023.

34,692
 **0.9%**
from 34,038
Fans & Followers

Facebook

Over this period, Customer Services have posted 149 posts to Galway County Council's Facebook page. Customer Services also utilised the 'story' function on Facebook twice this month with followers. Galway County Council's overall reach for the last month was 46,957, an increase of 14.2% compared to the previous month.

Audience Metrics – Facebook

- Last month Galway County Council gained 0 new Facebook followers, bringing the total followers as of December 31st, 2023, to 16,148.
- Galway County Council's Audience ages range between 18 – 65+ with the main audience being those aged between 35 and 44, when this is broken down further 23.4% of this age group are women and 10.7% are men.
- In total, 31.8% of Galway County Council's Facebook followers are male and 68.2% are female.



December's Top Three Posts



Audience Metrics – X (previously Twitter)

- During this period on X, Galway County Council posted a total of 131 tweets with 44.3k impressions.
- Galway County Council's account gained a total of 120 new followers from September to the end of December 2023, bringing the total following to 16,479.

December's Top Three Posts



Audience Metrics – Instagram

- Galway County Council's Instagram page has a similar audience base to the Council's Facebook page.
- Galway County Council's Instagram Audience ages range between 18-65+, with 69.6% being female and 30.4% being male. Overall, the main audience; with 35.6% in total, again is those aged between 35 and 44 years old, a closer breakdown shows that this consists of 25.3% women and 10.3% men.
- Over the last month Galway County Council have increased their followers from 684 in September to 834 followers by the end of this period. The overall reach for this period decreased by 30.3% compared to the previous period.



Audience Metrics – LinkedIn

- During this period on LinkedIn, Galway County Council’s account gained 127 new followers from September 2023 until 31st December 2023, bringing the total following to 1,578.
- Galway County Council shared 4 posts with 190 impressions this month.

December’s Top Three Posts



LIBRARY SERVICES

FAMILY TIME AT YOUR LIBRARY



Family Time at your Library is part of the national Right to Read programme and it focuses on family events and activities taking place in libraries during the month of December. The aim is to support the involvement of the whole family in children’s reading and to increase awareness of the benefits of reading and to promote reading as a fun, recreational activity for children.

We are delighted that so many libraries across the city and county hosted events that ranged from Bilingual Storytimes (Polish and English), Scéalaíocht agus Ceol na Nollag, Mobile Library Storytime, Christmas Carols, and family Christmas crafts.



AROUND THE HOUSE AND MIND THE DRESSER

Around the House and Mind the Dresser was the title of the 2023 Galway's Great Read programme, funded by Creative Ireland County. The aim was to highlight the rich musical and song writing traditions of North and East Galway; to explore the various storytelling voices of South Connemara and our Islands; to re-ignite in our older audiences' memories of times past and to inspire our younger generations to value and participate in this exploration of our Culture.

One of the most inspiring elements was a collaboration between singer/songwriter Ultan Conlon and the BARA (Ballinasloe Active Retirement Association) singers with a few extra friends who joined in for the classes. Over a series of 4 2-hour sessions the group met and wrote a song based on their recollections of musical times past.

Everyone loved this event and were delighted to combine their knowledge, talent, and experience, giving them the opportunity to create an impressive collaborative musical piece.



LAUNCH OF JOTS - ISSUE 20

A landmark 20th anniversary edition of the Journal of the Old Tuam Society was launched in December in Tuam Library. Packed with a wealth of diverse topics, as well as the usual sprinkling of local photos; much of the enduring success of JOTS is owed to the immense efforts of members and contributors from near and far, and so it is a must for those from Tuam and surrounding areas as well as those interested in local history. Tuam Library was thrilled to be involved in launching the journal, JOTS is a fantastic resource for Tuam Librarians when assisting with Local History queries. This year, 2 librarians in Tuam, Margaret Garvey and Clare Lowery-Doyle have contributed articles to JOTS.

The launch was attended by many well-known local faces and was covered extensively in the Tuam Herald and the Connacht Tribune.



UNITING COMMUNITIES THROUGH TRADITION: THE BEADY POCKET PROJECT

In the heart of Tuam town, a unique initiative emerged, weaving together the threads of tradition and community spirit. The Beady Pocket project (curated by artist Martina Passman) stands as a testament to the harmonious collaboration between two distinct groups: 14 women hailing from both the Traveller community and Tuam town. Their shared goal was to preserve and create Traditional Beady Pockets, an emblematic craft deeply rooted in cultural heritage. Tuam Library were very proud to be asked to launch the exhibition and the Beady pockets will be on display until mid-January.



COMMUNITY CONNECTS



GRD's Social Prescribing service in partnership with Tuam Library hosted their Christmas Community Connects event this week. This event is for adults to get together over a cup of tea/coffee, do a crossword or puzzle, get to know other

people, and learn more about the library and other community groups in Tuam. Over 20 people attended the event and Tuam Library are now planning to run the event bi-weekly starting in January.



MOBILE LIBRARY SERVICE



Galway Mobile Library had a busy month in December visiting 86 villages, small towns, rural areas, nursing homes and preschools across the county.

This year, for the month of December, we also introduced a number of

new initiatives. We held Christmas Storytime on the Mobile Library on three different days and distributed over 120 Christmas craft bags to our younger patrons. Some of our younger patrons in preschools decorated stars for us to display on the Mobile Library.

In collaboration with the Age Friendly Co-Ordinator at Galway County Council we delivered Christmas Cards to our older patrons. As part of our Christmas celebrations, we visited one of our regular nursing homes and hosted a lovely afternoon where we held a Christmas quiz, read Patrick Kavanagh's *A Christmas Childhood*, sang Christmas songs, and ate a mince pie or two!

Huge thanks to our amazing library staff Mary, Colette and James for providing such a fantastic service to our rural communities.

SCHOOLS LIBRARY SERVICE

Schools across Galway are thrilled to welcome our newly enhanced Schools Library van. This initiative was kindly supported by our colleagues the Arts Office of Galway County. Special thanks to Amie in the Arts office and to Sharleen from Galway Public Libraries.



CHILDREN FROM KILTULLAGH NS IN EAST GALWAY AND SCOIL NA MAIGHDINE MUIRE GAN SMÁL IN CAMUS, CONNEMARA.



KILTULLAGH NS



SCOIL NA MAIGHDINE
MUIRE GAN SMÁL, CAMUS

DECADE OF CENTENARIES FINALE CLAREGALWAY CASTLE



WESTSIDE LIBRARY

Westside Library in conjunction with the Westside Resource Centre hosted the annual Christmas Market Day on December 8th. This daylong event provides opportunities for people to support local community initiatives and enjoy the festive atmosphere in the library with traditional crafts and music. From jams to patchwork, knitting to art pieces there was something for everyone.

The opening was facilitated by the Mayor of Galway City and members of the community choir led the carol singing session. The community garden provided the materials for the flower arranging workshops and had homemade chutney and jams available for people to bring home.



Members of the Ukrainian community showcased traditional material crafts with a selection of necklaces and decorations.





As part of the Christmas celebrations, the library hosted storytelling events for little ones as well as a guest appearance from Dee Dee the elf, who enthralled children through music and song.

The event finished with a cuppa and mince pie for everyone and an opportunity to chat in a relaxed and warm setting. Several members of the Newcastle Active Retired group attended with one lady commenting that it was her first outing in public post Covid. She really enjoyed the experience and the warm welcome at Westside Library.

Westside also hosted the Westside Shining Stars Women's Group for the month of December in the MakerSpace. They had a wonderful time making Christmas centerpieces and floral arrangements.



A Christmas-themed Jigsaws for Grown-Ups event was held, with members of the public invited to drop in and spend a few minutes, or stay longer, making jigsaws. This drop in event saw our retired County/City Librarian Bernie Kelly, a passionate jigsaw fan shows tips and tricks for dealing with those tricky challenging puzzle pieces.

Christmas themed story-time encouraged all the children to sing along to jingle bells and they enjoyed the Christmas Classic of 'Mogs Christmas' and a tale about what the Ladybird heard!



The festive celebrations continued with a Family themed Saturday workshop where children enjoyed making a Christmas craft and sampled some hot chocolate too.

LAW AGENTS UPDATE

The number of instructions received in the Law Agents Office from enforcement sections in both Planning and Environment Directorates continued to rise throughout 2023 and this pattern is expected to continue through the early months of 2024.



The Law Agent solicitor staff will be actively involved in 16 separate court dates across the various court jurisdictions in the country involving over 25 different cases during the month of January 2024. The majority involve active enforcement action taken by Galway County Council for alleged offences within its jurisdiction.

The Law Agent office assisted the council in completing the acquisition of over 68 housing units in the closing weeks of 2023. We are continuing in such efforts and expect to complete and close over 40 additional units in the early weeks of 2024.

With the cooperation of members of the Housing Directorate we are fully operational in terms of the 'Tenant-in-Situ' and 'Croi Conaithe (Derelict Property) Grant' Schemes.

HOUSING & UKRAINE RESPONSE

HOUSING PROJECTS SHORTLISTED FOR LAMA AWARDS 2024

Now in its 18th year, the All-Ireland Community and Council Awards recognise and celebrate community and councils working together. They provide a great opportunity to highlight and celebrate the work done within our communities, to reward our unsung heroes and recognise the phenomenal contribution they've made to our lives. The Awards Ceremony takes place on the 17th February 2024 in Dublin.

Two projects submitted by the Housing & Ukrainian Response Directorate have been shortlisted for the 2024 Awards as follows:



HEAT PUMP REMOTE ACCESS SHORTLISTED FOR LAMA BEST ENERGY SMART INITIATIVE

This category recognises pioneering or innovative approaches to sustainable energy; this can range from a unique energy awareness campaign, a forward-thinking approach to retrofitting, inclusion of renewable energy technology, improvements to existing energy-management techniques, novel ways of communicating energy information or the implementation of an ambitious energy management policy. By promoting the use of energy in an intelligent and advanced way, this category recognises the efforts by a local



authority (either council-wide, by department or even by an individual) to become more energy-smart in how it operates on a day-to-day basis, with demonstrated savings in energy. The project should be exemplary in its field and should be easily replicated in other organisations.

Heat Pump Remote Access:

The need for this project was identified following the very successful rollout of the Local Authority Energy Efficiency Retrofit Programme primarily funded by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. Since the introduction of this Deep Retrofit Programme in 2021, Galway County Council have retrofitted approximately 300 houses to achieve a BER A rating. The programme focuses on upgrading the fabric of the home and providing an energy efficient heating system.

Galway county council have taken the initiative and are installing energy efficient heat pumps to meet the space heating and hot water demand while at the same time removing all existing fossil fuel heating systems. As many of the occupants are at risk of fuel poverty the council decided to install solar pv panel on all retrofit houses to provide a free source of fuel for the heat pump and greatly reduce the annual running costs.

Once the installation of the heat pumps ramped up, the maintenance department of the council noticed an increase in the number of repair requests logged by tenants with heat pumps. However, many of the issues were related to minor programming errors or the settings being adjusted inadvertently by the user. This resulted in a lot of additional call outs for maintenance staff and contractors. Further to discussions with one of the heat pump suppliers, Mitsubishi EcoDan, it was agreed that a remote access facility to allow the technician to access the heat pump controls would greatly reduce the number of call outs required to reset the heat pumps. This would result in reduced maintenance costs on callout charges, make more efficient use of the technician's time, eliminate the need to make appointments with the occupants, and reduce carbon emissions by eliminating the need to drive to the house, many of which are in remote locations.

