



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe  
Galway County Council

# TURASCÁIL BAINISTÍOCHTA MANAGEMENT REPORT



Bealtaine 2026

May 2026

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CORPORATE SERVICES

CIVIC RECEPTION

The Leas-Chathaoirleach on behalf of the Elected Members and people of Galway honoured the Loughrea Senior Hurling Team, County Senior Champions 2025, Kilkerrin Clonberne Ladies Football Team, winning their fifth consecutive All Ireland Ladies Football Championship and Athenry Senior Camogie, All Ireland Club Senior Champions 2025 with a Civic Reception held in County Hall. It was an evening filled with sporting anecdotes, sharp wit and warm encouragement with music from Lackagh Comhaltas providing great energy to the audience.



MEMBERS OF THE LOUGHREA SENIOR HURLING TEAM AND MANAGEMENT WITH THE LEAS CATHAOIRLEACH, CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND ELECTED MEMBERS OF GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL

MEMBERS OF KILKERRIN CLONBERNE LADIES FOOTBALL AND MANAGEMENT WITH THE LEAS CATHAOIRLEACH, CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND ELECTED MEMBERS OF GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL



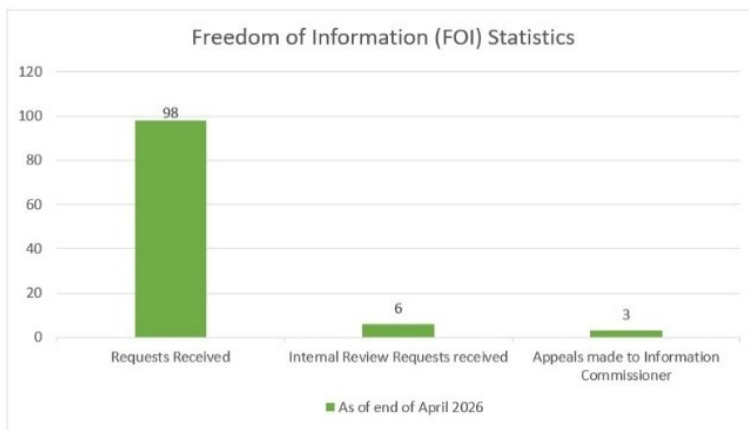


MEMBERS OF ATHENRY CAMOGIE AND MANAGEMENT WITH THE LEAS CATHAOIRLEACH, CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND ELECTED MEMBERS OF GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL

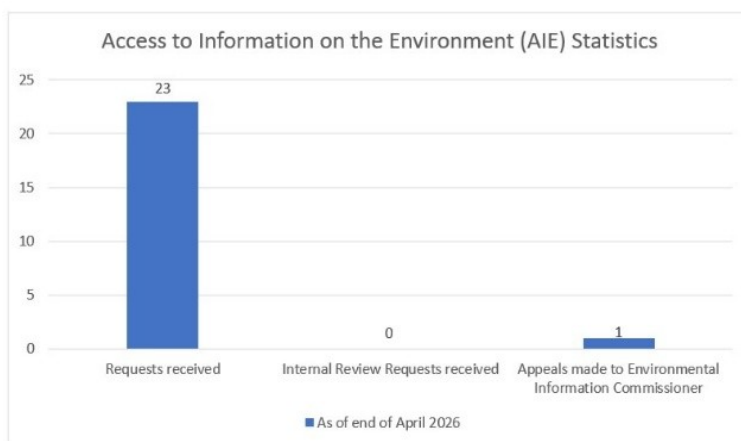
## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION, ACCESS TO ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION & DATA PROTECTION

2026 YEAR TO DATE STATISTICS TO 30.04.2026

### FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

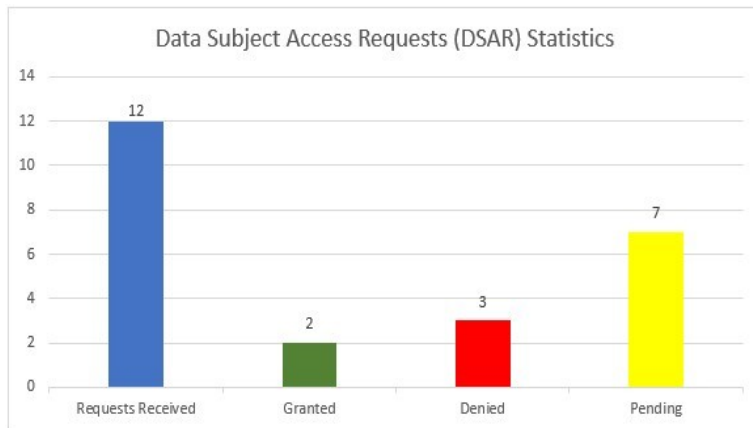


### ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON THE ENVIRONMENT



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## DATA PROTECTION



12 Requests received:

- 10 Subject Access Requests
- 2 Third Party Subject Access Requests (An Garda Síochána etc)

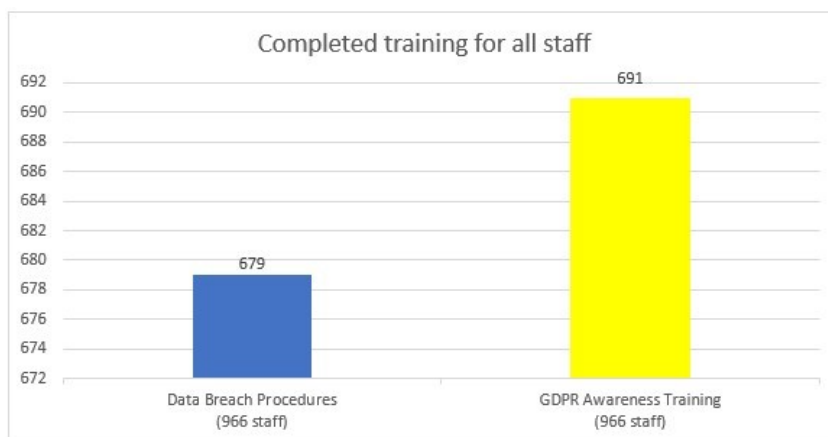
3 granted, 3 denied, 6 pending decisions.

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### GDPR/DATA PROTECTION TRAINING:

All staff are required to complete mandatory data protection training throughout the year covering GDPR awareness and data breach procedures.

Additionally, two unit-specific courses have been developed for HR and IT teams.



## RECREATION AND AMENITIES

Playground Inspector training is scheduled to take place on 22 May 2026. We are pleased to confirm that this year, two training places will be made available to all Community Playground groups.

We were successful in securing €21,709 in capital funding under the Capital Grant Scheme for Play and Recreation to support works at Renville Playground.

The Galway West by-election is scheduled for **22 May 2026**, following the signing of the



Polling Day Order by the Minister on **writ day, 23 April 2026**. The election deadlines for the receipt of applications to register, update details, or apply for inclusion on the postal or special voters lists were **Saturday, 25 April 2026 for postal and special voters**, and **Tuesday, 5 May 2026 for inclusion on the Register of Electors**.

In advance of the Galway West bye-election, the Register of Electors team undertook significant work to ensure that an accurate and up-to-date register is available, while also meeting all tight statutory and operational timelines along with working closely with the Galway Returning Officer and her team.

Throughout the preparation period, the team’s primary focus was on the timely processing of all applications received via CheckTheRegister, ensuring compliance with statutory deadlines and meeting timelines with the printers to facilitate the production of Polling Cards.

A strong social media campaign was undertaken to raise public awareness of key electoral timelines and to encourage eligible electors to register, to ensure they have their voice for the upcoming Galway West Bye-Election.

In total, **52,884 electors** are registered for the Galway West constituency within County Galway. During the preparation period, the Register of Electors team received 673 new applications, 91 of which were from electors reaching voting age. In addition, 107 electors registered for a postal vote, and there are 212 special voters on the register.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

### OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITY

Followers		New followers	
SOCIAL NETWORK	#	SOCIAL NETWORK	#
Facebook Page	22,989	Facebook Page	153
LinkedIn Page	3,356	LinkedIn Page	47
Instagram Business	3,248	Instagram Business	42

Posts		Post impressions	
SOCIAL NETWORK	#	SOCIAL NETWORK	#
Facebook Page	129	Facebook Page	337,487
Instagram Business	128	Instagram Business	48,314
LinkedIn Page	24	LinkedIn Page	4,557

Total posts on all Social Media Platforms for April were 281, 54% of which were also posted in Irish. Our Customer Services team, part of Corporate Services, continue to diligently 11 monitor and update the Council’s social media content daily towards enhancing our engagement with the Public.

