



Coiste um Fhorbairt Pobail Áitiúil
na Gaillimhe
Galway County Local Community
Development Committee



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

Galway County Local Community Development Committee

Annual Report 2025

Introduction

Local Community Development Committees (LCDC's) were given statutory effect in the Local Government Reform Act 2014 and were established in each local authority area thereafter. The legislation and governing regulations also give statutory effect to the functions of the LCDC and the Local Economic & Community Plan to be developed under its remit. These are further described in Operational Guidelines which are issued by the Department of Rural and Community Development & the Gaeltacht, which is the funding body for the programmes delivered by the LCDC.

The primary purpose of the LCDC is to bring a joined-up approach to local and community development, by bringing all stakeholders together at a local level. LCDC's draw on the expertise and experience of public and private actors within the local authority area to provide effective and efficient services to citizens and communities, and particularly those most in need of those services.

Membership and Administration:

The Galway County Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) has 19 members drawn from the public and private sectors. The membership brings together the expertise and skills of people actively working in local development and community development with local authority members, officials, and state agencies, to implement a joined-up, cross-sectoral approach to local and community development programmes. Six meetings of the LCDC took place in 2025, and membership of the LCDC comprised of the following at year-end of 2025:

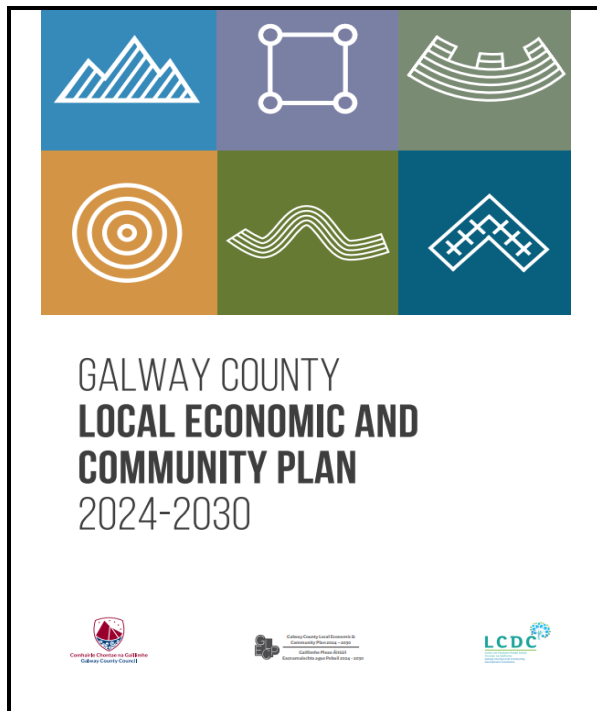
Pillar	No.	Nominating Body	Name of Nominee
Public Sector - 9			
Local Authority Elected Members	3	Galway County Council	Cllr. Michael Connolly (Chairperson) Cllr. Padraic Mac An Iomaire (Vice Chair) Cllr. James Charity
Local Authority Officials	2	Galway County Council	Kieran Coyne, A/Director of Services replaced by Michael Owens, Director of Services (from 15 th July 2025) Caroline McDonagh, LEO
State Agencies	4	Health Service Executive	Laurence Gaughan, Project Manager - Health & Wellbeing
		Department of Social Protection	Regina Higgins, Divisional Manager West
		Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board	Donal Walsh, Adult Education Officer
		Údarás na Gaeltachta	Sean O'Coisdealbha, Bainisteoir Réigiún an Iarthair
Private Sector - 10			
Local Development & Community	3	Galway Rural Development	Steve Dolan, CEO

Development Bodies			
		FORUM Connemara	Karen Mannion, CEO
		Comhar na nOileán CTR	Máire Uí Mhaoláin, Bainisteoir
Sectoral Interests	2	Employers & Business	Eveanna Ryan, Galway Chamber
		Agriculture & Farming	Anne Mitchell, IFA
Community & Voluntary Interests	5	PPN – Social Inclusion College	Kevin Gavin
		PPN – Social Inclusion College	Peter Gohery
		PPN – Community & Voluntary College	Máire Uí Mhaoláin replaced by Vincent Lyons (from 30 th Sept 2025)
		PPN – Community & Voluntary College	Gerard Costello
		PPN – Environmental College	Jen Fisher replaced by Aoibheann O’Brien (from 30 th Sept 2025)

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

The Chief Executive assigns staff to assist the LCDC in the exercise of its functions, including an assignment to the post of Chief Officer. The Chief Officer is not a voting member of the Committee but attends and participates at all meetings in an advisory and support capacity, particularly regarding policy and strategic direction, promotion of inter-agency working through the Public Participation Network (PPN), and providing an information flow with the local authority, particularly the Economic Development SPC. Mr. Kieran Coyne, Senior Executive Officer, Galway County Council, held the position of Chief Officer of the LCDC and Ms. Lorna Baek was appointed as the new Chief Officer at the LCDC Meeting held on 15th July 2025.

Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2024-2030:



The Local Economic and Community Plan was adopted at the December Council meeting in December 2024. The purpose of the Galway County Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP), established under the Local Government Reform Act 2014, is to set a framework, objectives and actions needed to promote and support the economic development and the local and community development of Galway County. The LECP acts as the primary mechanism at the local level to bring forward relevant actions arising from national and regional strategies and policies that have a local remit.

The LECP for 2024-2030 consists of two parts:

- The overall LECP framework detailing the High-Level Goals and Sustainable Community and Economic Objectives as well as consideration of outcomes and high-level indicators for the 6-year LECP period.
- Implementation Plan which details the inputs, actions and resources required for that implementation plan period as well as relevant specific key performance indicators to facilitate evaluation.

The community element of the LECP was agreed by the Galway County LCDC in December 2024. The LECP Framework 2024-2030 details 6 High Level Goals which were agreed by the to help achieve the overall LECP vision:

- 1 Active, healthy and safe communities
- 2 Equitable, inclusive and engaged communities
- 3 A county that celebrates its unique cultural identity
- 4 An accessible county with thriving urban and rural settlements
- 5 A sustainable and climate resilient county
- 6 A county that priorities economic development and education

These goals include 13 Sustainable Community Objectives and 10 Sustainable Economic Development Objectives with a combined total of 77 objectives.

The LECP Advisory Committee will reconvene in Quarter 1 of 2026 and an end of year review will take place in December 2026. The review will outline progress on each of the actions monitored by the LCDC.

Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme:

Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) is a targeted, holistic programme for individuals who are most disadvantaged and less likely to use mainstream services. SICAP is Ireland's primary social inclusion programme and is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development & the Gaeltacht through the European Social Fund and managed at local level by the Local Community Development Committee with support from Galway County Council. Under the programme, the Programme Implementers provides support directly to individuals based on their identified needs, with a view to promoting personal development and progressing to longer-term outcomes such as employment and education. The programme also focuses on collective community needs and the LCDC has identified 'People living in communities impacted by Disadvantage' as a priority target group, and the Programme Implementers will use a flexible community development approach to design and deliver the most appropriate types of interventions, projects, and initiatives to tackle poverty, high unemployment rates, and other issues associated with the most disadvantaged small areas and communities in the County. SICAP aims to reduce poverty and promote social inclusion and equality through local engagement and interagency collaboration with local, regional, and national services.



Since 2024 and under the new SICAP 5-year period 2024-2028, the number of Lots in Galway County is 3 as follows:

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

The contracts are a combined budget for SICAP in County Galway of almost €1.8m per year across the lifetime of the programme and was implemented across 3 Lots; Galway East and Galway Islands by Galway Rural Development CLG, and Galway West by Forum Connemara CLG in 2024. A new contract was signed for delivery of the Social Inclusion & Community Activation Programme (SICAP) for the Galway Islands in December 2024. Contracts for the delivery of the programme were signed by the Programme Implementor, Comhar na nOileán, along with Galway County LCDC (Local Community Development Committee) and Galway County Council and came into effective on 1st January 2025.



Attending the signing of SICAP Galway Islands Contract on 16th December 2024 at Galway County Council Chamber were (l-r) Cllr Michael Connolly, Marian Uí Chonghaile, Financial Officer, Comhar na nOileán CTR, Liam Conneally, Chief Executive, Galway County Council, Máire Uí Mhaoláin CEO, Comhar na nOileán CTR and Kieran Coyne, Chief Officer LCDC, Galway County Council.

Galway Islands Lot:

Comhar na nOileán exceeded the targets set for the programme in 2025. The KPI 1 target was exceeded by 225%, with 9 Local Community Groups assisted under SICAP, against a target set of 4. The KPI 2 target for 2025 was also exceeded by 118%, with a total number of disadvantaged individuals engaged on a one-to-one basis at 47, against a target set of 40.