The initial thinking was to utilise the existing internet access of the house where the heat pump is to be installed. However, this is reliant on the occupants maintaining this network connection to the heat pump and could result in losing connection to the heat pump if the occupants, say for example, switched internet supplier or changed modems or passwords, etc.

It was therefore decided to investigate the use of the GSM network for data transfer. This involves installing a sim card into a GSM modem on each heat pump. The GSM modem will allow remote access to the heat pump from anywhere in the world. The technician will be able to log into a particular heat pump from the manufacturers dashboard and download the stored data from the heat pump plc. It will allow the technician to read any errors recorded and to make some basic setting changes to the system. It is envisaged that the Local Authority will have its own dashboard which will allow them schedule planned maintenance service and identify potential problems prior to the site callout.

It is proposed to install the GSM modems in a chosen estate being retrofitted in 2024 on a trial basis. During the trial phase detailed procedures will be put in place to determine the



exact level of data that can be extracted and viewed, and the level of control the technician can employ remotely. If this initial trial proves successful, then Galway County Council plan to roll it out across its full housing stock that contain heat pumps including all new builds. This will form an integral part of the Housing Planned Maintenance Programme generating cost and time efficiencies for both the Local Authority and the occupants. Such a system could be replicated for any local authority or large property portfolio owner using heat pump heating systems. The property managers could have their own dashboard designed to suit their needs. The data can be collated at pre-determined time intervals and generate a performance report. For example, a report could be generated every morning that could show all heat pumps that have recorded errors in the last 24 hrs. The technician could potentially have issues resolved before the occupants know they existed. The user could also generate reports to show the efficiency (Coefficient of Performance) and to highlight any heat pumps that are operating below a predetermined level of efficiency. These units could then be adjusted remotely, in consultation with the dwelling occupants, to run at optimum efficiency, thereby reducing the running costs for the occupants and identifying the issue before the occupants receive excessively high electricity bills.



GARRAÍ GHUAIRE, KINVARA SHORTLISTED FOR LAMA BEST HOUSING REGENERATION & URBAN PLANNING AWARD

This category acknowledges excellence within social housing projects which have been developed in the last three years enabling stability and sustainability within communities. Projects will have provided homes for traditional families, lone-parent families, the elderly, homeless and disabled people. It will also have succeeded in its aims to provide a high standard of accommodation whilst relieving a local housing need as well as establishing and maintaining socially integrated communities rather than just shelter or accommodation.

This award also recognises innovation in local projects by teams or organisations that enable good urban planning and design, or a better understanding of towns and cities, and the needs of the people who live in them.

Design Development:

Located within six hundred meters of the village centre and within the existing Galway County Council landbank, this site offers connectivity, services, accessibility, and inclusion for a wide range of occupant needs.

The triangular shape of the site together with roads adjacent to North and South boundaries contributed to a challenging site layout. Proposed layouts were discussed at an early stage with the planning authority who highlighted concerns in relation to the limited areas of private open space for each unit. Following engagement with the Housing Department, the right of way to the South of the site was removed and the area was incorporated into the site boundary to allow for ample private South facing gardens. The first stage of a proposed relief road has been incorporated to the West of the site and provides temporary access to the remaining right of way. This doubles as the main access route to the site while maintaining a defined entrance and development boundary when the remaining relief road is completed.

The site is located on the urban edge of Kinvara village and addresses the transition to rural form in a mix of detached two storey and dormer units. Materiality reflects the rural location in a mix of nap plaster and stone with stone boundary walls provided to the adjacent roads. The development is a natural extension of the village with a connecting footpath and service connections encouraging development.

In order to provide efficiencies in time and cost, three housing project sites of similar scope and scale were tendered together for procurement of Design Team services and were awarded to OBFA Architects following a competitive tender process. The 10 no. units proposed for development at Garraí Ghuairé were prioritised for construction stage.

Construction Stage:

The houses are orientated to maximise natural light with South facing rear gardens. Car parking is provided to the North of the units. The curve of the new streetscape allows the new homes to face existing housing across the road to the front while maximising the views across the countryside to the rear.

The houses achieve a Building Energy Rating (BER) of A2 providing comfortable and sustainable accommodation. Sustainable building services include air to water heat pumps and whole house heat recovery ventilation. During construction the layout of the dormer homes was re-designed to allow for occupants to work from home with a neat office created on the first-floor landing from what would have been a void within the roof.

This project utilised a unique part of the Galway landscape re-creating the vernacular stone walling of Kinvara to create the boundary to the new site. Existing stone was re-used from the previous site, where the new road now lies. The stone was cleaned and arranged to be re-used as a low wall front and side boundary to allow the new development sit comfortably within its new neighbourhood.



Responding To Needs:

The site layout has been designed to minimise opportunities for anti-social behaviour with passive surveillance of communal areas. South facing rear gardens are accessed directly from the open plan living spaces providing natural daylight and accessibility through glazed double doors. Shared open space adjacent to the site entrance creates opportunities for community interaction and social engagement as well as a soft border on the entrance approach to both the development and the village of Kinvara. A substantial area of rear gardens is paved minimising maintenance obligations for tenants. Green areas to the public area are also consolidated to reduce maintenance requirements.

Internal layouts incorporate universal design principles including an open plan kitchen / living / dining area and a double bedroom on the ground floor level together with ground floor accessible bathroom and storage. As outlined in the Design Manual for Quality Housing and in accordance with the design principles identified by Age friendly Ireland the houses provide flexibility in accommodation needs with a second bedroom for a carer or additional inhabitant on the first-floor level. The flexibility of the accommodation in terms of layout and accessibility ensures a wide range of housing needs are catered for. Potential occupants were considered on the basis of their category of need and position on the waiting list. A broad category of needs was accommodated including homeless applicants, applicants living in poor conditions of accommodation, applicants with financial difficulty and applicants with specific medical requirements.



Connection to the village was a critical factor in the overall design and an uncontrolled pedestrian crossing was provided to the existing footpath to the North connecting the development to the village centre. Of the ten units

occupied just five are car owners. The urban connection has therefore removed any hindrance to accommodation of non-car owners further expanding the flexibility of the scheme and its sustainable future.

TENANT PURCHASE SCHEME UPDATE

Circular 48/2023

Circular 48/2023 has issued on 20th December 2023 regarding changes to the Tenant (Incremental) Purchase Scheme 2016 and comes into effect on the 29th January 2024.

The Circular relates to amendments to S.I. No. 484/2015 – Housing (Sale of Local Authority Houses) Regulations 2015 and gives effect to the Housing (Sale of Local Authority Houses) (Amendment) Regulations 2023 and revokes S.I. No. 776 of 2021 - Housing (Sale of Local Authority Houses) (Amendment) Regulations 2021.

The amendments contained in SI No. 619 of 2023 are summarized as follows:

1. Revoke Housing (Sale of Local Authority Houses) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 (S.I. No. 779/2021).
2. Revise the minimum reckonable income required for an applicant to qualify under the scheme downwards to €11,000 per annum.
3. The requirement for joint tenants to have been in receipt of social housing support for 10 years each, is amended to one tenant only fulfilling the 10-year requirement.
4. The following payments will be now considered as primary source of income:
 - a. The Widow's, Widower's, Surviving Civil Partner's (Contributory and Non-Contributory) Pension,
 - b. Blind Pension,
 - c. Invalidity Pension, and
 - d. Disability Allowance.
5. The following payments will now be considered as a secondary source of income:
 - a. Working Family Payment,
 - b. Age 80 (Pension) increase, and
 - c. Rural Social Scheme.
6. The following payments will specifically not be considered when assessing reckonable income:
 - a. Constant Attendance Allowance,
 - b. Household Benefits Package (including Electricity and Gas Allowance),
 - c. Telephone Allowance,
 - d. Increase for living on a Specified Island,
 - e. Payments under Medical Care Scheme,
 - f. Disablement Benefit,
 - g. Training Support Grant,
 - h. Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance,
 - i. Humanitarian Assistance Scheme,
 - j. Funeral Grant,
 - k. Community Service Programme,
 - l. Work Placement Experience Programme,
 - m. Payments in respect of education or training courses,
 - n. Mobility Allowance, and
 - o. Income earned by children.

Applications received by local authorities prior to 29 January 2024 will continue to be processed in line with the conditions applicable to the Scheme prior to this date. Tenants are permitted to withdraw an application submitted to a local authority prior to 29 January 2024 and re-submit a new application in order to avail of, potentially, more advantageous application conditions.



UPDATE ON TENANT PURCHASE SCHEME 2023

Under the Tenant (Incremental) Purchase Scheme 2016, which is the current scheme for Tenant Purchase, a total of 40 applications were received during 2023, of which 21 were valid applications.

Letters of Offer issued to 52 applicants. Sales were finalised for 18 properties, with a further 8 applications at a very advanced stage.

SECTION 183 SALE OF DERELICT PROPERTIES

Under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001 and Section 211 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, and in accordance with Article 206(1) of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 and Section 88 of the Housing Act 1996, approval was granted at the December Plenary Meeting of the Council to dispose of the following properties owned by Galway County Council:

- Coppanagh, Kylebrack
- Creggauns, Creggs
- Croaghhill, Williamstown
- Kiltroque, Claregalway
- Abbeylands, Dunmore
- Loughatorick, Woodford Doonreaghan, Cashel
- Brierfort, Williamstown

All of these properties were deemed to be derelict and because of issues such as access, services, extremely rural location and lack of demand, it was considered that these were not viable to return to social housing.

It is now intended to carry out a further exercise on derelict housing stock to establish if any other properties exist which are not viable to bring back into use as social housing so that these can be sold (Subject to the Section 183 process) to assist first time buyers and other persons to get a start on the property ladder in accordance with Housing for All.

UTILISING NEW SOCIAL HOUSING STOCK TO REDUCE HOMELESSNESS

In December 2023, Darragh O'Brien, TD, Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage issued correspondence to all local authorities in relation to the continuing rise in the number of households accessing emergency homeless accommodation and the urgent need to take all steps that we can to reduce this number.

Key to reducing the numbers in emergency accommodation will be ensuring that increased numbers of local authority and Approved Housing Body homes are allocated to households



in emergency accommodation. All local authorities have been requested to ensure that increased allocations are made to households in homelessness emergency accommodation.

In addition, the Minister has requested that in the short to medium term, there is a need to ensure that the delivery programmes of local authorities include sufficient numbers of four-bedroom properties for larger families, as well as one-bedroom properties for single households. More immediately, all local authorities have been requested to pursue suitable acquisitions to support the accelerated exit of households from emergency accommodation. The Minister has requested a short report by the end of January 2024, setting out details of the numbers of allocations, and proposed allocations, to households in emergency accommodation that will be completed during Q4 2023 and Q1 2024.

TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION PROGRAMME 2025 – 2029

Under the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act, 1998 housing authorities are required to commence preparation of the next 5-year Traveller Accommodation Programmes (TAPs) for adoption by 31 December 2024. The existing TAPs will therefore continue to operate to end 2024 while authorities prepare for the adoption by the end of 2024 of the Sixth Traveller Accommodation Programmes (TAPs) 2025-2029. The objective is to ensure that the incoming elected members will have full ownership of the new TAPs including implementation, which is also in line with the advice of the National Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (NTACC).

1. Duration of the Programme

Under Section 10 of the 1998 Act the Minister has directed that the next accommodation programme should be for a period of 5 years for the period from 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2029 which was informed by advice from the National Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (NTACC).