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

## FACEBOOK TOP THREE POSTS

**Top posts**

**Galway County Council**  
Apr 10, 17:00

(Post with no description)

**7,567** follower views

**Galway County Council**  
Apr 16, 15:14

Roadstone Ltd. on behalf of Galway Co. Co. are currently carrying out resurfacing works on N83 Two-Mile Ditch to Claregalway (Location attached) The works will be ongoing until the end of May 2026 Monday – Friday 9:00am

**7,509** follower views

**Galway County Council**  
Apr 23, 15:18

John Madden & Sons Ltd will be carrying out resurfacing works on Church Street, Athlone on behalf of Galway County Council from Monday 27 April 2026 to Friday 1 May 2026. To facilitate these works, a section of Church Street

**5,985** follower views

## INSTAGRAM TOP THREE POSTS

**Top posts**

**galwaycountycouncil**  
Apr 04, 09:01

Stádas Buí - Foláireamh gaoithe d'Éirinn Rabhadh Aimsire Met Éireann Beidh gaoithe an-láidir ó dheas mar thoradh ar Stoirm Dave, ag casadh siar faoin tráthnóna le gustáin throma agus gálaí cósta. Tionchair fhéideartha: - Roinnt

**1,397** views

**galwaycountycouncil**  
Apr 13, 14:46

Vacancy/Folúntais: <https://www.galway.ie/en/job-vacancies>

**1,194** views

**galwaycountycouncil**  
Apr 29, 08:14

Community Safety Fund 2026 – Applications Open Are you part of a community or voluntary organisation with an idea to help build a safer, stronger community? The Community Safety Fund 2026 is now open and provides

**1,151** views

## LINKEDIN TOP THREE POSTS

Top posts



Vacancy/Fóilintáils: <https://lnkd.in/eeyu-9V>

364 impressions



Thank You for Taking Part! 💎💎A huge thank you to everyone who attended the Local Community Safety Public Consultation and to those who have already taken the time to complete the survey. Your views, experiences,

334 impressions



Bronnadh Teastaisí ar Bhaird na Scoile Sóisearaí i Scoil Náisiúnta Naomh Muire, An Creadán, ag an gComhairle chun a mbuóchas a léiriú as an obair mhaith a dhéanann na daltaí, gach lá, chun na daltaí scoile a thabhairt slán

280 impressions

## FACILITIES

### THE BATTLE OF AUGHRIM VISITOR CENTRE - LINE UP 2026

The Facilities Team within Corporate Services are delighted to confirm the re-opening of The Battle of Aughrim Visitor Centre for the 2026 Summer Season May 2<sup>nd</sup> 2026 – 27<sup>th</sup> September 2026.

Our team have continued to work with The Cath Eachroma Community Group to deliver yet another great line up of events for the forthcoming 2026 season through this facility:



This Community group stands as a shining example of what grassroots volunteerism can achieve when driven by passion, heritage and history, and a deep commitment to community life.

The Facilities team are striving to increase footfall at the Centre to ensure its legacy is not only protected and respected but also reimagined for the future. The impact of our collective commitment is clear having increased visitor numbers by 20% to the Aughrim Visitor Centre in 2025, with a similar expectation for 2026!

In preparation for this season, much work has been completed by our Facilities technical team working with Contractors this month, to ensure the building remains well presented to the public pending the longer-term vision for the Centre (through the output of the current feasibility study being undertaken by our Tourism team).

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#### HISTORICAL STRUCTURES FUND GRANT APPLICATION SUCCESS



The Facilities team is pleased to report the successful award of €90,201 under the Historical Structures Fund (HSF) for the Athenry Heritage Centre with a further grant match of €90,201 from Galway County Council. This €180,400 funding represents a strong endorsement of the

importance of the Centre as a valued cultural and heritage asset within the town and wider county and it reflects the quality of the application submitted through our team. The grant will assist in safeguarding the long-term use of the building, which plays a central role in heritage interpretation, community engagement and tourism in Athenry.

The approved funding will support critical facility maintenance works to the historic structure, addressing priority conservation and repair needs, to prevent further deterioration. These works will contribute to the protection of the building's historic fabric, enhance its sustainability, and ensure that the Centre can continue to operate safely and effectively into the future. The grant aligns with the Council's broader commitment to the conservation of built heritage and the proactive maintenance of key historic buildings for community and public benefit.

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## INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT – HEBEI DELEGATION VISIT (UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY)



The Cathaoirleach attended a Biomedical Innovation and Cooperation Matchmaking Meeting at the University of Galway on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2026, engaging with representatives from the Hebei Provincial Government, Hebei Business Delegation, Hebei Medical University, and University of Galway Academic representatives, and Irish biotech and medtech stakeholders.

Prior to the formal session, the Cathaoirleach also met with the Secretary of the CPC Hebei Provincial Committee, which included an exchange of gifts, reflecting the positive and respectful nature of the engagement.



The event provided a valuable platform to strengthen international links and highlight Galway's position as a leading medtech hub, with discussions focused on innovation ecosystems, research collaboration, and opportunities in AI-enabled healthcare.

In his address, the Cathaoirleach emphasised the value of dialogue, information exchange and mutual learning, highlighted Galway's regional strengths and collaborative approach, and noted the opportunity to build relationships that may develop over time.

The University of Galway has signalled its intention to continue engagement on next steps arising from the meeting.

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## THE NATIONAL FAMINE COMMEMORATION AT THE IRISH WORKHOUSE CENTRE, PORTUMNA

The 19<sup>th</sup> National Famine Commemoration took place on Sunday, 17 May in the Irish Workhouse Centre in Portumna, County Galway in remembrance of all those who suffered, died or was forced to emigrate due to An Gorta Mór. This was the first time the National Famine Commemoration has been held in County Galway since it was established in 2008.

The Minister for Culture, Communications and Sport and the Chair of the National Famine Commemoration Committee, Patrick O'Donovan TD was in attendance.

Taoiseach Micheál Martin TD officiated at the event and delivered the keynote address. The Most Reverend Luis Mariano Montemayor, Apostolic Nuncio and the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps and the Cathaoirleach took part in proceedings introducing the Cultural Programme.

The event included military honours, cultural and community elements before culminating in a solemn wreath-laying ceremony by the Taoiseach, Minister for Culture, Communications and Sport and the Dean of the Diplomatic Corp.

The event was broadcast live on the RTÉ News channel but will be available for replay on the RTÉ Player and on [irishfamine.ie](http://irishfamine.ie) at a later date.

Galway County Council hosted a welcome reception for the Diplomatic Corp prior to the commemoration and a reception for the 500 in attendance following the ceremony.

Opened in 1852 and regarded as one of the most complete surviving complexes of its kind, the Irish Workhouse Centre, Portumna has become a hub for lectures, exhibitions and cultural events. The Workhouse and recently restored and re-opened Courthouse hosted a wide range of community heritage events as part of the wider commemoration programme.

**Cathaoirleach of Galway County Council, Councillor David Collins commented:**

*“The story of An Gorta Mór is deeply interwoven with the history and identity of the county of Galway, shaping communities across the county and its wider diaspora, including places such as Portumna, where loss, survival and emigration from that period can still be felt today. This event honours the memory of those who suffered or emigrated, acknowledges the strength and resilience of communities across this county, and encourages us to recognise the importance of compassion, dignity and solidarity in society Irish today.*

*“It is a privilege for Galway County Council and the people of Portumna to host this significant national commemoration.”*

PHOTOS FROM THE NATIONAL FAMINE COMMEMORATION



L-R: LIAM CONNEALLY, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL, MICHAEL D. HIGGINS, FORMER PRESIDENT OF IRELAND, CLLR. DAVID COLLINS, CATHAOIRLEACH OF GALWAY COUNTY



L-R: LIAM CONNEALLY, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL, MARIE MANNION, HERITAGE OFFICER, MICHAEL D. HIGGINS, FORMER PRESIDENT OF IRELAND, CLLR. DAVID COLLINS, CATHAOIRLEACH OF GALWAY COUNTY

L-R: THE MOST REVEREND LUIS MARIANO MONTEMAYOR, APOSTOLIC NUNCIO AND DEAN OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS, & CLLR DAVID COLLINS, CATHAOIRLEACH OF GALWAY COUNTY





L-R: LIAM CONNEALLY, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL, THE MOST REVEREND LUIS MARIANO MONTEMAYOR, APOSTOLIC NUNCIO AND DEAN OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS, & CLLR DAVID COLLINS, CATHAOIRLECH OF GALWAY COUNTY