Throughout 2025, individuals across the 4 Galway Islands received a wide range of supports through SICAP. Comhar na nOileán delivered a range of industry-accredited courses to individual participants across the Galway Islands, supporting skills development, employability, and progression opportunities. Soft-learning courses were provided to individuals with a particular focus on enhancing both physical and mental wellbeing, responding to identified needs within island communities. Comhar na nOileán has been highly active in delivering a range of initiatives focused on personal development, mental health, and overall wellbeing across the Galway Islands. A flavour of the courses ran on the Islands ranged from Mindful, Movement and Meditation, Leave No Trace, Chair Yoga, Mindfulness and Meditation, all of which were very well attended.



Leave No Trace on Inis Oirr



A knitting Group on Árann called Snáth na mBan

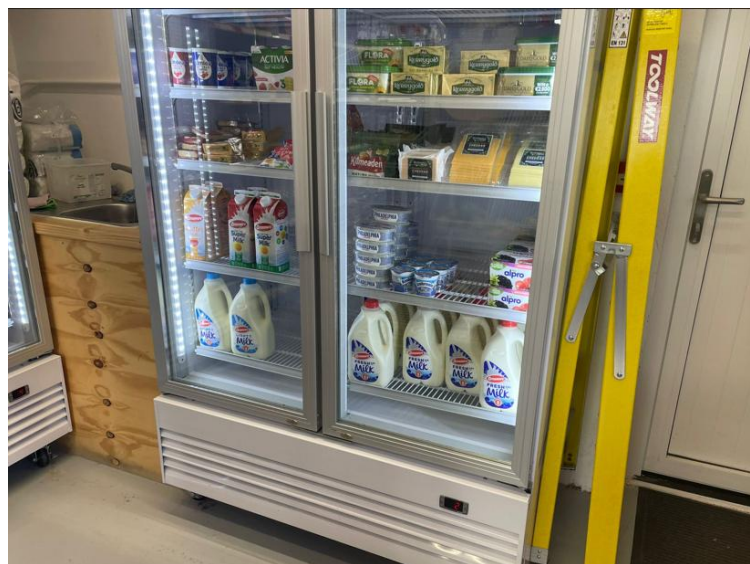
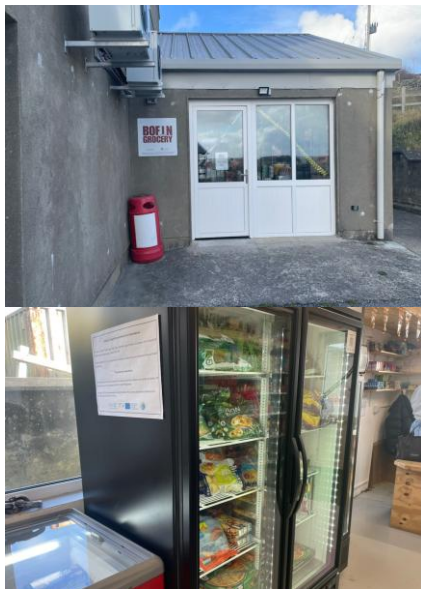
Monthly SICAP clinics were held on each of the Galway Islands to ensure accessibility of supports and ongoing engagement. These clinics provided a consistent local presence, enabling participants to access information, guidance, and tailored supports while reducing barriers associated with travel and geographic isolation.

In partnership with Healthy Ireland, an online Women's Health Programme consisting of four weekly sessions was delivered simultaneously to participants on all four Galway Islands. The programme was well attended and received a positive level of engagement from participants. This series of weekly sessions was very well attended in Spring, and a further series of sessions was delivered in Autumn.

Comhar na nOileán engaged with community organisations across all four Galway Islands to identify individuals within each community who require essential workplace training. To date, a Safe Pass course has been delivered for residents of the three Aran Islands and Inishbofin in partnership with SOLAS. This training was held at Aer Arann, Indreabhán, a centrally located and convenient venue for participants from the Aran Islands

Admin support and acquisition of resources to continue work was given to groups, assistance with community events and assistance with administration and applications for funding greatly benefits groups on the Islands.

Support was provided to an intergenerational group Garraí na nDaoine (Cleas Teo) primarily serving older residents, through ongoing practical support to access funding and apply for grant-aid. This resulted in making the activities of Garraí na nDaoine more accessible to people with challenges and those with disabilities. Supports to Comhar Caomhán Teo, Comhlacht Forbartha Inis Meáin, Comharchumann Forbartha Árann and Inishbofin Development Company as well as Inishbofin CSP and the community shop.