2. Date for Adoption of New Traveller Accommodation Programme

The Minister has specified 31 December 2024, as the latest date by which accommodation programmes must be adopted. Housing authorities are therefore directed to commence arrangements for the preparation of the new programmes.

3. Consultation

It is essential that Traveller Accommodation Programmes are prepared in a consultative manner. The Act requires that housing authorities consult with adjoining housing authorities, the HSE, approved housing bodies, the Local Traveller Consultative Committee, other local Traveller representative groups, community and interest groups and the public in general.



The purpose of broad consultation is to ensure that the interests of all concerned with or affected by proposals for Traveller accommodation are considered and to facilitate a planned and comprehensive response by housing authorities to the accommodation needs of Travellers.

4. Assessment of Need

Housing authorities, following consultation, must make an estimate of the current and projected accommodation needs of Traveller families arising over the five-year programme. The housing authorities must identify:

- the estimate of the number of Traveller families for whom accommodation will be required for the duration of the programme.
- the existing and projected accommodation needs of Travellers over the five-year period of the programme; and
- accommodation options required including standard and group housing, permanent residential sites for caravans and transient sites.

In conducting the assessment of need for Travellers, housing authorities should have regard to data gathered in the summary of social housing assessments as of 1 November 2023. Housing authorities should also have regard to submissions made during the consultative stages and any other supplementary information available to the authority.

5. Preparation of New Programme and Targets

The form and content of the Traveller Accommodation Programmes is set out under Section 10 of the 1998 Act.

To facilitate monitoring of progress on the implementation of the programme, annual targets should be included in programmes. The targets should include details of the numbers of units of accommodation proposed to be delivered for each of the five years of the programme for Traveller specific accommodation (group housing, bays on halting sites, including the need for transient sites), both new and refurbished as well as standard housing.

6. Mid-Term Review

A Mid-Term Review of the next Traveller Accommodation Programme should be carried out not later than 30 June 2027. Following a review, any amendment to the proposed accommodation programme must be made within seven months. More frequent reviews should be carried out, if required.



TAKING IN CHARGE

The Taking in Charge target each year is to have 12 estates processed for Taking in Charge and/or for Bond Release. The Table A hereunder outlines out progress to date.

Table A – Taking in Charge 2023

Estates Taken in Charge	13
Estates pending Ratification of Minutes	1
Estates for consideration at next MD meeting	2
Bond Release (Estates not Taken in Charge)	2
Total	18

In addition to the above, the following is position@ 31/12/2023:

Estates – advertised for Taking in Charge	1
Estates – Works Complete – Pending Uisce Éireann and/or GCC Water Services agreement	3
Estates – TIC Led Estates – Works in Hand A further 40 estates are at various stages of Taking in Charge process.	17
Estates – Developer led Estates – List of Remedials issued awaiting notification of completion	37

The taking in charge of an estate is a process and at times can be quite protracted. I wish to thank and acknowledge the Taking in Charge team for their work to date.



HEALTH & SAFETY SEMINARS

3No. health & safety seminars with the theme of *'Ownership of Safety'* integrated throughout, were delivered to GCC employees who are predominately based in the Municipal Districts in late November/early December. They were held in the Connemara Coast hotel in Furbo, the Shearwater hotel in Ballinalsoe and the Raheen Woods hotel in Athenry and were attended by over 270 employees from a variety of sections including Roads, Water Services, Environment, Corporate Services, ERCD & Housing. Speakers included the Chief Executive who gave the opening address and members of the H&S section who reminded staff of the safety statement/safety management system and gave an overview of recent incidents that occurred. Also, speakers from Croí, a registered charity based in the West of Ireland, whose aim is to lead the fight against heart disease and stroke raised awareness around maintaining healthy lifestyles to prevent the onset of various diseases. A presentation on *'Safe Loading and Cargo securing'* also took place which advised on the correct techniques and equipment required to carry loads safely on the road. The keynote item of the day was delivered by a theatre company called Theatre at Work, who produced an interactive drama inspired by an Irish incident exploring how failings in judgement, and failure to uphold a safe system of work, led to a workplace fatality.



All speakers were received well, and the day was thoroughly enjoyed by all, while key health & safety messages were communicated to all.

HEALTH SCREENING

GCC's health screening programme continued through December and early January. As part of GCC's commitment to promote and encourage good health for all employees and elected members, GCC offered **free** and **confidential** health & lifestyle screening for all. This service was provided by Medmark Occupational Healthcare. To date 400 people have taken up the service.

STORM DEBI

Storm Debie hit Ireland in the early hours of the 13th November. County Galway was under a red wind alert for the duration of the storm. The country had been warned in advance by Met Eireann of the significant dangers of damage to property and trees associated with the

winds. Nationally, all schools had been instructed to delay opening until 11.00am on the 13th. No specific coastal warning was issued in advance of the storm.

Following the event, an extensive clean-up operation was undertaken by Galway County Council which included:

- the removal of wind fallen trees from the road network
- the removal of debris from collapsed walls on coastal roads
- emergency road repairs, mostly to roads adjacent to the coast

A claim was submitted to the Department in mid-December for recoupment of overtime costs, plant hire and material costs associated with the immediate storm clean-up. Galway County Council received recoupment of the full claim of €77,400 in December 2023.



EXAMPLES OF
CLEAN-UP
OPERATIONS
REQUIRED

The submission to the Department in December specifically related to the immediate clean-up costs associated with Storm Debie (removal of debris and road repairs). A separate capital funding submission associated with Storm Debie was submitted to the Department in early January 2024. The submission outlined significant costs associated with:

- reconstruction of sea walls
- replacement of coastal embankments
- repairs to coastal protection infrastructure
- repairs to damaged piers
- improvements to coastal access roads (road raising)

A number of the works outlined are on protected structures, are in environmentally sensitive areas and / or will will require design inputs. A total of €750,000 has been sought under the capital funding submission.



EXAMPLES OF CAPITAL PROJECT SUBMITTED

The most significant impact of Storm Debie in County Galway was felt by sections of our coastal residential and business communities. The unforeseen combination of high tide, direction and speed of winds and atmospheric pressures, lead to a very significant tidal surge along the coastline between the villages of Oranmore and Kinvarra. A significant number of properties were flooded during the event. The following is an outline of the areas worst affected:



- Oranmore – Coast Road, Main Street, Castle Road and Rinville
- Clarinbridge – Business Park and adjacent residents
- Kilcolgan – the Weir area
- Killeenaran / Brandy Harbour
- Kinvarra village center



LOCATIONS WHERE PROPERTIES ARE KNOWN TO HAVE FLOODED. 15KM BETWEEN ORANMORE AND KINVARRA.

It is estimated that a total of 35 residential properties and 28 commercial properties were flooded by coastal waters in the early morning of the 13th November.



The Office of Public Works has responsibility for leading and coordinating the implementation of National Flood Policy. It carries out this role by coordinating the implementation of

flood risk management policy and measures.



In accordance with procedures outlined by the OPW, in the immediate aftermath of the storm event, Galway County Council began an extensive data gathering exercise. The information gathered will assist in:

- Confirming the extents and impacts of the event
- Confirming the accuracy of existing OPW flood extent mapping
- Identifying additional areas that are / could be prone to flooding
- Identifying and prioritising locations for implementation of flood prevention measures

The data gathering by the Council involved:

- Recording the impacts of the event on public infrastructure
- Contacting residents and business owners where it was known / suspected their property was flood damaged. The experiences and concerns of affected owners were noted in these meetings.
- Gathering flood related data from sites in the immediate aftermath, including photos / videos / CCTV images from property owners
- Capturing high water debris lines along the affected coastline
- Liaising with third parties that were also involved in data gathering in the aftermath of the event

The data outlined above was gathered as quickly as possible after the event, as some of the information would only be available in the immediate aftermath (water marks on buildings etc.). All data gathering was completed within four weeks, including the transfer of significantly large CCTV files from affected property owners.

The OPW Flood Mapping section has been provided with detailed reports on flood extents at the 5 locations outlined previously (Oranmore, Clarinbridge, Kilcolgan etc.). The information provided will allow the OPW to assess the accuracy of their current mapping.

Due to the extents of flooding experienced in County Galway during Storm Debie, the Council has scheduled a preliminary meeting for mid-January 2024 with the OPW to discuss how best to progress flood protection submissions for the affected areas.

It is anticipated that significant hydrological and engineering assessments will be required to identify feasible solutions. Environmental assessments (Galway Bay SAC) will also form a significant part of the considerations.

ACTIVE TRAVEL PROGRAMME – ACTIVE TRAVEL FOOTPATH AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

Galway Country Council Roads Section has completed several National Transport Authority (NTA)-funded Active Travel projects across Galway County during 2023.

Almost €2.3m in Active Travel funding was spent throughout the year across all 5 MDs. Most of the NTA approved Active Travel projects are fully completed now, those that are not will continue into 2024.

Some 2023 Active Travel Projects successfully completed in 2023 by Galway County Council Roads Section include:

Ballinasloe Town -

Reconstruction of sections of existing footpaths around the Town. 180m of footpaths were replaced at a cost of €72,300. A huge thanks to the Roads Team in Ballinasloe Area for completing this project.



An Ceathrú Rua - funding was received to construct a footpath on Tismeain Road connecting the GAA facility to the Village. 200m of footpath was constructed and public lighting installed, costing €169.5k. Thanks to the Roads Team in Carraroe Area Office for completing this project.

Annaghdown - 140m of new footpath was constructed and some public lighting installed in Annaghdown costing €127k. Thanks to the Roads Team in Athenry Area Office for completing this project.



FIRE & EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

MAJOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

The West Region Major Emergency Management Steering Group (WRMEMSG) met on the 11th December and the West Region Major Emergency Management Working Group (WRMEMWG) met on the 12th December. On the 7th of December an Interagency Motorway Road Traffic Collision (RTC) exercise took place in Carnmore Airport. The hazmat (hazardous materials) capability of Galway Fire and Rescue Service was exercised along with the CBRN (Chemical, Biological, Radiological & Nuclear) capabilities of An Gardai Siochana. CBRN is a new addition to An Gardai Siochana's capabilities and the exercise proved successful in demonstrating this to all Principal Response Agencies (PRA's). In addition, the Onsite Coordination Centre was set up and Controller of Operations and Information Managers engaged from all PRAs. Galway County Council held a Major Emergency Development Committee meeting on the 14th of December. These meetings are held bi-monthly. A meeting of all PRAs is programmed for January 2024 to discuss the updating of the External Emergency Plan (EEP) for Colas Oranmore. This is an Upper Tier COMAH Site and the EEP is updated every 3 years.

CAPITAL PROJECTS

ATHENRY FIRE STATION

Construction of the New Fire Station in Athenry continues with the project approximately 70% complete and the building is now fully enclosed. Installation of services and remaining siteworks underway.





FRONT ELEVATION OF NEW FIRE
STATION ATHENRY

LOUGHREA FIRE STATION

Part 8 Planning application is scheduled to be lodged and the advert published in the local newspapers on the 19 January 2024.

BRIGADE MECHANICS WORKSHOP ATHENRY

Tender for Design Team to be issued by end of January 2024.

HEADQUARTERS AND GALWAY CITY FIRE STATION

Site identified and awaiting CE approval. Capital appraisal 99% complete and will be submitted to the NDFEM once CE approval is received. Briefing of CE's from Galway County and City Councils scheduled for 31 January 2024.