GROUP PHOTO INSIDE THE WORKHOUSE



L-R: LIAM CONNEALLY, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL, PATRICK O'DONOVAN, MINISTER FOR CULTURE, COMMUNICATION AND SPORT, MÍCHÉAL MARTIN, AN TAOISEACH, & CLLR DAVID COLLINS, CATHAOIRLECH OF GALWAY COUNTY

L-R: GARDA CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT GERRY ROCHE, CLLR. DAVID COLLINS, CATHAOIRLEACH OF GALWAY COUNTY, AND ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER CLÍONA RICHARDSON



L-R: CLLR. DAVID COLLINS, CATHAOIRLEACH OF GALWAY COUNTY AND MR. CIARAN TUOHY

MUSICIANS AT THE COMMEMORATION: ÁINE SHERIDAN (HARP), CATHAL SWEENEY, RÓISÍN MANNION & TÓMAS MANNION (SINGERS), GER FAHY (UILEANN PIPES), JO VAHEY (NARRATOR)



A meeting was held between the Chief Executive, the Management Team of Galway County Council, and Oireachtas Members on 30 March 2026 to discuss key strategic, infrastructural and funding priorities for County Galway. The meeting provided an opportunity to outline the significant challenges facing the Council, particularly in relation to structural underfunding when compared with national benchmarks, and to seek support in addressing these issues through enhanced central funding mechanisms. It was emphasised that a multi-year funding correction, including an increase in the Equalisation Fund, is required to ensure the sustainable delivery of services.

A number of major capital and strategic projects were presented, including:

- The Galway City Ring Road, highlighted as a critical strategic infrastructure project requiring prioritisation, funding commitment, and advancement through statutory processes;
- The proposed redevelopment and transfer of Dunguaire Castle into public ownership, with an identified funding requirement of €5 million and ongoing engagement with key national agencies;
- The East Galway Wastewater Treatment Plant, identified as essential infrastructure to support population growth, housing delivery, and economic development;
- Progress on water services transition and the Craughwell–Clarinbridge wastewater scheme, including associated resource and funding implications.

Updates were also provided on wider economic and spatial development initiatives, including the preparation of a joint Economic Development Strategy for Galway City and County, ongoing Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) projects in key towns, and the advancement of rail and public realm infrastructure at Oranmore.

Housing delivery was a key focus of the discussion, with reference to recent measures to increase land availability, the use of the Land Acquisition Fund, and significant funding applications under the Housing Infrastructure Activation Fund. The Council outlined proposals with the potential to deliver substantial additional housing units, subject to infrastructure funding and approvals.

The meeting also included updates on transport and greenway projects, as well as ongoing national road schemes, all of which are central to regional connectivity and economic development.

The engagement provided an important platform to communicate the Council's strategic priorities and to advocate for the necessary policy and funding supports from national government to enable sustainable growth and service delivery across the County.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The Minister of State with responsibility for Community Development and Charities, Jerry Buttimer TD, launched a national awareness campaign on 1 May 2026 to highlight the role of Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) in connecting communities with public bodies at local level. The Chief Officer of County Galway LCDC, Lorna Baek, attended the official launch event in Cork City.

As part of the campaign, three LCDCs nationally were selected to participate in the development of marketing videos, representing urban, rural and Gaeltacht contexts. Galway County LCDC was selected to represent the rural perspective.

The Galway County suite of videos focus on the Healthy County Galway Dementia Café initiative in Connemara as an illustrative example of how LCDCs can support collaborative, community-based responses to local needs through partnership working and programme alignment.

The national campaign aims to increase awareness of LCDCs as a key local government structure responsible for coordinating community development initiatives and overseeing the delivery of programmes such as SICAP, the Local Enhancement Programme and other actions aligned with Local Economic and Community Plans (LECPs).

[LCDC Awareness Campaign 2026 | Galway County Council](#)

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MINISTER CALLEARY VISIT TO DRCDG-FUNDED PROJECTS IN CONNEMARA

Galway County Council welcomed Dara Calleary TD, Minister for Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht, to County Galway on Thursday, 14 May 2026, for a programme of visits to a range of community and rural development projects across the Connemara area.

Galway County Council was represented by the Chief Executive Liam Conneally; Lorna Baek, Senior Executive Officer, Rural, Community, Tourism Development and Integration Directorate; and staff from the Directorate, including Rural Development Officer Eimear Dolan, Integration Officer Jennifer Swannock and Outdoor Recreation Officer Siobhán Cleary.



The visit commenced in Clifden with the official opening of the new offices of Forum Connemara, followed by the reopening of the refurbished Clifden Arts Festival facility, supported under the Community Recognition Fund. These projects demonstrate the impact of targeted investment facilitated through collaborative engagement between the Department, Galway County Council and community stakeholders.

The Minister then visited Ionad Pobail an Mháma, where he viewed a newly developed community car park delivered with funding from the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS). This project enhances access to the Western Way and supports a broad range of outdoor recreation and community activities.



The final visit took place at Leenane Community Park, where significant enhancement works have been delivered under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme and the CLÁR Programme. The project has transformed the site into an accessible and vibrant community amenity, with improved pathways, seating, and inclusive recreational facilities.

The visit provided an opportunity to showcase the effective partnership approach between the DRCDG, Galway County Council and local communities, and to highlight the Council's ongoing role in identifying opportunities, supporting applications, and ensuring the successful delivery of funded projects that contribute to sustainable rural development across County Galway.



### COUNTY GALWAY COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS HONOURED AT CATHAOIRLEACH'S AWARDS

Community groups and volunteers from across County Galway were honoured at the Cathaoirleach's Awards in the Raheen Woods Hotel on Friday night (8<sup>th</sup> May). The event, organised by Galway County Council in partnership with the Galway County Public Participation Network, recognised the work of individuals and organisations making a difference in their communities.

Hosted by Cathaoirleach Councillor David Collins, the ceremony brought together nominees, their families and supporters. MC Ronan Lardner of Galway Bay FM entertained a full house, while others tuned in via a live stream on the Council's Facebook page.

Among the winners on the night were Make A Difference Youth Club, John Tarpey, the Ballinderreen Heritage Publication, Belmont National School, Pop Up Gaeltacht Chinn Mhara, Brian Healy, Eyrecourt and District Community Development, St Colman's Camogie Club, Oranmore Tidy Towns, Portumna Tidy Towns, Tuam Women's Shed and the Fionn Science Project.

Each recipient received a specially commissioned award designed and crafted by Craughwell artist Seán Mahony, along with a certificate and a €500 prize to support their work.

Two additional honours were presented on the night. The Cathaoirleach's Special Recognition Award was awarded posthumously to **Damien Delaney** of Lackagh, Turloughmore. He was remembered for his commitment to his community, his involvement in local activities and his support for heritage initiatives. The Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to **Jarlath McDonagh** from Turloughmore. A former teacher and public representative, he has made a significant contribution to community life, education and sport over several decades, including his work with Galway County Council and Seanad Éireann.



PICTURED AT THE CATHAOIRLEACH'S AWARDS 2026 ARE JARLATH MCDONAGH; ANNE CASEY DONOHUE (CLUB POP UP GAELTACHT); PETER MARTIN (PORTUMNA TIDY TOWNS); MELISSA HOGAN (EYRECOURT AND DISTRICT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CO. LTD.), JOHN TARPEY; MARY O'NEILL (TUAM WOMEN'S SHED), TRISHA DELANEY; MARIE RUANE (BELMONT N.S.); PAULA GALLAGHER (ST COLMAN'S CAMOGIE CLUB), BLESSING OGUEKWE (MAKE A DIFFERENCE YOUTH CLUB); BRIAN HEALY (ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE AWARD); BRENDÁN Ó LAINSIGH (BALLINDERREEN COMMUNITY CENTRE); AND SEATED, BRENDAN SMITH (FIONN PRIMARY SCHOOL SCIENCE PROJECT); MICHAEL OWENS (DIRECTOR OF SERVICES, GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL), CLLR DAVID COLLINS (CATHAOIRLEACH), AND MARGARET MCNULTY (ORANMORE TIDY TOWNS)

## ALL-ISLAND PRIDE OF PLACE COMPETITION 2026

Each year, Galway County Council selects 2 communities to represent the County in the All-Island Pride of Place Competition and this year, we have selected the following projects:

Portumna Tidy Towns will coordinate efforts on behalf of their community in the 'Community Tourism Initiative'. Portumna is a vibrant town blending natural beauty with rich heritage, it features landmarks like the Priory, the Irish Workhouse Centre and at the heart of the town stands Portumna Castle.

Nature lovers can enjoy Portumna Forest Park or the new Waterways Ireland Blueway, which offers scenic walking and cycling trails from Portumna Bridge to Castle Harbour.