Some images of community shop on Inishbofin

Galway East Lot:

Galway Rural Development once again exceeded the targets set for the programme in 2025. The KPI 1 target for 2025 was exceeded by 112%, with 83 Local Community Groups assisted under SICAP, against a target set of 74. The KPI 2 target for 2025 was also exceeded by 107%, with a total number of disadvantaged individuals engaged on a one-to-one basis at 841, against a target set of 785.

Some of the specific initiatives implemented by Galway Rural Development during the 2025 programme were:

- Supported community events to include day trips - Ability West Tuam, Killererin Young at HeartGroup, Turloughmore Active Retirement Group and Clarinbridge Cairde Group
- Supported leisure/social activities - Carrabane Parents Council, Glinsk Community Development Association, Tuam Active Participation Group
- Helped in combatting social isolation by supporting - Carrabane Women's Shed, Ballinasloe Social Services and Ballinasloe Care and Repair
- Supported environmental-related activities - Killererin Heritage Group, ADL Woodlands in Gort and Clonberne Community Development
- Supported older people through Positive Ageing Week events,
- Distributed over 700 Message in a Bottle and worked with Galway Sports Partnership and other partners to link groups to activities throughout the county.

GRD gave grants to LCGs for IT and office equipment to groups such as, Caherlistrane Kilcoona Community Council, Solas Ballygar FRC and Craughwell Athletic Club, small scale capital works such as Poolboy Community Development Committee in Ballinasloe and the Kiltullagh Community Centre and resources to group such as the Brothers of Charity Loughrea, Vision Arch Group in Athenry, Brú Bhríde, Gort FRC, Crafty Girls Ballinasloe, MOVE Ballinasloe, Tynagh Abbeyduniry Men's Shed, Ballinasloe Care and Repair and Newcastle Foróige Club and for climate change groups such as Ballygar GAA for recycling initiative and the SuckValley Beekeepers for resources.



Positive ageing week – Loughrea



Active Ageing event – Ballinasloe



Failte Isteach Christmas Event – Tuam



Flower arranging – Gort



Health and Wellbeing event - Portumna

Community education courses were delivered in collaboration with the GRETB with a further three courses involving Tusla Family Support projects in Ballinasloe and Tuam (n=39). Courses included yoga, sewing and crafts in areas such as Ballygar, Ballinasloe, Athenry and Tuam.

GRD has incorporated human rights and equality framework into its management and delivery of SICAP. This included hiring members of SICAP target groups such as the long-term unemployed, the refugee community and people with criminal histories to work on the team and subcontracting individuals from these backgrounds to work as tutors. GRD incorporated a focus on gender-based issues including through engaging with specific health initiatives such as Men’s and Women’s Health Week and targeted community education programmes. GRD have looked to address the issue of gender-based violence in marginalised communities. They participated in the Community Response to Domestic Abuse Western Region Network and co-funded the development of their new strategic plan.

They collaborated with Sexual Health West to organise a Women’s Health and Wellness event for the Ukrainian community to support access to information on issues such as sexual health, contraception, domestic abuse laws in Ireland, trauma recovery, and nutrition.

In partnership with the Ballinasloe Lions Club, a Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Awareness public information evening was facilitated in Ballinasloe in Q1 with guest speakers including Jigsaw, Pieta House and the HSE with safe Talk training later organised.



Domestic Violence Awareness Event - Ballinasloe

GRD’s SICAP team continued to engage with interagency networks, steering groups and boards at a local, regional and national level with the aim of representing and advocating for the needs of local communities and individuals from SICAP target groups. An example of this

approach is shown by the establishment of the Tuam Food Distribution Hub steering group, which emerged from a need to systematically address local food poverty as identified by the local CFSN. This steering group is chaired by the SICAP manager and includes representatives from Brú Bhríde, Tusla, the local School Completion programme, Cope Galway and the Tuam Community Training Centre. It is expected that this will be operational in Q1 2026 and will hopefully act as a significant resource for families into the future. GRD staff continued to collaborate with local academic institutions with the objective of influencing policy making at a wider strategic level in areas such as rural development, social inclusion and access to medical services. GRD's SICAP team also continued to facilitate the development of better connections between key stakeholders through information signposting and providing networking opportunities, for example, through organising health and wellbeing events.

Galway West Lot:

Forum Connemara once again exceeded the targets set for the programme in 2025. The KPI 1 target for 2025 was exceeded by 204%, with 53 Local Community Groups assisted under SICAP, against a target set of 26. The KPI 2 target for 2025 was also exceeded by 202%, with a total number of disadvantaged individuals engaged on a one-to-one basis at 568, against a target set of 281.