PREVENTION

The information in the following is based on the December figures. The Fire Authority received 18 Fire Safety Certificate applications and issued decisions on 7 applications. 8 Disability Access Certificate applications were received, and decisions made on 10 applications. A total of 2 new licenses were issued and 22 inspections were conducted.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING

PLANNING ENFORCEMENT

A total of 234 planning enforcement complaints were received to the end of December 2023. During 2023, 119 Warning Letters were served, 70 Enforcement Notices have been served. A total of 169 files were closed in this period.

Cases listed in the court calendar from January to March 2024

January 8

February 9

March 7

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

A total of 2,083 applications were received in 2023. The percentage of e files submitted for the year was 76% and 24% paper files. Looking at December alone the percentage of e files was 81% and 19% paper files.

A total of 1,548 of planning applications were decided in 2023, 1,213 granted and 335 refused.

The breakdown of the decisions granted/refused 2023.

	Granted	Refused
Extension of Duration	14	7
Retention	254	42
Permission	937	282
Outline	5	4
Permission Consequent	3	0
Total	1213	335

REGENERATION SCHEMES

ATHENRY

Part 8 submissions window remains open until January 12th, 2024, for the Public Realm development of Market Square and Cross street. An immediate turnaround is required post Planning approval to make this scheme available to form part of the CAT 1 Funding Call just announced yet scheduled to close on February 8th, 2024. Challenging but possible. The Regen team is working on the application and engaging with the Department.

LOUGHREA TOWN HALL

Review of the revised Tender Documents is continuing with the view to go to publish in February. The process of prequalifying contractors has been completed and the Regen Team has now re-engaged with the approved contractors to enable an efficient tender process. Fire Cert and DAC have now been approved for the Designed Works.

CLIFDEN

Public Realm Design Planning package has been received and will be reviewed by the Regen Team when resources allow.

Destination Towns Funding: Works are underway at Ardbear on the R341 to facilitate the Greenway readiness and provide safe passage for pedestrians from Clifden Town Centre to the head of the Greenway. This upgrade prioritises the safety of the pedestrian and will



require a yield and give way to HGVs at the severe bend. Consultations with Cllr Gerry King and the hauliers will continue.

Gateway signage has been manufactured in Kents Stainless in Wexford and is being prepared for transportation to Clifden.

Works to the Pavillion at the Coach Station have commenced and NUARK are on site.

PORTUMNA



Stakeholder meetings with adjacent landowners have taken place following issues raised at the Public Consultation phase.

Public Realm issues that were raised as part of the Public Consultation phase in Q3, 2023 are being dealt with by the Regen Team. Meetings with affected stakeholders will continue through Q1, 2024.



Abbey Street property acquisition has now been completed as confirmed by our Law Agents. Site inspections will take place as soon as resources allow, and the team is aware of some concerns borne by neighbours residing close to the property. Inter directorate meetings will be scheduled to coordinate the future uses of the site.

PORTUMNA COURTHOUSE

Site meetings with Regen, Consultants O C and C architects and identified successful tenderer have occurred in Portumna in the past week, identifying issues that are required to be resolved prior to formal appointment of successful tenderer. It would be hoped to have the Contractor on site in February 2024. Fire Safety and Disability Access Certs have been granted.

GORT: TOWN CENTRE FIRST PLAN

The Gort Town Centre First plan was launched in the Gort Town Hall on the 14th December.

The plan was welcomed by the local community and the Town Team. An application to the Heritage Stewardship Fund for the Gort Town Hall is to be submitted by January 15.



Negotiations will continue regarding the future of Canon Quinn Park with the Diocese.

The possible acquisition of lands to facilitate public parking replacement is being considered and discussed with stakeholders.

MEMBERS OF THE GORT TOWN TEAM, LIAM CONEALLY, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, AND LIAM HANRAHAN, DIRECTOR OF SERVICES, GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL

TUAM

The Regen team are currently working on an application for CAT 1 funding together with all the supporting documentation required for the competitive bid process. This work is being prioritised by Regen due to its importance to the Council and the tight timeline identified by the Department. It is hoped that the application will include the proposals for the Town Hall and also the proposed covered outdoor space at the Shambles which is currently the subject of a Part 8 planning process.

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. Our 2024 Schedule of Short Training Courses is now up and running.



JANUARY & FEBRUARY TRAINING SCHEDULE

20th January	Website & Online Marketing
3rd February	Website & Online Marketing
7th February	Social Media Marketing for Beginners
13th February	A step-by-step Digital Plan for your Business
17th February	Website & Online Marketing
20th & 27th	February How to Start a Podcast
21st February	Tax & VAT for Beginners

START YOUR OWN BUSINESS PROGRAMME (SYOB)

LEO Galway runs SYOB programmes monthly with up to 14 participants on each programme.

Start date for the next upcoming programme is January 29th.

LEAN LAUNCH

LEO Galway delivers the Lean for Business programme twice a year with up to 12 participants on each programme. Lean for Business is designed to encourage clients to adopt Lean business principles in their organisations to increase performance and competitiveness. Lean is for all companies, regardless of sector. Lean tools and techniques are helping companies across the globe to address competitiveness issues within their businesses by building the capability of their people to identify problems, improve operations and create a more innovative organisation.

The next programme will commence on February 19th in City Hall with up to 12 businesses participating.

LEAN FOR BUSINESS

Lean For Business is designed to encourage clients to adopt Lean business principles in their organisations to increase performance and competitiveness. Lean is for all companies, regardless of sector – it is not just for manufacturing companies.

Lean tools and techniques are helping companies across the globe to address competitiveness issues within their businesses by building the capability of their people to identify problems, improve operations and create a more innovative organisation. In a nutshell, Lean is about doing things quicker, better and saving costs. Lean strives to remove waste and to continually improve a company.



The current programme will conclude in February with an online review and results discussed. The next programme will commence in Spring with up to 12 spaces available for businesses to participate.

UPCOMING EVENTS

SHOWCASE 2024 – 21-23 JANUARY

Ireland is globally renowned for its craft and design and the Showcase trade fair is the international launchpad for so many Irish makers to achieve this recognition. With more than 380 exhibitors at the show across Fashion, Jewellery and Home & Gift, the three-day trade fair expects to welcome more than 4,000 registered trade buyers from Ireland and UK, Europe, Japan, and the UAE. The Local Enterprise Network has 105 stands and LEO Galway has seven clients taking part. These include:

- Sketchico
- Wild Atlantic Wicks
- Orla Culligan Ceramics,
- Fiona Concannon Art,
- Socksociety,
- Galway Fairytales and
- Emer Whelan Design.

GALWAY FINALISTS ANNOUNCED FOR BUSINESS OF CRAFT AWARDS AT SHOWCASE 2024

Two craft and design businesses from Galway have been shortlisted for the finals of the Business of Craft Awards as part of Local Enterprise Showcase at Showcase 2024 later this month.

The awards have three categories; **Best Newcomer** for the best craft and design business who is exhibiting for the first time, **One to Watch** for the best craft and design business who has excellent export and international potential and finally **Sustainability Champion** for the best craft and design business who is excelling in sustainability.

In the Sustainability Champion category, the finalists included Galway based company, Irish Socksociety and In the One to Watch category the Galway finalist was Sketchico both supported by LEO Galway.



OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE BIA INNOVATOR CAMPUS



BIA
INNOVATOR CAMPUS

The Official Launch of the Bia Innovator Campus will be on Friday 26th January from 10.30am – 2pm by An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar.



BACK ROW L-R: MARTIN KELLY, BIA INNOVATOR AND ALAN FARRELL, DIRECTOR OF SERVICES GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL

FRONT ROW L-R: LIAM CONNEALLY, CHIEF EXECUTIVE GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL, DEVON BUTTERFIELD, BIA INNOVATOR AND PETER FEENEY



L-R: LIAM CONNEALLY, CHIEF EXECUTIVE GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL AND PETER FEENEY

PAST EVENTS

LOCAL FOOD AND CRAFT GIFT FAIR

The Local Food & Craft Gift Fair 2023 took place on Sat 2nd December and Sunday 3rd December at the Blackbox Theatre, Dyke Road, Galway. The annual Fair had 58 stands this year and showcased the best of Galway's artists, designers, crafters, and artisan food and drink producers. The Fair is always a great opportunity for Galway shoppers to find gifts before Christmas and to support the small businesses in Galway by shopping local and spending local.



GALWAY LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE STAFF.

HERITAGE OFFICE

DECADE OF COMMEMORATIONS CLOSING EVENT



The "Embracing the Past" which took place on Thursday 14th December was the closing event of Galway County Council's Decade of Commemoration programme. This was a joint initiative between the Heritage Office, County and City Library Service and the Archives Department of Galway County Council.

Members of the public joined with community organisations, historians, heritage experts and local authority elected members and officials to acknowledge the past ten years of remembering the momentous and defining period in Ireland's and the county of Galway's history.

The event was launched by Councillor Dr. Evelyn Parsons, Leas Chathaoirleach of Galway County Council, and featured a keynote address by Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh, Professor Emeritus in History

and former Dean of Arts and Vice-President of NUI Galway. Throughout the day reminders of various exhibitions researched and held during the decade were on view, together with a craft display, various publications, and a showcase of videos and films. Tomás Mannion, Carmel Dempsey and guests also presented an Aeraíocht of music and dance.

The recording and publishing of previously unheard and unwritten stories of Galway's central role in the revolutionary period from 1913 to 1923 is a very important legacy project of Galway County Council's Decade of Centenary Commemoration Strategy 2013-2023.

"This closing event gives us an opportunity to once again remember and reflect on the many historic events which took place throughout the country between 1913 and 1923," stated the Leas Chathaoirleach, Cllr Dr Evelyn Parsons. "It also allows us to recognise and pay tribute to all the people, young and old, who contributed in so many ways, often on a voluntary basis, to ensuring the aspirations of the Commemorative Strategy for the County of Galway, issued in October 2013, were fulfilled."

According to **Liam Conneally, Chief Executive of Galway County Council**, "The ambitions of the Commemorative Strategy were to build on and complement the national commemorative programme, focusing on the role of our county and its people. It aimed to deliver a comprehensive and balanced programme of commemorations, recognise the totality of the historical period, ensuring mutual respect was central to all commemorative events and to ensure active engagement of all those interested in commemorating our history, in all its dimensions, with pride and respect."

Mr. Conneally added, "During the past decade, including through the pandemic, Galway County Council hosted and facilitated numerous events in every corner of the county, including on the islands, focusing on remembering and honouring significant moments and people, as well as honouring the ordinary citizen, who continued to work, learn, live and love during this extraordinary period in Irish life."

Acting County Librarian, Josephine Vahey, recalls the memorable wreath laying event in Athenry in March 2016, which formed part of the national commemorative events.

"It was the largest and the most significant commemorative event held in the county during the past ten years. It was both a solemn and joyous occasion," Ms. Vahey said.

According to **Marie Mannion, Galway County Heritage Officer and Galway County Decade of Centenaries Co-ordinator**, "Galway County Decade of Commemorations programme brought the community together to reflect on its past, learn from it, and appreciate the sacrifices made during a crucial period in Irish history".

"Our community of wonderful artists, musicians, poets and creatives contributed with huge enthusiasm and originality throughout the decade," added Ms. Mannion. "With great imagination, grace, and wisdom they captured the spirit of our emerging nation of 100 years ago. With great insight, reverence, and accuracy they reflected the cultural consciousness, mood and tone of our contemporary reflections on the decade and truly helped us re-imagine a fairer more equitable and balanced reading of our history."