Recent investment has further revitalised the town, notably through the restoration of Portumna Courthouse. Formerly idle, it is now a dynamic community hub providing remote working facilities, meeting spaces, and the popular Courthouse Café.

Today, Portumna thrives as a hub of music, sport, and community spirit. Here, tradition and progress meet to create a dynamic and inclusive town — one that proudly celebrates its heritage while confidently embracing its future.



Being chosen to represent County Galway is a testament to the dedication of Portumna Tidy Towns, its volunteers, local organisations, businesses and residents, who work collaboratively to enhance the town for everyone.

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#### PORTUMNA CASTLE

Tuam Women’s Shed will enter the ‘Inclusive Communities’ Award Category to showcase their outstanding contribution to well-being, inclusion and community connection in Tuam and the surrounding area.

Established in 2021, Tuam Women’s Shed has, in a relatively short period of time, become a cornerstone of local community life. The Shed provides a welcoming and inclusive space where women can come together to socialise, share skills, build confidence and support one another. Guided by its Cairde Mná — Friends of Women — ethos, the group promotes social inclusion and creativity, ensuring that women of all backgrounds feel valued and connected. A particularly notable achievement is the development of the Michael McGrath Sensory Garden, a multi-sensory space designed to support children of all abilities while also providing areas for reflection and mental wellbeing. This project is a powerful example of how community led initiatives can transform public spaces into places that promote inclusion, wellbeing and shared pride.



The Palace Grounds, often described as Tuam’s “jewel in the crown”, now offers a welcoming environment for people of all ages — from walking trails and recreational facilities to spaces designed to encourage interaction, physical activity and community connection.

Being chosen to represent County Galway is a testament to the dedication of Tuam Women’s Shed, its members and volunteers, and to the strong partnerships that underpin their work.

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## PPN

### Rethinking Systems Event - Growing Local Strength for People and Planet

The Irish Environmental Network, along with CELT and in collaboration with Galway County PPN, Clare PPN and Galway City Community Network held an event which explored community wealth and capacity building.

This free event spoke about the Wellbeing Economy with Roisin Markum of FEASTA

- Explored how we can become good ancestors with Dr Peter Doran
  - Heard about the Nature Restoration Law (NRL) from Niamh Roche of Bat Conservation Ireland
  - Heard about local food policy with Fergal Anderson of Talamh Beo
- This was held on Saturday 25th April 2026 at 10am - 4pm at the Burren Nature Sanctuary, Kinvara



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## AGE FRIENDLY

Over the last few weeks separate meetings took place of the Council's Interdepartmental Team and the Age Friendly Alliance. Both of these meetings focused on Quarter 1 updates for the agreed actions in the adopted strategy. The Alliance meeting also received a presentation on the Healthy Age Friendly Homes initiative. May was also the month of the National Convention of Older Peoples Council. This was held in Athlone and hosted by Westmeath County Council. The theme of the convention this year was Thriving Together Age Friendly Sustainable Communities.

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## RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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### CLÁR

The Rural Team is currently supporting three concurrent CLÁR Measure 1 Programmes. The 2024 programme draws to a close at the end of May (15 projects); the 2025 programme (10 Projects) is ongoing with projects progressing to tender. The 2026 programme was launched in March 2026 (€12m nationally), and Galway County Council is accepting applications up until May 15<sup>th</sup>. Applications will be validated in May with Further Information requests and will progress to shortlisting and assessment in June 2026. A maximum of 16 projects can progress from Co. Galway under CLÁR 2026.

In May 2026 the following projects was completed under the CLÁR 2024 Programme.

## CLONBERNE ALL INCLUSIVE PLAY AREA

The existing Clonberne all-inclusive playground, which is very highly used, only catered for children with additional needs and children in general up to the age of 13 years. This new extension is to cater for adults with additional needs and active retired and is led by the SNO (Special Needs and Others) Project Sub-Group. The CLÁR funding was used to extend the playground and provide equipment and facilities to meet the needs of teenagers and adults in the above category, as well as the active retired members in the community through a boules area and other exercise equipment appropriate for adult use. The project area is



part of the overall Clonberne sports facilities, which includes multi playing pitches, surrounded by a lit-up walkway, dressing rooms and gym located adjacent to the community centre, community creches and Clonberne Enterprise Centre.

The SNO (special needs and others) Club sub-committee have been working tirelessly to raise additional funds to bridge the gap between the 50, 000 secured from CLÁR to cover the total cost of the project which was successfully achieved. The key beneficiaries of the project are active residents of Clonberne Central Park nursing home with a resident population of 70, residents of Kilkerrin nursing home with a population of 38 residents. Additionally, there are Mocateer House Kilkerrin, Dochas Glenamaddy, Ability West Kilkerrin and Creggs residential centre. These services are in the nearby catchment area and can avail of and benefit from the great kit of equipment suitable for adults with additional needs, the elderly. In addition, there is a big population of active retired in Clonberne and surrounding communities.

MEMBER OF  
CLONBERNE  
DEVELOPMENT  
GROUP AND SNO  
(SPECIAL NEEDS  
AND OTHERS)  
COMMITTEE



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## KILLERERIN - BARNADERG

Killarerin Community Centre in Barnaderg is a vital hub within the local community, providing space for social, recreational, educational and youth activities. Prior to works commencing, the roof structure had significantly deteriorated, with ageing slates, weather damage and defective timber elements posing a risk to the long-term usability and safety of the building. In 2024, as part of a phased redevelopment plan, the centre was closed to facilitate essential refurbishment works, with roof replacement identified as a critical priority to protect the building fabric and enable future internal upgrades. The original building dates to 1895. The project was led by Killarerin Community Council CLG, who have operated the facility which was held by St. Jarlath's Diocesan Trust. The project cost over 48k with CLÁR providing 90% funding and 10% provided by the local community via the Community Council. Works were completed in May 2026.

The Centre has secured further funding under the Community Centre Investment Fund CCIF and is finalised internal electrical upgrades. With the new roof and upgrades electricians the project paves the way for considering Green Energy solutions such as PV panels to further future-proof the facility.



KILLERERIN COMMUNITY CENTRE, BARNADERG, COMPLETION OF RE-ROOFING, MAY 2026 FUNDED BY THE CLÁR PROGRAMME

## RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Galway County Council is pleased to announce that Outscape has been appointed to develop the Galway County Outdoor Recreation Plan 2026-2030. This appointment represents a significant milestone in advancing outdoor recreation infrastructure across the county and provides elected members, stakeholders, and the public with an opportunity to participate in the consultation process. The plan is scheduled for completion by mid-September 2026, with an anticipated launch before year-end.

The Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) is expected to open for applications in the coming weeks. The Outdoor Recreation Team welcomes submissions of potential projects located within County Galway.

## CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

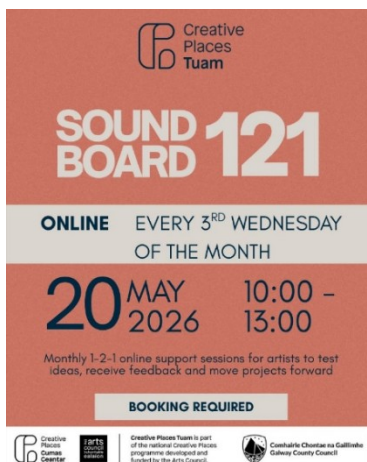
### FUNDING APPLICATIONS: EU PRESIDENCY 2026

The Department of Culture, Communications and Sport have awarded Galway County Council €37,500 through Culture Ireland towards the EU Presidency 2026 Culture Programme. Projects funded include:

- **Heritage to Protect, Europe to Connect** as part of Athenry Walled Town Day - Aug
- **European Heritage & Craft Exchange** as part of Féile na gCloch, Inis Oírr - Sept
- **Tiny Mutiny and Broei** as part of Culture Night, Tuam - Sept
- **Guthanna Óga na hEorpa** as part of Scoil an Phiarsaigh, Ros Muc - Oct
- **Connections: Echoes Across Europe**, Galway County Libraries, Countywide – Nov

### CREATIVE PLACES TUAM

#### SOUNDBOARD 121 OPEN FOR BOOKINGS



Creative Places Tuam

# SOUNDBOARD 121

ONLINE EVERY 3<sup>RD</sup> WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH

20 MAY 2026 10:00 – 13:00

Monthly 1-2-1 online support sessions for artists to test ideas, receive feedback and move projects forward

BOOKING REQUIRED

Creative Places Tuam is part of the national Creative Places programme developed and funded by the Arts Council.

Comhairle Chontae na Gallíne Galway County Council

Soundboard 121 offers supportive one-to-one sessions tailored for artists and creatives, whether seeking feedback, advice on a funding application, guidance on concept development, or just space to figure out the next step.