Outreach clinics were held in Corr na Móna, Lettermore, Lettermullan, Carraroe and Inverin. Community-led projects targeting social isolation were supported across the region, including lunch clubs, disability supports, active retirement groups, and senior programmes e.g. Positive Aging Week, Clifden Arts Festival Lunch, Clonbur Day Centre activities, Oughterard Active Age Club, Christmas Lunches for Seniors in 9 locations, Cluid Housing Clifden and Conamara Sea Week. The Tuesday Club initiative was established in Roundstone to serve residents of Roundstone, Cashel and Ballyconneely, addressing social isolation in areas with ageing populations and limited opportunities.



National Childrens Day



National Childrens Day



Grant to Chalet na mBan Cornamona



Local Youth Club Clifden - Badminton Grant

Grants of up to €17,286 were awarded to 23 Local Community Groups in total to support locally led initiatives. FORUM Connemara also delivered tailored training including mentoring, governance, financial sustainability, GDPR, Health & Safety, using AI for groups, and facilitated networking and cultural engagement to strengthen community connection and resilience. Further support was given to the Men's Sheds groups, the Clifden Choir and the Clifden community garden to encourage new members, especially from the new arrival's community.

A Total of €12,037 grant aid was allocated to 35 Individuals to support participants in enhancing their skills through targeted training programs. These grants facilitated access to a range of labour market courses, including Childcare, Nursing, Safe Pass, Bus Licence, HACCP, and workshops focused on CV preparation and interview techniques, all aimed at improving employability. In addition, support was provided to participants seeking assistance through the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance (BTWEA).

Work was carried out in collaboration with primary and post-primary schools, school completion programmes, and home-school-community liaison supports to develop initiatives aimed at helping children and young people who might be at risk of leaving school early or becoming involved in criminal activity. Partnerships with the FORUM Youth and Adolescent Support Project, the Schools Completion Programme, local youth organisations, and community groups helped to complement existing services and fill any gaps in support. Additional attention was given to young refugees and international protection applicants, with programmes designed to support personal development, peer integration, and enrich both their social and educational experiences. Further support was provided through summer camps and excursions, including opportunities for children with special needs, and participation in events such as National Children's Day, SNA Summer Camp in Diamond Hill and Connemara Therapeutic Riding. Support for Parents of children & teenagers was delivered by SICAP hosting 2 anxiety talks for parents & teenagers by Dr May O Kane and a Developing Emotional Resilience Workshop for Parents of teenagers

The Local Enhancement Programme – LEP 2025

Galway County Council, on behalf of the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC), invited applications for funding from not-for-profit community or voluntary groups within the Galway County administrative area under the Local Enhancement Programme 2025. The Local Enhancement Programme is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development and administered by the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) in each local authority area and Galway County LCDC received an allocation of € 213,600.

The purpose of this Community Support Fund was to support groups, particularly in disadvantaged areas, with:

Capital General Allocation of €183,086 and a Current (running costs) Funding Allocation of €30,514.

- Capital Funding (€183,086) was assigned to support groups to carry out necessary repairs and improvements to their facilities, and to purchase equipment for community use.
- Current Funding (€30,515) was assigned to support small grassroots groups such as Men's/Women's Sheds with their non-pay running costs, e.g. insurance, electricity, heating, etc.

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

Galway County LCDC recognises that these capital grants are essential for the many small grassroots community groups and organisations active throughout the County, particularly those who serve disadvantaged communities in rural and urban areas, or address disadvantage in other ways. The LEP fund also aims to support local strategic priorities through linkages with the Local Economic Community Plans (LECPs). Aware that social isolation & loneliness is prevalent across the County, the LCDC has focused on supporting the development of social and community facilities and services which provide safe, warm meeting spaces, and promote active inclusion for all (Objective SCO 2.1 of LECP).

The number of applications received for current funding was 146 applications and 189 applications were received for capital funding. There were 111 successful applications under the General Fund Allocation receiving €183,086 and 51 successful applicants under the Current Fund Allocation receiving €30,514.

In the General Fund €183,086 – there were two categories - grants under €1,000 and grants over €1,000. In accordance with Departmental recommendations, approximately 30% of the funds were allocated towards small grants under €1,000. This is to ensure that small grassroots groups with limited funding can access the equipment they need to support their community. 60 grants under €1,000 were given out, totalling €44,770. Priority was given to support smaller community groups with limited resources which are active at grassroots level to purchase equipment for community use or carry out small scale capital repairs/projects Examples: equipment for Men’s Sheds, Older People’s Groups, Youth Groups, Community Groups in Disadvantaged Areas. 51 grants totaling €138,316 were given out over €1,000.