Throughout the decade there were many history-based talks and activities, such as the in-person conference 'Social and Political Change', held in Loughrea in 2017, and the online seminar in 2021, titled 'The War of Independence comes to North Connemara'. There have been exhibitions, such as those marking 100 years of the Dáil in 2019 and of An Garda Síochána in 2023. There was also the hugely successful two-day Farming and County Life event held in Teagasc in June 2016.

Many publications were researched and launched, such as *Cumann na mBan: County Galway Dimensions* (2015), *Women of the West, Art Citizenship & Literature*, published by Galway Public Libraries in 2018, *The Independence Struggle in County Galway 1916-1923: A Research Guide* by Galway County Historian in Residence, Dr. Conor McNamara.

Important anniversaries were marked, such as with the Pumps, Piers and Potholes, 120 Years of Local Government programme, with talks, exhibitions and bespoke national school workshops. Its strong educational strand involved art educators working with 4th and 5th class school children, introducing them to the concept and history of democratic local government, and facilitating the creation of contemporary visual interpretations of various resolutions passed by Galway County Council at its inaugural meeting held on 22 April 1899.

Monuments were unveiled, gardens and trees were sown, and wreaths laid, while communities around the county embraced the commemorations and held their own events and projects such as the Athenry 1916 Commemorative Garden, Aleen Cust Conference in Mountbellew, Jeremiah Mee book launch in Glenamaddy, Loughnane Brothers events in Beagh, Scoil Mhuire, Maigh Cuillin who had an award winning project on John Geoghegan, *The War of Independence comes to North Connemara*, hosted by Clifden and Connemara Heritage with Galway County Council.

Patria McWalter, Galway County Council Archivist stated, "Many of the wonderful and important archive collections held in Galway County Council Archives were digitized, thus ensuring global access to a treasure trove of historical records".

Liam Hanrahan, Director of Services, Economic Development & Planning, Galway County Council, said, "The widespread engagement from the citizens of the county of Galway and the whole country, together with the diaspora, helped to ensure that the events of a hundred years ago were well remembered. He also commented that the Decade of Commemorations brought "a wider and deeper understanding of the lives of the people of that time, and the impact of the events of 1913 to 1923 had on them, and indeed the legacy of those events on our own lives today."

"Embracing the Past", the finale of the County of Galway's Decade of Commemorations programme, funded by, Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media and Galway County Council is a wonderful opportunity to gather, to remember, and learn from the past.

Visit the award-winning Decade of Commemorations website at

www.galwaydecadeofcommemoration.org and

<https://www.podomatic.com/podcasts/beogalway> for more information.





PRESENTATION OF 'EVER AND ALWAYS THE MARVELLOUS STORY OF ALEEN CUST 'BRITAIN AND IRELAND'S FIRST FEMALE VET' TO GALWAY COUNTY LIBRARY SERVICE AND LAUNCH OF "THE TALE OF A PIONEERING WOMAN" FILM BY PAUL MURPHY.



Cllr Liam Carroll, Cathaoirleach of the County of Galway presented the publication, *Ever and Always The Marvellous Story of Aleen Cust 'Britain and Ireland's First Female Vet* to Galway County Library Service and launched "The Tale of a Pioneering Woman"

film by Paul Murphy, in St Colman's Town Hall, Gort, Co Galway on 6th December.



Over 100 students and teachers from Gort National Schools, Gaelscoil na bhFilí, Kiltartan and Sternean National Schools and guests were present on the day.



Eithne O'Halloran of Kylemore Abbey wrote

the text and designed the layout aided by superb illustrations of Sara Nylund. The workbook is in a bilingual format and will appeal to a wide audience of younger readers, has added educational value, each section having an exercise to provoke searching minds, quizzes, word games and artistic challenges. Feedback to date suggests that the book will entertain both young and indeed older readers.

Aleen Cust was Irish born at Cordangan Manor, close to Tipperary town in 1868 to Leopold and Lady Cust, a land agent for the Smith-Barry estate. After Leopold's untimely death in 1878 at forty-six years of age, the family moved back to England and Aleen became a ward of the Widdrington family of Newton Hall, Northumberland, close to the Scottish border. Aleen always wanted to be a vet and despite being disowned by her family she went to the New Veterinary College in Edinburgh and graduated with merit in 1900. The Royal College in London refused her permission to sit their final examinations because she was a woman. Undeterred Aleen returned to Ireland and took a position assisting a well-known veterinary surgeon in Athleague, Co. Roscommon, William Augustine Byrne. Aleen was an excellent practitioner and a very fine horse woman; accepted by the community and kind and compassionate to her clientele. In 1905 Aleen obtained a controversial position as a Local Authority Veterinary Inspector for the Mountbellew district (described by the *Western People* as 'disgusting, if not absolutely indecent'), which she held until 1915 when she drove her own car to France to assist the treatment of injured horses during World War 1.

'Miss Cust' or 'Vet Cust' as she was known rode a white Arabian stallion in her earlier years at work and is remembered in Galway and Roscommon for her integrity, intelligence, wit, charm, determination. The women who followed in her footsteps found employment difficult as societal prejudices and economic depression were formidable barriers in the earlier years. In the present time the intake of females far surpasses that of male applicants to veterinary schools around the world. The feminisation of the veterinary profession is well and truly complete.

Veterinarians Brendan Gardiner, Donal Connolly and Ascinta Kilroy of the Aleen Cust Memorial Society, Marie Mannion, Heritage Officer of the Galway County Council, Nollaig Feeney, Heritage Officer, Roscommon County Council and Róisín O'Grady, Heritage Officer, Tipperary County Council managed and directed the project.



Joanne Perry, Galway County Council's Chief Veterinary Officer, who is following in Aleen's footsteps spoke to the audience about her work and what work would have been like for Aleen over one hundred years ago.



Cllr. Liam Carroll, Cathaoirleach of the County of Galway presented a copy of 'Ever and Always, The Marvellous Story of Aleen Cust 'Britain and Ireland's First Female Vet' bi-lingual workbook to Jo Vahey, Acting County Librarian as the library service will be distributing the booklet to all the schools in the county. Cllr Carroll also officially launched

"The Tale of a Pioneering Woman" film by Paul Murphy, which I hope you all enjoy watching.

Brendan Gardiner of the The Aleen Cust Society said that the Society "regard this bi-lingual schools' workbook as an eternal legacy to the memory of this trailblazing, courageous woman".

This workbook was funded by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media (Decade of Centenaries Local Authority Funding); Galway County Council, Roscommon County Council and Tipperary County Council. It is an action of Galway County Council's Decade of Commemoration Strategy 2013-2023. A digital copy of the workbook is available on the following link:

<https://heritage.galwaycommunityheritage.org/content/people/aleen-cust/ever-and-always>





GALWAY PROJECT HIGHLIGHTED IN NEW BOOKLET CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF HERITAGE OFFICER WORK.



Galway County Heritage Officer Marie Mannion (second from right) at the launch of the booklet in the Newpark Hotel in Kilkenny with CEO of the Heritage Council Virginia Teehan (left), Minister for Nature, Heritage and Electoral Reform Malcolm Noonan TD (second from left) and Chairperson of the Heritage Council Martina Moloney (right)

A special Heritage Council publication featuring stories

from heritage officers in every county is being launched today to mark 25 years since the Heritage Officer Network was founded. The booklet, 'Opening the door to Ireland's heritage' details one key heritage project from each local authority from the last three years which collectively, highlight the enormous contribution the Network has made to the preservation of our heritage over the last quarter of a century.

The booklet chronicles the growth of Féile na gCloch, or Festival of Stone, which takes place on Inis Óírr in Galway every year, celebrating the craftsmanship, heritage, and the timeless beauty of stonework. The project started in the early 2000s due to the volume of enquiries coming into the Galway County Council Heritage Office about courses and workshops covering traditional crafts and skills. What began as a small event in 2004 attended by around 200 people, has now expanded into a full-blown international festival with participants coming from all over the world.

The festival also has an important economic impact, playing a role in promoting local businesses and artisans involved in stonecraft. Taking place in September each year, it brings in valuable revenue to the island community in the off-tourism season.

In a partnership between the Heritage Council and local authorities, the first heritage officers were appointed in 1999 in Kerry, Sligo, and Galway with the aim of raising awareness of heritage issues within the local authority and among local communities. Since then, the heritage officer network has become synonymous with the protection and promotion of Ireland's heritage and for the first time in 2021, every local authority in the country had appointed somebody to the role.

While highlighting the important work they do, the stories in the publication also offer a stark insight into what may have been lost were it not for the heritage officers. Mangan's Clock in the heart of Cork city may have fallen into disrepair. The most historic buildings in Ballyshannon or Listowel may have been left derelict and allowed to crumble. The natural beach and dune habitats along the coast of Wicklow may have become irrevocably degraded and the craftsmanship of dry-stone walling on Inis Oirr may have receded.

Speaking on the launch of the booklet, Heritage Officer for Galway County Council Marie Mannion said: "It is deeply satisfying to see documented in this publication the influence of the Heritage Officer Network in shaping our approach to heritage conservation and protection. Although we work as individuals at local authority level, what is clear from these pages is that the real strength of the Network is in the collective. These stories cover only a snapshot of recently completed projects from current heritage officers, so when we factor in the hundreds of past projects completed since 1999, it brings into the focus the enormous impact that the Local Authority Heritage Officer Programme has had."

Chairperson of the Heritage Council Martina Moloney added: "I have had the pleasure of working extensively with our Heritage Officers over many years and am constantly amazed by the sheer variety of their work which is excellently captured in this beautiful publication. Not only do they provide advice, guidance, and information on all aspects of heritage, but they also secure funding, undertake research, collect data, and develop and lead a multitude of highly impactful and engaging projects. Raising awareness locally, Heritage Officers inspire communities to value and take ownership of their important local heritage in all its forms. What their work achieves, ultimately, is that it opens the door to our heritage for people across Ireland and further afield, so that it can be enjoyed and appreciated by everyone."

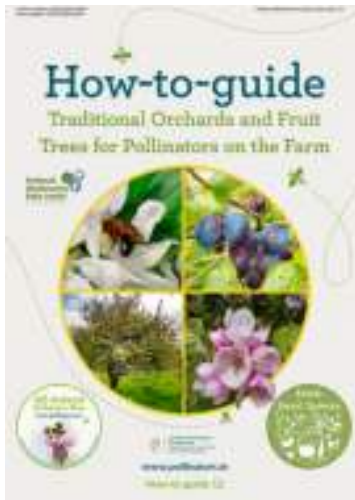
John Mulholland, Chair of the CCMA Rural Development, Community, Culture and Heritage (RCCH) Committee also attended the launch and said: "What has always stood out to me about the Heritage Officer Network is the range and number of individuals, groups and funders involved in the projects they undertake. It is very difficult to keep such a diverse range of interested parties singing off the same hymn sheet and getting the job done. This is the silent but tireless work of the Heritage Officers at play, to whom we owe a great debt of gratitude. On behalf of the CCMA, I commend them for their dedication."

The publication can be read in full on the Heritage Council website here:

<https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/content/files/Opening-the-Door-to-Irelands-Heritage.pdf>



EDUCATION OUTREACH: GRETB MOYCULLEN BIODIVERSITY COURSE PRESENTATION



The Biodiversity Officer met with and gave a presentation to the students of the GRETB Moycullen's Biodiversity Class on 12th December, outlining the work of Galway County Council in protecting, managing, and restoring Biodiversity around the county. She also outlined opportunities for the students to take action in their own communities. Educational resources and booklets were provided to the students, outlining best-practice for actions on projects such as creating habitats for pollinators and developing orchards.