Creative Places Tuam offers 30-minute sessions between 10 AM - 1 PM every third Wednesday of the month. The sessions take place on Zoom.

Bookings are now open for Soundboard 121 on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May:

<https://doodle.com/meeting/participate/id/b2qmmova>

#### LOOP SESSIONS

The next Loop Session takes place on Thursday 21st May 2026 at Brownes, The Square, Tuam, 7 - 9 PM. Loop Sessions are monthly informal gatherings organised by Creative Places Tuam, where local artists and creatives can connect, share ideas, and spark collaborations - all in a relaxed, welcoming setting. Artists from all artforms and career stages are welcome. Bring an instrument, a poem, something you are working on or simply bring yourself. Teas and coffee provided!



Creative Places Tuam

# LOOP SESSIONS

BROWNES EVERY 3<sup>RD</sup> THURSDAY OF THE MONTH  
The Square, Tuam

21 MAY 2026 19:00 – 21:00

Informal monthly meet-ups for artists and creatives in Tuam and surrounding areas to connect, share ideas and spark collaborations. Tea and coffee provided.

Creative Places Tuam is part of the national Creative Places programme developed and funded by the Arts Council.

Comhairle Chontae na Gallíne Galway County Council

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## GALWAY COUNTY AFRICA DAY 2026

Creative Places Tuam hosted a drop-in creative station for all ages exploring printmaking. The celebration took place at Tuam Palace Grounds on Saturday 9th May, 2-5 PM bringing communities together to celebrate the diversity, culture and contributions of African communities across the county.

Organised by the Galway County Local Authority Integration Team (LAIT) and supported by the Department of Foreign Affairs, the celebration will feature a varied programme of live music, multicultural performances, African cuisine, children's activities and community stalls.

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## SPARKCATCHERS! ATTEND HEART OF GLASS (UK) CONFERENCE

Sparkcatchers! (Jojo Hynes and Midie Corcoran) attended With For About (WFA) 2026 a gathering for practitioners who make art with young people - including artists, youth workers, play workers, teachers, producers, and funders. The day (16th April 2026) hosted a reflective, practice-based space, exploring questions together, experimenting with ways of working, and sharing learning as it unfolded - an assemblage of people, poetry and play.

WFA 2026 is organised by Heart of Glass (UK) a Merseyside-based community arts organisation. Heart of Glass brings together artists and communities to make collaborative art, and provide support, resources and opportunities to artists and anyone interested in socially engaged practice.

Attending as part of a Creative Places delegate group, the professional development event also featured an interview with Patrick Fox, CEO, (17th April) who shared 10 years insight and experience in creative placemaking. The interview was coordinated by Situate Practice, Creative Places Adviser and Network Support.

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## CREATIVE PLACES TUAM ON EDEN FM

Listen back to the Creative Places Tuam Team interview on Eden FM during the March visit to Creative Places Edenderry: <https://www.mixcloud.com/Edenfm/creative-places-tuam/>

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## ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

During April 2026, organisational development work on Creative Places Tuam focused on strengthening organisational structures, building local relationships, and progressing key developmental and governance supports for the initiative. Activity during the month centred on stakeholder engagement, internal planning, and the development of foundational documents and frameworks to support the long-term sustainability of the programme.

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## APRIL IN NUMBERS:

- 4 Soundboard 121 sessions supporting 4 local artists
- 1 International research trip to Heart of Glass, UK supporting the professional development of 2 local artists
- 1 Creative Places national network meeting
- 1 Loop Session supporting 7 local artists

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## TINY MUTINY

Following our Tiny Mutiny open call Sparkcatchers! facilitated a panel meeting where 3 teenagers who had received Tiny Mutiny awards along with the Arts Officer discussed each application, scored and made decisions on who will take part this year. We're very grateful to the 3 Tiny Mutineers for taking part in this assessment process and we will continue to have a youth voice at Tiny Mutiny panels in the future.

Congratulations to our successful applicants: Abigale Heavey (Newbridge), Alannah Caddy (Glenamaddy), Harlow Madden (Loughrea), Lainey Tighe & Lia Mae Coen (Tuam), Lauren Caine (Oughterard) and Liam O'Connor (Tuam). Sparkcatchers! will pair the teenagers with artist mentors so they can start realising their creative idea.

More information to follow on the lead up to the Tiny Mutiny showcase at the Mall Theatre Tuam on Friday 18 September as part of Culture Night.



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TEENAGE DANCE ARTIST AMY LAZOR  
PERFORMING AT THE TINY MUTINY SHOWCASE  
2025 AT CLIFDEN TOWN HALL. PHOTO: LIAM  
CARROLL

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## CULTURE NIGHT 2026 OPEN CALL

Culture Night will take place on Friday 18 September 2026, 4pm - 12 midnight.

Galway County Council invites individuals, groups and organisations to submit funding applications for free events taking place in County Galway.

Event organisers can apply to pay for artist fees and production costs for in person events. The minimum contribution available is €250 and the maximum is €800. Any funding requests above €800 will be ineligible.

Places and event organisers that haven't received Culture Night funding before will be prioritised. If you have any questions about submitting your application, please contact [culturenight@galwaycoco.ie](mailto:culturenight@galwaycoco.ie).

Deadline: Thursday 28th May at 4pm

[Click here for the application form and more information](#)



Comhairle Chontae na Galaithe  
Galway County Council

# Open Call

Funding for free Galway County Culture Night events on Friday 18 September 2026  
**Deadline: 28 May at 4pm**

## CULTURE NIGHT OPEN CALL

## ÁRAS ÉANNA – EALÁIN AR AN IMEALL

On 7 May the Arts Office team attended the premier of the Aniar documentary **Áras Éanna – Ealáin ar an Imeall** by Feilimí O'Connor which was created during the arts centre's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations in 2025. The film gives audiences an insight into the work of the arts centre through its exhibitions, artist residencies, concerts and Féile an Phobail, all beautifully framed by the stunning context of Inis Oírr and its people. After the screening the Áras Éanna team and Board gathered its funders and supporters together to discuss the future of our Gaeltacht island arts centre. In attendance were representatives from Galway County Council, Arts Council and Údarás na Gaeltachta. The documentary will be screened on TG4 later in 2026.

## ARTIST SUPPORT SCHEME 2026 – ANNOUNCEMENT

### Baker's dozen in the dough under Artist Supports

Tribune Reporter

A baker's dozen of Galway artists are in the dough this week – after they were chosen as the 13 recipients of Galway County Council's Artist Support Scheme. A total of €33,860 will be shared between the artists working across literature, music, theatre, traditional arts and visual arts. The funding, administered by the local authority's Arts Office, is aimed at supporting professional artists at all stages of their careers to develop their practice and progress new work.

The successful applicants are Aisling Conneely, Alison Mac Cormaic, Ari Bharti, Fergal Scabhill, Laurie Legrand, Lorraine Stack, Máire Robinson, Máise Lee, Moira Mahony, Peadar Tom Mercier, Roisin Lowry, Ruth Smith and Shirley-Anne Godfrey. Galway County Arts Officer Sharon O'Grady said the scheme plays a key role in sustaining artists' development locally.

"This annual scheme provides essential financial support to professional artists, allowing them to develop their arts practice and artistic career," she said. "It provides a vital bridge in funding and often positions artists to

apply for larger scale opportunities in the future."

Athenry-based theatre artist Moira Mahony, for example, applied as an early-stage artist to develop her play *Lifejacket*, which she will redraft, rehearse, produce and present.

Peadar Tom Mercier, a musician and composer from An Cheathrú Rua, will undertake a residency with the *Bohy Project* on the Isle of Egga in Scotland.

Visual artist Laurie Legrand, based in Killimor, will use the award to research and develop a new body of work titled "Strategies (of simultaneous presence and invisibility)".

The work explores the implications of data misuse and neurodivergence and will be subsequently exhibited in Cork as well as other venues.

Speaking about the award, Legrand said it offered "a valuable opportunity to focus on my work without interruptions for an extended period" and described it as "sincerely heartening to be supported by an art panel in my own county".

A panel of professional artists assessed applications for the scheme, which is open to practitioners across a range of disciplines including architecture, dance, film, opera and street arts.



Killimor-based visual artist Laurie Legrand.

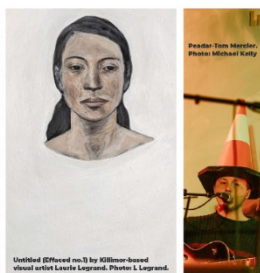
## ARTIST SUPPORT SCHEME: CONNACHT TRIBUNE

To amplify the work of the recipients of the Arts Office's 2026 Artist Support Scheme we worked with Dunphy Communications to share what artists will do with their funding.