Successful applications demonstrated the priorities agreed by the LCDC and met the following criteria;

- to provide equipment for general community use
- to provide to improve access for persons with a disability / older people
- to enhance participation in community activities for disadvantaged and marginalised groups and areas
- to improve energy efficiency of these community facilities to reduce ongoing costs through energy efficiency works or repairs/improvements



Ballymacward Hall– Painting



Leitrim Ballydugan Community Centre & Field – replaced windows



Coiste Pobail Ros a Mhil - Supply & fit kitchen units



Abbeyknockmoy Parish Society CLG



Improvements to Ballinasloe Town Hall Theatre – new doors into the foyer



H91D562
Oranmore Community First Responders – defibrillator installed outside Oranmore Garda Station



Ballyglunin Community Development
Ballyglunin Station – funding for wheelchair ramps



Williamstown Playground Committee –resurfacing playground

Empowering Communities Programme 2025

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



The area covered by the Ballinasloe, County Galway ECP is the Urban Small Area comprising of six estates: Saint Grellan's Terrace, Saint Anne's Park, Saint Theresa's Park (the initial three estates), as well as Curragh Park, Hymany Park and Dunlo Court (now also being targeted). The programme is administered by Galway Rural Development CLG (GRD).

In 2025 the project was staffed by a project team leader and one part-time Community Engagement Worker. The budget allocation is based on the level of population in each small area and Ballinasloe Urban receives an annual allocation of €140,000. In July 2025, a revised Letter of Undertaking setting out the funding arrangements between the Department, Galway County Council/LCDC and Galway Rural Development Company covering the period 09 August 2025 to 31 December 2025 was issued. The Department took the decision to have LOUs for the Empowering Communities Programme run on a calendar year basis. An additional funding of €55,616 was made available to reflect the revised LOU to cover the period 09 August 2025 to 31 December 2025. Furthermore, in July 2025, additional funding was made available as a one-off measure to support specific project proposals that could support the current ECPP areas. It was a competitive process with a maximum allocation of €30,000 to the successful ECPPs. A brief was prepared outlining the project proposal and €5,735 was granted.

Some of the projects undertaken during the year 2025 include:

- Delivering training and support to both the residents in the Empowering Communities area so that they are empowered to engage with and hold meetings with statutory stakeholders such as Galway County Council, Garda, Local elected representatives, Tusla & Social services in a structured and meaningful way in which they can get their opinions and needs heard without conflict occurring and relationships breaking down which was happening previously.

- Advocating on behalf of the community in the target areas to help raise awareness of the ongoing issues they are encountering. With a specific focus on anti-social behaviour and estate management issues.
- Courses such as Jewelry Making /AED training/Flower arranging and crafting courses/DIY
- Back to school supports for families in need in collaboration with Ballinasloe Family Resource Centre
- Environmental awareness training in conjunction with the SICAP Climate Action Officer.
- Supported events such as summer activity outings for young people, community clean ups, events focused for senior citizens, residents on their annual pilgrimage to Knock, 50th Anniversary mass celebrations and halloween youth engagement & activities.



Window box preparation for residents of St. Annes, St. Teresas & St. Grellans



Flower arranging course for residents of St. Annes, St. Teresas, St. Grellans, Hymany & Curragh Park



Advanced DIY course for residents of St. Annes, St. Teresas & St. Grellans, Hymany & Curragh Park



Community event on St. Grellans green in collaboration with Galway Sports Partnership & Involve Youth Service

The project has connected and engaged with every household in the target estates on numerous occasions in 2025 through door-to-door engagement, surveys and provision of information. Additionally, there is increased awareness of the ECP by stake holders, supports and organisations throughout the municipal district of Ballinasloe as the project has targeted increasing awareness of the programme in Ballinasloe and promoting services and supports available in the Ballinasloe area to the residents of the target estates.

The positive impact and benefit to the target area have been significant. Feedback from residents, Galway County Council, the Ballinasloe FRC and both the St Theresa's, St Anne's and St Grellan's combined estates and Hymany & Curragh Park Residents Associations highlighted the positive impact the project has made.

Healthy Galway



Healthy County Galway continues to advance the aims of the national Healthy Ireland Framework throughout 2025 by delivering a range of health and wellbeing initiatives across the county. The programme remains focused on improving health, reducing inequalities, and strengthening supports for community initiatives.