MEETING WITH MINISTER MALCOM NOONAN AND THE HERITAGE COUNCIL STAFF IN KILKENNY

The Local Authority Biodiversity Officer Programme is supported by the Heritage Council through financial support as well as technical, developmental, professional, and training support for the biodiversity officers appointed to local authorities. The roll-out of the Biodiversity Officer Programme has been seen as a practical step in the acceleration of Ireland's National Biodiversity Action Plan in response to the biodiversity crisis and follows up on a Programme for Government commitment to ensure that all local authorities have a sufficient number of biodiversity and heritage officers among their staff complement. Minister of State for Nature, Heritage and Electoral Reform Malcom Noonan met with the Biodiversity Officers and Heritage Officers met and spoke of the key role they play, in particular, the important work they do with and for communities around the country.



PHOTO: (L-R) VIRGINIA TEEHAN CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, HERITAGE COUNCIL, CATHERINE CASEY, HEAD OF CLIMATE CHANGE, HERITAGE COUNCIL, TD MALCOM NOONAN, MINISTER OF STATE FOR NATURE, HERITAGE AND ELECTORAL REFORM, ROSINA JOYCE, BIODIVERSITY OFFICER, GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL AND DR. MARTINA MOLONEY CHAIRPERSON HERITAGE COUNCIL

POLLINATOR BULB PLANTING SCHEME 2023

The Biodiversity Office with the support of the Roads Section provided a total 100 packs of bulbs to community groups and Green Flag Schools working on the Biodiversity Theme through an initiative that is designed to foster biodiversity and support our pollinator populations across the county. As a local authority partner to the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan, Galway County Council is committed to improving habitats that support our pollinating insects. Through this scheme, the council supplied specially selected bulbs to communities so that they can create important feeding habitats for these species, which are under pressure. The flower bulbs are suitable for planting in pots, gardens or near your local sports pitch and will brighten up communities around the county for many years to come.



CROCUS ARE A SOURCE OF FOOD IN EARLY SPRING FOR OUR POLLINATORS AND WERE INCLUDED IN THE PACKS DISTRIBUTED TO COMMUNITY GROUPS AND SCHOOLS AROUND THE COUNTY.

ENVIRONMENT

CLIMATE CHANGE

CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

The consultation for the draft Local Authority Climate Action Plan closed on the 11th of December and the consultation on the accompanying environmental documents closed on the 22nd of December. A Submissions Report will be prepared for the public representatives in January 2024 to adopt the draft plan by the 24th of February.

CLIMATE ACTION UNIT

Our Community Climate Action Officer, Denise Feeney attended the Community Climate Action Showcase in Dublin Castle in November and presented our draft plan to the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications, Eamon Ryan.

CLEAN ENERGY FOR EU ISLANDS

The Clean energy for EU islands initiative provides a long-term framework to help islands generate their own sustainable, low-cost energy. The Clean energy for EU islands secretariat acts as a platform to exchange best practices and provides dedicated capacity building and advisory services. In June 2023, the secretariat invited applications of interest under the *30 islands for 2030* programme. Galway County Council supported applications for both the Aran Islands and Inishbofin. On the 30th of November 2023 it was announced that both applications were successful. The secretariat will now provide significant technical and organisational support to the island communities and Galway County Council. Further information is available at the following [link](#).

COMMUNITY CLIMATE ACTION FUND



The Community Climate Action Fund was opened in December to support small and large, rural, and urban communities to take climate action at a local level. Information on the fund is available at the following [link](#).



Media coverage of the launch of the fund is available at the following links:

[Galway allocates €762,000 in scheme addressing climate change | Independent.ie](#)

[County council launches new fund to support community-led climate change projects - Galway Bay FM](#)

[County council launches new fund to support community-led climate change projects - Connacht Tribune - Galway City Tribune](#)

Additional public information events relating to the draft plan and the fund were held in December including:

- Presentation and stand at the launch of the Gníomhaireacht Fuinnimh an Iarthair (GFI or Western Energy Agency) on December 7th at An Cromptán, An Ceathrú Rua. GFI is one of three Local Energy Agencies (LEAs) that have been set up to support homeowners, communities, and small businesses to implement retrofit energy upgrades in the Northwest Region under the LEAP Project (Local Energy Agencies in the Peripheral regions). The Climate Action Unit are represented on the Steering Group for the LEAP project and look forward to working with GFI.



- Agallamh ar an clár Iris Aniar ar RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta ar an 11ú Nollag (Interview on the programme Iris Aniar on the 11th of December):
<https://www.rte.ie/radio/rnag/clips/22331945/>
- Interview on Connemara Community Radio on 12th of December.
- An online Climate Action Fund Webinar, titled *Helping your Group Generate Projects and Discover the Best Ideas to Create a More Sustainable Community!* took place on December 11th from 19.00-20.30 and was very well attended. The webinar was hosted by the PPN in collaboration with the Climate Action Unit and horticulturist and Environment Consultant Aoife Munn. Topics covered included:
 - Climate Action Fund – making an application
 - Rain gardens, their uses, where to site them
 - Tree planting and which trees would suit which site
 - Local food production and supporting sustainable growers
 - Looking at waste as a community

- An additional 1-day workshop on the Climate Action Fund Themes will take place on the 13th of January.

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS



Secondary Schools Anti-Litter Poster Competition 2023



AWARDS CEREMONY FOR ANTI-LITTER POSTER COMPETITION FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS 2023



On Monday 11th December 2023 in the Galway County Council Offices, Barrack Street, Loughrea, the Cathaoirleach of the Municipal District of Loughrea, Councillor Jimmy McClearn, presented the prizes to the winners of the Galway County Council Anti-Litter Poster Competition for Secondary Schools 2023.

It is planned to run this competition again in 2024 and promoted it amongst a wider audience.

CHRISTMAS TREE RECYCLING 2024.



13 sites have been set up for the recycling of Christmas Trees from 6th January. Full details at <https://www.galway.ie/en/news/name,47268,en.html> .



GALWAY BAY FM Radio slot

Ours to Protect is a unique and exciting audio project managed by Galway Bay FM. It is a collaboration of local and regional broadcasters from across the country who have come together to tackle climate change, champion climate action, and inform

and educate audiences all over Ireland about how they can make a difference.

The Environmental Awareness Officer was interviewed on the programme, and he gave an overview of good waste management practices and the need to segregate waste properly. Excellent feedback was received.

SOCIAL MEDIA



We continued with our social media campaigns on Brown bin rollout, Food waste management at Christmas and illegal dumping.





In addition to pet dogs enhancing the lives of their owners, dog ownership involves owner commitment and owner responsibilities.

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM), the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) and Local Authorities have compiled this guide to responsible dog ownership in Ireland.

<https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/1a517-responsible-dog-ownership/>

VETERINARY DEPARTMENT

During 2022, a number of serious dog attacks on people (including children) and on sheep occurred, causing significant public concern in relation to the issue of dog control. The Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine Charlie McConalogue was tasked with coordinating governmental efforts around dog control, working with Minister Heather Humphreys and the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD). Ministers McConalogue and Humphreys subsequently requested their officials to convene a working group on control of dog's issues. Galway County Council's Veterinary Officer was and continues to be a member of this working group.

In March 2023, this Cross-Government Working Group on Control of Dogs published their report which contained a number of recommendations to improve dog control in Ireland which included the need for improve dog control infrastructure and equipment in local authority dog shelter facilities.

The Department of Rural and Community Development committed funding under the Dog Control Support Initiative to the local authorities in November 2023 with Galway County Council receiving an allocation of €67,967 in capital funding.

A substantial part of the funding allocated is being used to carry out upgrade works to the shelter which will help futureproof the service in respect of the health and wellbeing of the dogs in our care as well as assisting in improving health and safety for the dog wardens, shelter keeper and veterinary personnel on site. This work is ongoing in at present, and we

would hope that we will be able to provide an update on the completed works in the shelter in due course to the Plenary.

The funding available has also been of significant benefit to improving the existing equipment available to the service with the upgrade of items such as traps/cages etc. for the wardens as well as kennelling units for our wardens in which they could hold a dog overnight in the event the shelter is full or if they are called out to pick up stray/abandoned dogs in evening hours when bringing to the shelter may not be feasible.

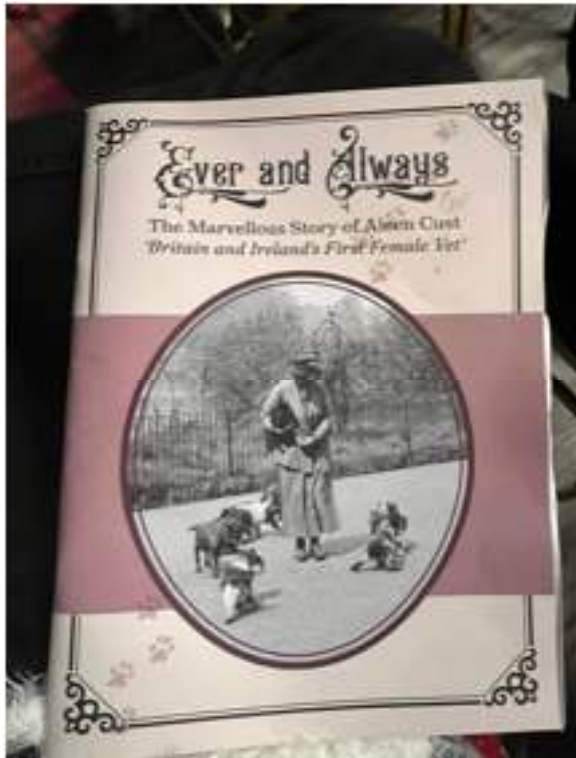
On 1st December 2023 on-the-spot fines for a number of offences under the Control of Dogs Act were increased, an outline of which is given below:

Offence	Relevant Section	New Fine Amount
Keeping or transferring possession of a dog contrary to section 2 of the Act	Section 27(1)(a)	€150
Dog not in effectual control	Section 27(1)(b) contrary to Section 9(1)	€300
Greyhound not properly controlled	Section 27 (1) (b) contrary to Section 10	€250
Stray dog found and not dealt with in the correct manner	Section 27 (1) (b) contrary to subsection (1) or (2) of Section 13	€150
No dog licences	Section 27(1)(c)	€150
Restricted dog not properly controlled	Section 27 (1)(f) contrary to Article 5 of the Control of Dogs Regulations, 1998	€300
No / incorrect collar / ID	Section 27 (1)(f) contrary to Article 6 of the Control of Dogs Regulations, 1998	€200

DOG CONTROL STATISTICS DEC 2023

- 609 dog licences were purchased during the month of December.
- 19 stray/abandoned dogs came through the dog warden service during December 2023.





Galway County Council's Veterinary Officer attended and spoke at the launch of a new bilingual book based on the life of Aleen Cust on the 6th of December in the Town Hall in Gort. The event was hosted by Galway County Council and the Cathaoirleach. Aleen Cust was born in Co. Tipperary in 1868 and later worked for Galway County Council as a veterinary inspector before volunteering during the First World War. The talk at the event gave an overview of the life and career of a Veterinary Inspector working for Galway County Council and how it compared to that of Aleen Cust when she worked for the local authority.

CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT

Seminar

The Veterinary Officer also presented to the National Dog Control Seminar in October and the LTACC on the 1st of December on Millie's Fund, a free spay initiative for eligible female dogs which Galway County Council partnered with MADRA on earlier in 2023. The scheme has had 142 applicants in respect of the scheme since its inception in March 2023 and continues to assist in reducing the number of unwanted puppies being born in Galway.

ABATTOIRS/MEAT INSPECTIONS

Galway's 11 abattoirs and 13 other meat businesses were busy in December. The abattoirs process beef, lamb, wild game and approximately 1500 local Turkeys for Christmas.

CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT

During the month of December 2023, the staff completed the RMCEI (Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections) Plan 2023. This included inspections of Section 4 Discharge License sites, Septic Tank inspections, Agricultural inspections, Group Water Scheme monitoring programme, and EPA River monitoring programme, etc. In relation to Agricultural inspections, the EPA requires local authorities to carry out inspections in “at risk” waterbody areas and in “protect” areas where the status is good or high. For the latter the aim is to keep the status at this level. The water quality team met with LAWPRO staff to choose two waterbodies, one in each category. The “at risk” waterbody chosen was Cappagh (Galway)_20, which is close to the village of Abbey. Inspections were completed in December upstream of the EPA monitoring station at Cappagh bridge, which dictates the status. Non-compliances with the GAP (Good Agricultural Practice) regulations were identified with several farms and follow-up will commence in early 2024. The “protect” waterbody chosen was Levally Stream_010, which is northwest of the village of Moylough.

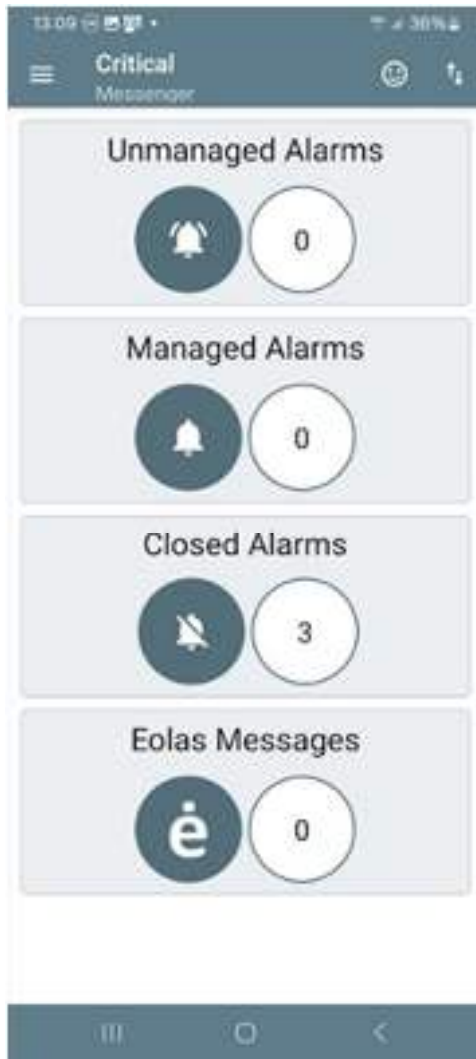
Farms upstream of the “bridge near Levally” monitoring station were inspected. Some minor non-compliances were identified and are being followed up.



LEVALLY STREAM_010
WATERBODY

A number of Agricultural inspections were also carried out in relation to complaints received and three of these farms were cross reported to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for GAP non-compliances.

LONE WORKING APPLICATION



Technical staff from the environment section attended training on a new lone working phone app being introduced by the health and safety section. When staff are lone working, they can activate the app and if there is an incident or emergency, an alert can be sent by the user which goes out to other members of their team.



ATLAS LONE WORKING APP



COMPLAINTS

During the month of December, a number of open complaints on the system were closed off. This was done by the water quality team with help from the community wardens and the administration staff.

OIL POLLUTION PLAN

An Oil/HNS (Hazardous Noxious Substances) Spill Contingency Plan for Galway County Council was submitted on 20th December 2023 to the Irish Coast Guard for review and approval. The Irish Coast Guard (IRCG), a Division of the Department of Transport, is the designated authority to approve these plans.

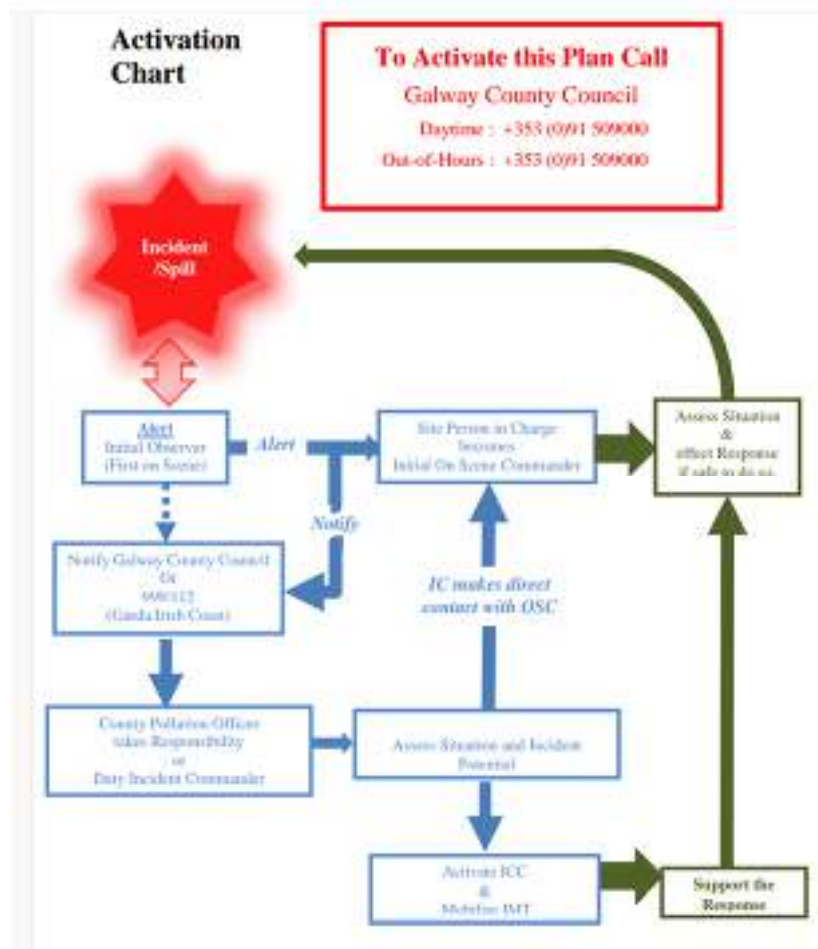


DIAGRAM FROM OIL/HNS SPILL CONTINGENCY PLAN



MULTI AGENCY WASTE ENFORCEMENT CHECKPOINTS



Checkpoints were carried out with members of the Gardai. These checkpoints were carried out at multiple locations in Tuam.

WASTE MANAGEMENT NOTICES ISSUED

Four Section 14 directions, three Section 18 notices and four Section 55 notices under the Waste Management Act were issued in December 2023.

Two of the four Section 14 directions were in relation to waste on a pier, and they directed the holders of the waste to dispose of it to an authorised facility and to provide receipts. The third Section 14 direction related to illegal burning of waste and directed the person to stop the activity. The person was also issued with a Section 18 notice requesting information on how they dispose of their waste. The last Section 14 direction related to infilling of land, and it directed the owner of the land to dispose of the waste material to an authorised facility and to provide disposal receipts.

One person received a Section 18 and a Section 55 notice. There is waste beside the person's house and the Section 55 notice directed them to clear it and dispose of it correctly and provide evidence of where it was disposed of too. The Section 18 notice required them to provide information about how they dispose of their household waste.

The second Section 55 notice was issued to the holder of many End-of-Life Vehicles and the other to the owner of a field where trailers of waste mattresses are stored. Both Notices issued require the holders to remove the waste to authorised facilities for proper disposal to prevent or limit environmental pollution within the given time.

The last Section 18 notice was issued to an authorised facility who had not submitted their waste records. The notice requested them to provide the information within the given time.

COURT ATTENDANCE

Three cases on waste management were listed for court in December. One case was adjourned to March 2024, but the defendant pleaded guilty to not having a waste collection permit when collecting waste with a view to reward or profit. The second case concerned a commercial operation causing water pollution. The defendant agreed to do work on the site before the next hearing in March 2024. The third case was adjourned to January 2024 as the defendant gave an undertaking to the court to dispose of the waste on his site.

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT UPDATE

ATHENRY MUNICIPAL DISTRICT UPDATE

ARTICLE I. ROADS PROGRAMME PROGRESS REPORT – JANUARY 2024

1. Restoration Improvement – Ongoing
 - a. Roanmore – Contractor Delay
 - b. Annagh Hill - Contractor Delay
 - c. Gorteen - Complete
 - d. Kiltullagh - Complete
 - e. Castlelambert - Complete
 - f. Cloonboo - Complete
 - g. Lydican - Complete
 - h. Garraun/Ardaun – Complete
 - i. Baunmore – Complete
 - j. Cullairbaun – Complete
 - k. Monivea – End of January

2. Restoration Maintenance/Improvement
 - a. Surface dressing - Complete
 - i. Belville Cross/Hundred Acres - Complete
 - ii. Parkcurry - Complete
 - iii. Carnakelly South - Complete
 - iv. Glennagloghaun/Cloonkeen - Complete
 - v. Kilskeagh - Complete
 - vi. Castleturvin - Complete
 - vii. Gardenham - Complete
 - viii. Moneymore - Complete
 - ix. Maonbaun - Complete
 - x. Annaghdown - Complete



- xi. Killoughter - Complete
- xii. Tiaquin demesne – Complete
- xiii. Ballinloughaun - Complete
- b. Works completed by direct labour crews.
 - i. Farravaun - Complete
 - ii. Gortbrack - Complete
 - iii. Rockfield - Complete
 - iv. Killoughter- Complete
 - v. Ballygurraun – Complete
 - vi. Clamperpark - Complete
- c. Recycling Contract – Contract Complete
 - i. Aghafadda- Complete
 - ii. Clooncah - Complete
 - iii. Bushfield - Complete
 - iv. Muckrush - Complete
 - v. Annagh West - Complete
 - vi. Monard - Complete

3. Safety Improvement Works

- | | |
|---|---|
| a. Derrydonnell Beg Junction
design report | Preliminary Design Review complete
Road safety audit Complete. |
| b. Moyveela (Mother Hubbards) | Works complete. |
| c. Oranbeg (Furey's Cross) | Preliminary Design Phase Road safety
audit planned. |
| d. Cregmore Bridge Traffic Lights | Lights Damaged over Christmas period. |

4. Climate Change

- a. L6214 Clogher – LO Discussions
- b. L7125 Ballydavid – End of January
- c. L3112 Gloves West - Complete
- d. L2117 Lisheenananoran - Complete
- e. L3117 Cormachugh – Complete

5. Community Involvement Scheme

- a. CIS.86.21 L-31165 Curry Gorteen
- b. CIS.69.21 L-3112 Montpellier Athenry - Complete
- c. CIS.73.21 L-2119 Baunmore/ Gardenham – Issue with Landowner consent no
Funds.
- d. CIS.59.21 L-4101 Maree Road Oranmore – Cycle path placed ongoing.
- e. CIS.32.21 L-7119 Mirah Turloughmore – Complete.
- f. CIS.29.21 L-6202-1 Rooanmore planned.