## Council provides financial aid to artists

**By Máirín Kelly**  
Thirteen artists with a Galway connection are to share a €33,860 award administered by the County Council.  
13 of the 13 recipients, artists working across literature, music, theatre, traditional arts and visual arts, will receive a €3,386 award administered by the local authority's Arts Office, in aid of supporting professional artists at all stages of their careers to develop their practice and progress new work. Ten of the recipients are established artists, while three are in their early careers.  
Galway County Council said there were 87 applications, seeking a total of €200,000 in support. A short list of 16 applicants was drawn up, and a panel of professional artists assessed the final 13 recipients.  
The successful applicants are Aisling Conneely, Alison Mac Cormaic, Ari Bharti, Fergal Scabhill, Laurie Legrand, Lorraine Stack, Máire Robinson, Máise Lee, Moira Mahony, Peadar Tom Mercier, Roisin Lowry, Ruth Smith and Shirley-Anne Godfrey.  
Galway County Arts Officer Sharon O'Grady said the scheme plays a key role in sustaining artists' development locally.  
"This annual scheme provides essential financial support to professional artists, allowing them to develop their arts practice and artistic career," she said. "It provides a vital bridge in funding and often positions artists to apply for larger scale opportunities in the future."  
Athenry-based theatre artist Moira Mahony applied as an early-stage artist to develop her play *Lifejacket*, which she will redraft, rehearse, produce and present.

Set in Galway, the work follows a man in his forties dealing with addiction, alcohol, and family estrangements, as he explores themes of social class, neurodivergence, mental health, intergenerational trauma and recovery through music, theatre and contemporary history.  
**Peadar Tom Mercier** is a musician and composer from An Cheathrú Rua who is involved in Ireland's official arts, experimental and alternative music scene. Through the scheme, Mercier will undertake a residency with the *Bohy Project* on the Isle of Egga in Scotland. Mercier will create a music video for his band's latest album *Cochán Clé*, which is based on a dystopian walk and takeover of the coast, to be released in September 2026.  
Visual artist **Laurie Legrand**, based in Killimor, will use the award to research and develop a new body of work titled *Strategies (of simultaneous presence and invisibility)*. The work explores the implications of data misuse and neurodivergence. It will be exhibited in Cork as well as other venues.  
"Speaking about the award, Legrand said it offered "a valuable opportunity to focus on my work without interruptions for an extended period" and described it as "sincerely heartening to be supported by an art panel in my own county".  
A panel of professional artists assessed applications for the scheme, which is open to practitioners working across a range of disciplines including architecture, dance, film, opera and street arts.  
Galway County Council said the funding will directly support artists' professional development and help create artistic opportunities within the sector.



Visualised *Effluent* no.13 by Killimor-based visual artist Laurie Legrand. Photo: L. Legrand.

Home / Arts & Entertainment / Galway County Council announces 2026 Artist Support Scheme recipients

### Galway County Council announces 2026 Artist Support Scheme recipients

By Brian Kelly - April 22, 2025



Killmacbeath visual artist Laurie Legrand.

Galway County Council has announced the 13 recipients of its 2026 Artist Support Scheme, with €33,860 awarded to artists working across literature, music, theatre, traditional arts and visual arts.

The funding, administered by the local authority's Arts Office, is aimed at supporting professional artists at all stages of their careers to develop their practice and progress new work.

The successful applicants are Aisling Conneely, Alison Mac Cormaic, Ari Bhatti, Fergal Scathill, Laurie Legrand, Lorraine Stack, Máire Robinson, Maisie Lee, Moira Mahony, Peadar-Tom Mercier, Roslin Lowry, Ruth Smith and Shirley-Anne Godfrey.

Galway County Arts Officer Sharon O'Grady said the scheme plays a key role in sustaining artistic development locally.

"This annual scheme provides essential financial support to professional artists, allowing them to develop their arts practice and artistic career," she said.

"It provides a vital bridge in funding and often positions artists to apply for larger-scale opportunities in the future."

Athenry-based theatre artist Moira Mahony applied as an early-stage artist to develop her play *Lifejacket*, which she will redraft, rehearse, produce and present.

Set in Galway, the work follows a man in his forties dealing with addiction, illness and family estrangement, exploring themes of alcohol culture, masculinity, mental health, intergenerational trauma and recovery through sharp humour and emotional honesty.

Peadar-Tom Mercier is a musician and composer from An Cheathrú Rua who is involved in Ireland's traditional arts, experimental and alternative music scene. Through the scheme Peadar-Tom will undertake a residency with the Bothy Project on the Isle of Egg in Scotland.

Peadar-Tom will also be using the artist support scheme to collaborate with filmmakers Jolú Tudella and Dónal Dineen to create a music video for Trí Pháidín's latest album "Cloch's Clá", which is based on dry-stone walls and tokenism of the Gaeltacht, to be released in September 2026.

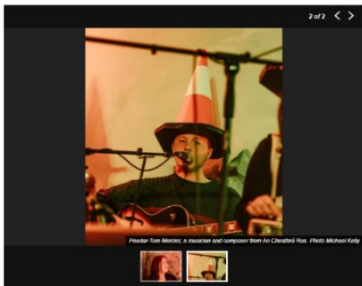
Visual artist Laurie Legrand, based in Killmac, will use the award to research and develop a new body of work titled "Strategies of simultaneous presence and invisibility".

The work explores the implications of data misuse and neurodivergence and will be subsequently exhibited in Cork as well as other venues.

Speaking about the award, Legrand said it offered "a valuable opportunity to focus on my work without interruptions for an extended period" and described it as "sincerely heartening to be supported by an art panel in my own county."

A peer panel of professional artists assessed applications for the scheme, which is open to practitioners working across a wide range of disciplines including architecture, dance, film, opera and street arts.

Galway County Council said the funding will directly support artists' professional development and help create future opportunities within the sector.



Peadar-Tom Mercier, a musician and composer from An Cheathrú Rua. Photo: Michael Kelly



ARTIST Support Scheme recipient Moira Mahony from Athenry receiving a DL/ADCI Playwriting Award for her play *Lifejacket* from Ollie Kenny of the Drama League of Ireland. PHOTO: MOIRA MAHONY

# Council scheme will support Athenry artist

AN ATHENRY-based theatre artist has been selected as one of the recipients of the 2026 Artist Support Scheme by Galway County Council.

The scheme awards funding of €33,860 to artists working across literature, music, theatre, traditional arts and visual arts. It is aimed at supporting professional artists at all stages of their careers to develop their practice and progress new work.

Moira Mahony from Athenry applied as an early-stage artist to develop her play *Life-*

*jacket*, which she will redraft, rehearse, produce and present. Set in Galway, the play follows a man in his 40s dealing with addiction, illness and family estrangement, exploring themes of alcohol culture, masculinity, mental health, intergenerational trauma and recovery through sharp humour and emotional honesty.

Thirteen successful artists in 2026 include Aisling Conneely, Alison Mac Cormaic, Ari Bhatti, Fergal Scathill, Laurie Legrand, Lorraine Stack,

Máire Robinson, Maisie Lee, Moira Mahony, Peadar-Tom Mercier, Roslin Lowry, Ruth Smith and Shirley-Anne Godfrey.

"This annual scheme provides essential financial support to professional artists, allowing them to develop their arts practice and artistic career," said Galway County Arts Officer Sharon O'Grady.

"It provides a vital bridge in funding and often positions artists to apply for larger-scale opportunities in the future," she added.

ARTIST SUPPORT SCHEME: GALWAY DAILY, GALWAY ADVERTISER & TUAM HERALD

## ARTS + HEALTH: CHECK UP, CHECK IN CONFERENCE

Several Galway artists attended this year's **Arts + Health: Check Up, Check In** event on 30 April alongside Assistant Arts Officer Amie Lawless. The 'go to' event for artists, healthcare professionals and arts and health practitioners which promotes solidarity, practice sharing and exchange, and is open to anyone working in, or interested in learning more about arts and health. It featured a keynote address by artist Karrie Marshall, panels, case studies, arts

and health policy and strategy updates, workshops, screenings, reflections and many opportunities to connect. The event is programmed by Réalta the national resource organisation dedicated to developing arts and health in Ireland.



GALWAY  
ATTENDEES AT  
THE DOCK,  
CARRICK-ON-  
SHANNON

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### GALWAY THEATRE FESTIVAL LAUNCH

Galway County Council plays an important supportive and enabling role in the Galway



Theatre Festival, contributing to the cultural vitality of the region by fostering opportunities for artists and audiences alike. This year Galway County Arts Officer had the opportunity to outline our support for a number of Galway County Artists in the programme this year to include Ari Bhatti, Rena Bryson, Jenni Nikinmaa and Lorraine Stack.