A central priority is to increase weekly social and leisure participation among adults aged 50+, in line with the 2022–2025 programme objective. Delivery of the programme is supported through collaboration between statutory agencies, community organisations, and the voluntary sector, ensuring a coordinated and evidence informed approach. Galway Council receives an annual Healthy Ireland allocation of €75,000 and this funding is overseen by the Galway County Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) and the Healthy Galway Subcommittee, which guides programme governance, spending, and implementation of funded actions.-

Throughout 2025, notable developments took place across the programme's key priority

areas. The Dementia Café Network continued to grow its footprint in Connemara, with cafés in Roundstone, Letterfrack, Oughterard, Carraroe, and Clifden offering regular opportunities for meaningful social connection, access

to information, and peer support for people living with dementia and their carers. These cafés provided structured activities, facilitated conversations, and signposting to local supports, helping to reduce isolation and normalise community-based dementia engagement. Beginning in 2025, the programme was further strengthened through the introduction of funded activity packs, facilitator-led sessions, and music and arts engagement. These additions enhanced social interaction

within the cafés and supported increased participation from carers, creating a more inclusive and engaging environment for all involved.





The Women’s Health Program was initiated in 2025 with the rollout of a comprehensive schedule of community expert based talks, as part of a hybrid framework which was delivered across multiple venues, and aimed to improve awareness through education, menopause supports, mental health services, and healthy lifestyle practices. The programme aspired not only to inform but also to empower women by providing accessible health education and reducing stigma surrounding menopause, sexual health, and mental wellbeing.

These initiatives enabled women, particularly those in rural and island communities, to access reliable, culturally sensitive information locally, reducing barriers to participation and supporting key Healthy Ireland priorities. Engagement was strong with presence across all sessions, supported by strong partnerships with Forum Connemara, Comhair na nOileain, HSE, Solas FRCs and Galway Sports Partnership.



The Taking Stock Farmers Health Programme was also developed in 2025 in partnership with Healthy Ireland HSE and HI coordinators for Roscommon and Mayo. Site health checks and cardiovascular screening at marts and rural venues, providing farmers with accessible site health checks and cardiovascular screening at marts and rural venues, providing farmers with accessible site health checks and cardiovascular screening at marts and rural venues, providing farmers with accessible early intervention opportunities site health checks and cardiovascular screening at marts and rural venues, providing farmers with accessible early intervention opportunities to adopt new lifestyle habits and behaviours management supports. It also acknowledged the unique pressures facing rural men, including long working hours, isolation, and limited access to management supports. It also acknowledged the unique pressures facing rural men, including long working hours, isolation, and limited access to services. The initiative began with a series of radio broadcasts that provided farmers with practical, accessible information on health and wellbeing. This was supported by newspaper articles and locally distributed flyers to reinforce the messages. The programme focused on key themes such as cardiovascular health, mental health, and stress management supports.

Healthy County Galway also invested in improving local environments that support healthier living. Schools and clubs benefitted from the Playground Stencils Programme, enabling them to create active play spaces at minimal cost. In partnership with GSP and HSE suicide awareness the remaining Health and Wellbeing Boards from the 2024 program were distributed to community locations to enhance access to trusted mental health information and signposting. Community Gardens also continued to be supported to help local groups develop shared garden spaces that encourage social inclusion, support biodiversity, and promote positive mental and physical wellbeing.

Additional targeted programmes enriched the overall landscape of activity in 2025. The Mending Hearts arts initiative, delivered under the Creative Ireland/Healthy Ireland collaborative fund, brought creative rehabilitation in the form of art workshops to hospital and

community settings and an exhibit to showcase this work in Ballinasloe library for those recovering from heart disease or stroke.

Health and Wellbeing events continued to be implemented in 2025 including Men's Health Week, and other multi-agency collaborations in support of ongoing community engagement, health promotion, and awareness-raising across Galway County.



-inclusive communities.

Although the rollout of Social Digital Hubs was delayed in 2025, implementation will proceed in 2026 which will be led out by local libraries in partnership with Age Friendly Galway and Healthy County Galway. These hubs will provide digital skills training for adults aged 50+, supporting the Healthy Galway objective of increasing social participation and improving digital literacy among older people. -led projects under the Healthy Galway programme, enabling groups across the county to strengthen social engagement, develop new skills, and support positive physical and mental health outcomes.