8. Figures and Pictures



MIRAH FLOOD RELIEF –
ONGOING



MIRAH FLOOD RELIEF –
ONGOING



R446 DUAL
CARRIAGEWAY WORKS
– COMPLETE



R446 DUAL
CARRIAGEWAY
WORKS – COMPLETE



ORANMORE BOYS
SCHOOL –
COMMUNITY
INVOLVEMENT SCHEME



ORANMORE BOYS
SCHOOL – COMMUNITY



CREGMORE BRIDGE LIGHTS
REPAIR



AUCLOGEEN – CIS



GORTEEN CIS



COAST ROAD CLEAN UP



STORM DEBI TREE REMOVAL

BALLINASLOE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT UPDATE

In December 2023, Ballinasloe MD completed projects in the 2023 Roadworks Programme. This included Ballymacward village which was successfully resurfaced as shown in the images below. The remaining overlay project at Ballygar Village is expected to be completed in January 2024, subject to contractor available and suitable weather conditions.

Operational maintenance works completed by Ballinasloe MD staff consisted of the drainage district repair and improvement works, storm clean up and repair, road surface patching, hedge cutting and flooding preparedness actions. Staff throughout the MD are continuing to monitor flood level online data, physical inspection locations and weather forecasts, in advance of possible flooding events.

Ballinasloe MD managed the delivery to completion of the TII-funded N63 Footpath and Lighting safety improvement Project at Cloonreleagh, Mountbellew. This project now provides a safe accessible route on the Moylough Road, and included significant drainage improvement works at this location.

A Community Involvement Scheme (CIS) was completed at the entrance to Dún Íde housing estate. This location is on the R348 Sarsfield Road on the Ballinasloe to Kilconnell Road, adjacent to Ashtree Cross. The works included sightline improvement works.

Ballinasloe MD supported the running of the inaugural Connacht Championship Cyclocross Event held at the Fair Green in Ballinasloe, on the 17th December 2023. The event was organised and run by Ballinasloe Cycling Club, in association with Cycling Ireland. General feedback following the event is that it was highly successful.

BALLYMACWARD R359 OVERLAY WORKS UNDERWAY DECEMBER 2023



BALLYMACWARD R359 OVERLAY WORKS COMPLETE DECEMBER 2023





MOUNTBELLEW CLOONRELEAGH N63
FOOTPATH SAFETY WORKS INCLUDING
ACCESSIBILITY, LIGHTING & DRAINAGE –
COMPLETE DECEMBER 2023



CIS SCHEME AT DÚN ÍDE ESTATE
ENTRANCE, BALLINASLOE R348 -
SIGHTLINE SAFETY WORKS COMPLETE
DECEMBER 2023



THE FAIR GREEN IN BALLINASLOE WAS THE LOCATION OF THE CONNACHT CHAMPIONSHIP
CYCLOCROSS EVENT RAN BY BALLINASLOE CYCLING CLUB SUPPORTED BY GALWAY COUNTY
COUNCIL ON THE 17TH DECEMBER 2023



THE PALESTINIAN FLAG WAS RAISED AT ST. MICHAEL'S SQUARE IN BALLINASLOE IN DECEMBER 2023, AS AN ACT OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLE OF PALESTINE. THIS ACTION WAS AGREED BY ALL BALLINALSOE MD COUNCILLORS AT THE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETING HELD ON THE 13TH DECEMBER 2023.

CONAMARA MUNICIPAL DISTRICT UPDATE

Conamara MD is currently preparing a DRAFT 2024 Roads Programme.

Below is a non-exhaustive list:

- Restoration Improvement (RI)
- Restoration Maintenance (RM)
- Discretionary Grant (DG)
- Safety Improvement Works
- Specific Improvement Grants
- Strategic Regional and Local Roads
- Drainage Works
- Community Involvement Scheme
- Former National Roads
- Rural Limit Speed Sign & Housing Estate Signage
- Cycle "Safe Passing" Signs
- Climate Change Adaptation & Rehabilitation Grant
- Council Own Funding Regional & Local Roads
- DRCD - Local Improvement Schemes

- NTA - Active Travel Programme 2024

Furthermore, the Conamara MD is considering requests for funding for works on the 3 No. Aran Islands and Inishbofin for 2024. In 2023 the DRCD provided funding for several road resurfacing works on Inis Mora and 2No. Teilescóip Inis Méain.



NEWLY INSTALLED BUS SHELTER
CASLA



ROAD EMBANKMENT FAILURE,
CNOC, LEITIR MEALLAIN

2023 ROADS PROGRAMME STATUS:

The 2023 Roads Programme is complete. Additional road projects, as advised to Elected Members, will be completed in Q1 as resources allow and subject to suitable weather conditions.

2024 ROADS PROGRAMME STATUS:

We have commenced work on the preparation of the 2024 Roads Programme for the Loughrea Municipal District. This work is in anticipation of Galway County Council receiving notification of the 2024 Regional and Local Road Grant Allocations in the coming weeks. We are always under significant time pressure to finalise our proposed programme and it is provisionally intended to have the proposed programme before the MD at a meeting in February or March.

WORKS COMPLETED:

During the December/January period the focus shifts to maintenance of ancillary items associated with the road network. To this end works such as sign replacement, hedge trimming, opening of water tables, pothole repair etc. are prioritized. Several outstanding NOM projects and various other minor work projects have also been completed. A sample of such works is as follows:

- Installation of Salt Bins at 8No. locations within the Loughrea MD.
- Tree removal from St. Laurence's Fields, Loughrea
- Road repairs at Hedgetown, Bullaun.
- Removal of illegal dumping of domestic waste in Loughrea. Specifically, from the bottle bank site.
- Opening of Water Tables on the R380 – Gort to Loughrea Regional Road
- Preparatory works for the installation of an Accessible Equipment Hub in Portumna
- Construction of a Stone Wall in Labane to facilitate the introduction of a new footpath.
- Cemetery footpath upgrade works - Renville
- Milestone marker upgrade works - Kiltartan

TREE MANAGEMENT

Tree removed at St. Laurence's Fields, Loughrea in response to safety concerns raised.



ILLEGAL DUMPING

Continuing issue with the illegal dumping of domestic waste at bottle banks and public bins. Items are removed from these locations on a regular basis by Loughrea Municipal District outdoor staff.



ROAD REPAIRS



HEDGETOWN, BULLAUN.

WINTER MAINTENANCE

Salt bins have been placed at 8 locations on routes around the Loughrea Municipal District to enable members of the public access salt to make footpaths and walkways safe during periods of freezing weather.



MAP OF LOUGHREA MD
SHOWING THE 8
LOCATIONS PLUS A 5KM
COVERAGE RADIUS



SALT BIN LOCATED AT REAR
OF PORTUMNA AREA
OFFICE/LIBRARY

ACCESSIBLE EQUIPMENT HUB



PREPARATORY WORKS FOR THE INSTALLATION OF AN ACCESSIBLE EQUIPMENT HUB IN PORTUMNA HAVE COMMENCED.

ROAD SAFETY WORKS



TIMBER POST AND TENSIONED MESH FENCE INSTALLED AT HIGH RD. TYNAGH TO ADDRESS SAFETY CONCERNS RELATED TO EXPOSED EMBANKMENT.

CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE WORKS

Retaining wall and shed rebuilt at High Rd., Tynagh following a verge collapse related to heavy rainfall.



TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT



PARKING RESTRICTION
BOLLARDS ERECTED TO
REINFORCE PARKING
ARRANGEMENTS AT BARRACK
STREET, LOUGHREA



CONSTRUCTION OF A STONE WALL IN LABANE TO FACILITATE A NEW FOOTPATH.



CEMETERY FOOTPATH UPGRADE WORKS – RENVILLE



TUAM MUNICIPAL DISTRICT UPDATE

ROAD MAINTENANCE



The last few months have brought challenging road conditions for the Tuam MD with a sustained period of prolonged rainfall coupled with the current low (minus) temperatures.

The Tuam MD roads staff have responded and endeavoured to ensure roads remain passable and that access will be maintained to necessary services including schools. It should be noted, however, that we have finite resources and that it is not feasible to respond to all the potholes, flooding the same day.



Repairs will be prioritized by Road Classification – National Road=> Regional=> Local Primary=> Local Secondary=> Local Tertiary and by strategically important routes. It will take up a month to 6 weeks to carry out the full winter road maintenance works – weather dependent and number of issues.

WINTER SERVICE PLAN

In severe and prolonged winter weather stockpiles of grit will be made available for use by the public when resources allow. We intend to continue providing salt at specific public locations during periods of prolonged severe weather (prolonged meaning an expectation of 5 no. days of sub-zero temperatures) in the Tuam MD

The locations are as follows;

1. Parkmore Estate Tuam	9. Kilconly (Community Centre)
2. Palace Fields estate Tuam	10. Belclare (beside Bottle Bank)
3. Cois Na H-Albainn estate Tuam	11. Caheristrance (opposite the Church)
4. Lissadyra estate Tuam	12. Headford (at GAA Pitch)
5. Pottlerys estate Tuam	13. Barnadearg Church
6. Headford Secondary School	14. Abbey Church
7. Entrance to the depot in Dunmore Town	15. Annagh Hill School
8. Peak Hill Dunmore	16. Kilcoona school



Be Winter-Ready

Local Authorities are required to do a major review of their operations and to produce a plan and map detailing the proposed response/operations that the Council will be operating. This review has been carried out prior to the onset of winter. During the period from October through to April weather conditions may create frost and ice on roads and make travel on roads more hazardous than normal. There is an onus on all road users to eliminate nonessential driving and to

exercise extreme care if required to drive in such conditions.

Galway County Council monitors road conditions through the winter period and has organised a road gritting regime on specific roads listed within the plan if conditions require gritting. These are priority routes and while every effort will be made to have these routes gritted by morning it cannot be guaranteed as weather conditions i.e., rain, can prevent gritting. Drivers are warned not to assume that these roads have been gritted.

Given the scale of the resources involved in delivering the winter maintenance service it is not possible to provide the service to all parts of the network. Galway County Council ordinarily treats 623 km of road which equates to 100% of the national primary network, 100% of the national secondary network and 20% of regional roads.

WORKS CARRIED DURING THE MONTH IN TUAM MUNICIPAL DISTRICT



Community Involvement Scheme outside Headford which involved setting back boundary to improve sightlines for motorists and passing bays.



HEDGE CUTTING IN BEAGH AND KILCONLY



NEW LINE MARKING ON CASTLE STREET DUNMORE APPROACHING N83



A NEW WASTE COMPACTOR HAS BEEN DELIVERED TO THE TUAM TOWN DEPOT. THIS COMPACTOR WILL ALLOW THE MD TO IMPROVE MANAGEMENT OF WASTE, REDUCE COSTS OF WASTE COLLECTION HAVE A EFFICIENT WORKING ENVIRONMENT AND MINIMISE TIME AND INCREASE EFFICIENCY.



ROAD OVERLAYS BEING COMPLETED IN TUAM TOWN



BEFORE ROAD REPAIRS N83 DUNMORE TO CLOONFAD ROAD





.....
AFTER ROAD REPAIRS N83
DUNMORE TO CLOONFAD
ROAD



.....
BEFORE ROAD REPAIRS N83 DUNMORE



.....
AFTER ROAD REPAIRS N83 DUNMORE



WINTER CLEANING BY THE COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT SCHEME IN TUAM TOWN WHICH INCLUDED POWER WASHING OF STREETS, LITTER COLLECTION AND GENERAL CLEANING OF STREETS AND ESTATES.

Mise, le meas,

Liam Conneally

***Chief Executive
Galway County Council***

16th January 2024