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GALWAY THEATRE FESTIVAL LAUNCH

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### CREATIVE IRELAND

We are full steam ahead with our Cruinniú na nÓg programme for 2026. This year's National Day of Creativity for Children, on Saturday the 6<sup>th</sup> of June, is shaping up to be our biggest and most exciting yet! Our programme will go live on <https://cruinniu.gov.ie/> once the ministerial launch has taken place in Dublin City on Monday the 18<sup>th</sup> of May. There is something for all ages, all interests, and all corners of the County from Ballinasloe to Inisbofin and everywhere in between. The Creative Communities Engagement Officer is busy booking in radio appearances on Galway Bay FM and Connemara Community Radio to promote Galway County



Council's fantastic programme of events. We are currently sitting at 62 events, beating our own personal record of 59, and 34 of these are either incorporating the Irish language or are fully as Gaeilge meaning we have 54.8% of our programme available through Irish beating last year's 51%.

This year we have taken a mixed approach of Open Call and Direct Programming. In 2025 we commissioned Branar Theatre Company to carry out a Youth Consultation with the young people of Brú Bhríde in Tuam. The goal was to discover what the top choices for Cruinniú na nÓg activities would be. As a thank you for participation, we have programmed the top three choices of Cyanotype Printmaking, Circus Skills, and Lego Coding Workshops. All three workshops will take place across the day of Cruinniú na nÓg ensuring that all of the young people get to try everything out.

For our newer arrivals in Ireland, we are having Drumadore take their ever-popular Drumming Workshops to IPAS centres in Tuam, Kinvara, and An Cheathrú Rua. These sessions are great fun for kids of all ages and can be easily carried out even when there is a language barrier present.

As usual we are bringing the Cruinniú na nÓg magic to all 3 of the Aran Islands. We have directly programmed a full day of activities on each island. Following on from last year's success we have decided to stick with the method of using one central location per island for all activities. These are as follows;

Inis Mór – Halla Ronáin

Inis Meáin – Halla Naomh Eoin

Inis Oírr – Áras Éanna

We are also planning to have a presence at Ros a Mhíl on the morning of Cruinniú na nÓg to alert ferry passengers to the events taking place on each island.

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#### YOUNG PEOPLE ENJOYING THE FESTIVITIES AT ÁRAS ÉANNA FOR CRUINNIÚ NA NÓG 2025

Our Libraries have also put together an absolutely fantastic programme of events as always. Our County's Library Branches will play host to writers, illustrators, artists, and all manner of creatives as they celebrate Cruinniú na nÓg. We have events for children and young people of all ages in the following branches; Ballinasloe, Gort, Loughrea, Clifden, Athenry, Oranmore, Woodford, Dunmore, An Cheathrú Rua, An Spidéal, Headford, and Inisboffin.



So be sure to keep Saturday the 6<sup>th</sup> of June free in the diary if you have some children or young people in your life and check out <https://cruinniu.gov.ie/> for details of the programme, available after Monday May 18<sup>th</sup>.



## SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

### TUAM PALACE GROUNDS

Galway Sports Partnership was pleased to officially launch the 3v3 Basketball Court, funded through the Participation Nation Fund, alongside the Box Up Unit and Fitstick Trail, which were supported by the Healthy Ireland Fund. These new amenities provide inclusive opportunities for people of all ages to engage in physical activity and promote active, healthy lifestyles within the community.



L-R ANDREW MCBRIDE, CLLR KAREY MCHUGH FARAG, RÓNÁN QUINN, THOMAS PEOPLES

L-R: LAURENCE GAUGHAN, HSE, ANDREW MCBRIDE & CLLR KAREY MCHUGH FARAG



Since its installation on 11 June 2025, the Tuam Palace Grounds Box Up has demonstrated strong and consistent usage, with a total of 2,796 recorded sessions equating to over 1,553 hours of activity across 335 days. The equipment has attracted 554 individual users, with an average participation of 2.53 people per session, indicating that it is commonly used in small groups or social settings. User demographics show a broad age range (13 to 80 years), with an average age of 36, highlighting the Box Up’s appeal across multiple generations. While participation is higher among males (66%) compared to females (34%), the overall engagement remains positive, supported by a high user satisfaction rating of 4.4 out of 5. These figures suggest that the Tuam Palace Grounds Box Up is a well-utilised and valued



recreational asset, contributing meaningfully to accessible physical activity and community engagement in the area.

## PEIL SHÓISIALTA (SOCIAL FOOTBALL) – ACTIVE ISLANDS PROGRAMME



**CLG Oileáin Árann**  
Traenáil Peile Shóisialta



Fáilte roimh chách  
D’Fhir & do Mhná | 18+ | Spraíúil & Sóisialta  
Bigí linn do sheisiúin peile chairdiúla, shuaimhneacha.

Seisiúin sheachtainiúla ar na trí oileán

Dáta Tosaigh: Seachtain an 13ú Aibreáin  
Fad: 6 seachtaine  
Roinntear an am agus lá níos gaire don dáta tosaíthe

Tóg cairde leat agus bain sult as peil i dtimpeallacht spraíúil, shóisialta.

Caithfeadh clárú leis an nasc a cuireadh ar fáil nó an cód QR a scanadh  
 Le haghaidh tuilleadh eolais:  
[coordinator@activeislands.ie](mailto:coordinator@activeislands.ie)









Social football sessions commenced across all three Aran Islands in April and continued throughout May, delivered in collaboration with CLG Oileáin Árann. A coach based on each island led weekly sessions designed to create a fun, non-competitive and sociable environment for adults to engage in Gaelic football. The programme aimed to increase community participation, encourage new members to engage with the club, and promote physical activity for adults of all fitness levels and playing experience.

## BIKE WEEK 2026

Galway Sports Partnership delivered a successful and inclusive programme of events to mark Bike Week 2026, engaging a wide range of participants across the county. In partnership with key organisations, including Corlann and Cycling Ireland, the initiative focused on promoting active travel, physical activity and accessibility for all members of the community. Schools were actively supported through the provision of Bike Week resource

packs, while additional initiatives such as free bike hire in Portumna provided accessible and practical opportunities for individuals and families to engage in cycling locally.

A number of flagship events took place throughout the week, including the 'Move 4 Health' and Bike Week event in Kilcornan Walled Gardens, which attracted over 100 participants and featured activities such as Zumba, yoga, and bike and trike tasters. An inclusive event in Westside provided participants from special schools and adult disability groups with the opportunity to trial adapted bikes and trikes in a supportive environment. The Wheels of Athenry Cyclefest was another key highlight, promoting community participation through a fun and social cycling experience. In addition, a schools city centre cycle saw approximately 200 primary school children take part, creating a vibrant and visible celebration of cycling while encouraging active travel among young people.



Overall, Bike Week 2026 demonstrated Galway Sports Partnership's strong commitment to inclusion, community engagement, and the promotion of cycling as a lifelong activity. The



wide range of events and high participation levels highlighted the demand for accessible, community-based opportunities, while initiatives such as free bike hire, school engagement and local cycling festivals reinforced the value of partnership working in delivering impactful and far-reaching programmes.

WHEELS OF ATHENRY PEDAL PARADE AND  
PORTUMNA FREE BIKE RENTAL

## OLDER ADULT INFORMATION DAYS

A number of Older Adult Information Days took place in May. These were delivered in partnership with various organisations, with Galway Sports Partnership hosting information stands and demonstrating activities at each:

- Tuesday 19th May – Lackagh Health and Wellbeing Day, in partnership with Healthy Ireland, Galway Rural Development and the HSE.
- Friday 22nd May – Kilconly Community Comeback, hosted by Muintir na Tíre.

- Wednesday 27th May – Ballinasloe Retirement Planning Seminar, hosted by Healthy Galway.



## SCHOOLS



May was the busiest month of the year to date for school programmes. Galway Sports Partnership supported schools through activity equipment loans and by strengthening links with sporting organisations to assist in the delivery of activities and the upskilling of school staff. These initiatives, delivered across the city and county, contributed to increased physical activity for more than 2,000 children.

## MEN ON THE MOVE

Men on the Move programmes were actively delivered throughout May in Mervue, Garrafrauns, Clonberne and Leitir Mór, providing structured opportunities for men to engage in regular physical activity within their local communities. The programme targeted adult men of all fitness levels, particularly those who were previously inactive or looking to re-engage with exercise in a supportive, non-intimidating environment.

Each programme consisted of weekly sessions led by qualified instructors, focusing on a combination of aerobic exercise, strength training and general fitness activities tailored to meet the needs and abilities of participants. Emphasis was placed on creating an inclusive, social and encouraging atmosphere, which helped to build confidence, improve fitness levels and promote long-term participation in physical activity.