A key communication and engagement tool in 2025 was the *Healthy County Galway Newsletter*, which provided regular updates on health promotion activities, programme developments, and community initiatives supported under the Healthy County Galway programme and among partnering agencies. The newsletter was distributed across community organisations, libraries, HSE partners, voluntary groups, and local stakeholders, ensuring consistent access to clear and accessible information on emerging health initiatives, event schedules, and local opportunities for participation.

The newsletter features update programmes led out by Healthy County Galway in addition to Galway Sports Partnership activities, community programs as well as information on funding allocations and collaborative work with statutory and voluntary partners.



Healthy County Galway

We support and organise programmes, events, and funding opportunities to empower people to improve their health and wellbeing.

What is Healthy Ireland?

Healthy Ireland is a Government-led initiative which aims to create an Irish society where everyone can enjoy physical and mental health, and where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society.

Healthy Ireland has come about because of concerns that the current health status of people living in Ireland – including lifestyle trends and health inequalities – is leading us towards a future that is dangerously unhealthy, and very likely unaffordable. The many risks to the health and wellbeing of people living in Ireland include some which are obvious: issues such as overweight and obesity, mental health, smoking, alcohol and drugs. Healthy Ireland seeks to provide people and communities with accurate information on how to improve their health and wellbeing and seeks to empower and motivate them by making the healthy choice the easier choice.

Related Links

- Galway Sports Partnership
- Healthy Ireland
- Gal Ireland Active
- Get Ireland Walking
- Tobacco Free Ireland
- A Healthy Weight for Ireland
- Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery
- National Sexual Health Strategy
- Comhairle na nOg
- Beirte Outcomes Better Future
- Crí na Gaillimh
- Sexual Health West
- Galway Rural Development
- Forum Connemara
- Galway Children's Young People's Services Committee (CYPSCI)
- Comhairle na nOgais Cúige
- Comhairle na nOgais Cúige Facebook

Three Year Strategy

Healthy County Galway's Programme Objective for 2022-2025

To increase the percentage of people aged 50+ engaging in one or more social leisure activities at least once a week.

In addition to the newsletter, 2025 saw the restoration and updating of Galway County Council's Healthy County webpage, which now serves as a central, publicly accessible information hub for all programme activities. The refreshed webpage provides an organised and userfriendly structure, offering upto date details on ongoing initiatives, upcoming events, programme resources, and links to partner services. The webpage will continue to be maintained and expanded in 2026 to support date details on ongoing initiatives, upcoming events, programme resources, and links to partner services.

Pride of Place Competition 2025

Clarinbridge was named winner of the '300 – 1,000 Population' Category at the 2025 IPB Pride of Place Awards, held on the 7th of November at the Strand Hotel in Limerick. Nominated by Galway County Council to represent the county in the all-island competition, the south Galway village was selected for its exemplary community development efforts.

The Pride of Place Awards, now in their 23rd year, are organised by Co-operation Ireland and sponsored by IPB Insurance. The programme recognises voluntary groups that demonstrate a strong commitment to improving their local areas through collaboration and civic engagement. Established in 1979, the Clarinbridge Tidy Towns group has played a central role in enhancing the village's physical and social environment. It has been a part of projects involving the maintenance of local landmarks such as The Green, Parish Hall, Kilcornan Estate, and Cowpark. The village also promotes heritage and environmental care through the development of walking trails and green spaces. Judges commended Clarinbridge's partnerships with organisations including the Clarinbridge Men's Shed and SCCUL Sanctuary, as well as its annual events such as Clarinbridge Market Day and Halloween on the Green.

The Marconi Men's Shed in Clifden also represented Galway County in this year's competition, competing in the 'Community Wellbeing' category. Although not a category winner, the group was recognised for its innovative approach to supporting male family carers and promoting health and wellbeing in the Connemara region.



Attending the IPB Pride of Place Awards 2025 were (l-r): Ms. Helen Melia, Senior Staff Officer, Galway County Council, Mr. Ronan Kavanagh, Clarinbridge Tidy Towns, Cllr. David Collins, Cathaoirleach of Galway County Council, Ms. Mary Daly, Clarinbridge Tidy Towns, Mr. Liam Conneally, Chief Executive, Galway County Council, Ms. Theresa Donohue, Administrative Officer, Galway County Council, and Mr. Michael Owens, Director of Services, Director of Services for Corporate Services, Rural Community & Tourism Development & Integration, Galway County Council.



L-R: Cllr. David Collins, Cathaoirleach of Galway County Council, Ms. Mary Daly & Mr. Ronan Kavanagh, Clarinbridge Tidy Towns