The continued delivery of Men on the Move across multiple locations highlights the strong demand for male-focused programmes and supports Galway Sports Partnership's broader objective of increasing participation among harder-to-reach groups. Feedback from participants remained positive, with many noting improvements in their physical health, wellbeing and social connections as a result of their involvement.

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## GALWAY WALKS

As part of the Active Cities Galway initiative, a successful and well-attended community walk took place in Merlin Woods to mark May Day. The event provided an opportunity for participants of all ages and abilities to engage in a guided walk in a safe, welcoming and scenic environment, making use of one of Galway City's key natural amenities.



The walk promoted the benefits of regular physical activity while also encouraging social interaction and community engagement. Participants enjoyed favourable weather conditions, which contributed to a positive overall experience and strong engagement on the day. The event highlighted the accessibility of walking as a form of exercise and its role in supporting both physical and mental wellbeing.

The continued delivery of community walks under the Active Cities framework reinforces Galway Sports Partnership's commitment to creating opportunities for people to be active in their local areas. It also supports the broader aim of developing healthier, more active communities through inclusive and easily accessible initiatives.



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## HE SWIMS

Galway Sports Partnership partnered with Swim Ireland to deliver a six-week men's swimming programme at the Claregalway Hotel. The programme targeted adult men with low confidence in the water, aiming to build skills in a safe and supportive environment.

Sessions were led by qualified instructors and focused on improving water confidence, technique and overall fitness, with activities tailored to suit varying ability levels. A welcoming and non-judgemental atmosphere supported strong engagement throughout.





The programme contributed to broader efforts to increase male participation in alternative physical activities, with early feedback indicating improved confidence, fitness and social connection among participants.

## TRAVELLER WOMEN'S GYM PROGRAMME – HUSTLE FITNESS, DOUGHISKA

The Traveller Women's Gym Programme commenced at Hustle Fitness, Merlin Commercial Centre, Doughiska, on Thursday 7th May and ran over a six-week period. The programme provided one weekly session, with two class options each Thursday at 11:00am and 2:30pm, accommodating a total of 16 participants. The initiative aimed to support the development of fitness, confidence and sustained engagement in physical activity. Galway Sports Partnership partnered with Galway Traveller Movement to deliver the programme, with key support from Gráinne Ní Eidhin, Community Link Worker with the Community Connection Project at Galway City Partnership.

## WOMEN'S SWIM PROGRAMMES (GALWAY CITY PARTNERSHIP)



Targeted women's beginner swim and aquafit programmes, delivered in partnership with Swim Ireland and Galway City Partnership, took place at Kingfisher, University of Galway, and Leisureland from May to August. These programmes aimed to increase access to aquatic activity for women from marginalised and underrepresented communities, providing a supportive and inclusive environment to build confidence and skills in the water. The programmes

were offered free of charge to participants in recognition of existing barriers. This brought the total number of women's swim programmes delivered in 2026 to six.



## BADMINTON FOR WOMEN – BCNC

The Badminton for Women (Beginners and Improvers) four-week programme at Ballinfolle Castlegar Neighbourhood Centre neared completion, with 14 women participating

throughout. The initiative provided a supportive and enjoyable environment for participants to develop skills, build confidence and engage in regular physical activity. The newly developed facilities enhanced the experience, and a sustainable social element was established through low-cost weekly badminton sessions on Wednesdays from 8–9pm. Many participants expressed interest in continuing through these sessions. Thanks were extended to coaches Irene and Larissa Hayden of Galway Lawn Tennis Club for their contribution to the programme’s success.

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## COACHING TEENAGE GIRLS WORKSHOP

The Coaching Teenage Girls in-person workshop was delivered on Saturday 2nd May 2026 at the Connacht Hotel, Galway. The three-hour workshop was well attended, with 10 participants engaging fully throughout. Attendees represented a diverse range of sports, including basketball, ladies’ football, camogie, athletics and health promotion, contributing to a collaborative learning environment.

The workshop was facilitated by Vivienne Nee, National Volunteer Development Officer with the Ladies Gaelic Football Association (LGFA), who brought extensive experience and insight. Feedback was positive, and all participants were scheduled to receive Sport Ireland certification.



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## PARKS TRY TENNIS – WESTSIDE AND MAREE



The Women in Sport Parks Try Tennis Programme in Westside (Galway City) and Maree (Co. Galway) commenced on 30th April and 11th May respectively and ran over six weeks. The programme targeted adult women aged 18+ and catered to both beginners and those returning to tennis. Demand was exceptionally high, with both locations reaching capacity quickly and generating waiting lists; additional sessions were subsequently added.

Delivered in partnership with Tennis Ireland, the programme provided beginner-friendly coaching in a supportive and inclusive setting, with equipment supplied. The strong uptake highlighted significant demand for community-based tennis opportunities for women, and Galway Sports Partnership continued to explore expansion options.



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## ESF+ SOCIAL INNOVATION IN SPORT

The Girls Off Grid pilot programme in County Galway concluded its inaugural six-week block for first-year students at Presentation College Athenry. The initiative addressed issues such as digital social surveillance and cyberbullying by introducing a “Digital Sabbatical,” during which participants exchanged smartphones for DSLR cameras.

The programme combined technical photography training, including light painting, with physical activity to promote creativity and reduce passive online engagement. Supported by Creative Ireland, Photo One Studios, BigO Media and the Galway Camera Shop, the initiative



culminated in a final workshop and a summit hike of Diamond Hill in Connemara.

Overall, the project successfully transitioned participants from digital consumers to visual storytellers, demonstrating an effective model for enhancing adolescent wellbeing through skill development and outdoor engagement.

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## TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

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### GOLF IN GALWAY

A meeting on the ‘Golf in Galway’ initiative was held in the Council Chamber, it was very well attended by members of the golf courses from across the county, demonstrating strong industry engagement and support for the development of Galway’s golf tourism offering. This initiative is led collaboratively by the tourism team and tourism stakeholders; the initiative aims to strengthen Galway’s position as a leading golf tourism destination and aligns with the opportunities presented by the Ryder Cup 2027.

The Tourism Officer gave a presentation that highlighted the importance of golf tourism as a high-value market that attracts repeat visitors, while showcasing Galway’s championship and links courses alongside the county’s wider landscape, culture and hospitality offering.



LOCAL AUTHORITY REPRESENTATIVES AND GALWAY GOLF COURSE STAKEHOLDERS GATHERED TO PROMOTE COLLABORATION AND STRENGTHEN THE GOLF IN GALWAY INITIATIVE.

The next phase of the initiative will involve continued collaboration with golf courses to develop a coordinated marketing campaign supported by shared course information and visual content.

STAKEHOLDERS FROM ACROSS THE TOURISM AND GOLF SECTORS ENGAGED IN DISCUSSIONS DURING THE GOLF IN GALWAY INITIATIVE MEETING.



## MILAN – NETWORKING EVENT

The Tourism Activator represented Galway County Council at the Milan Trade Event in Italy last week. This event was in collaboration with Ireland West Airport, Tourism Ireland and Good Food Ireland. It was a great opportunity to directly promote County Galway to the Milan travel trade and showcase the unique experiences available. Business representatives

attended from Connemara and East Galway. County Galway offers access to both the Wild Atlantic Way and Irelands Hidden Heartlands a unique advantage that truly impressed the Milan trade.



A key theme emerging from discussions with the Milan trade was the growing demand for destinations that are authentic, off the beaten track and aligned with the principles of slow tourism, East Galway was viewed as a particularly strong fit for this market due to its rural character, heritage, culture, and unique visitor experiences.

L-R: ALISON HARNETT OWNER OF BRACKLOON CASTLE, CLONFERT, SANDRA FAHY, MANAGER OF DEXCOM STADIUM, LORETTA RAFTERY JTF ACTIVATOR, EOGHAN O' REILLY, MANAGER OF AHASCRAUGH DISTILLERY

REPRESENTATIVES FROM ACROSS GALWAY'S TOURISM SECTOR DURING THE NETWORKING EVENT.



GROUP PHOTO OF ALL BUSINESSES AND LOCAL AUTHORITY REPRESENTATIVES WHO ATTENDED THE MILAN NETWORKING EVENT

This was a hugely successful event with valuable connections made. We look forward to welcoming more visitors from Milan to County Galway especially via the direct route from Bergamo to Ireland West Airport.

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#### BATTLE OF AUGHRIM WEBSITE

The Tourism team is pleased to share the successful launch of the new Battle of Aghrim website.

The new Battle of Aghrim website for County Galway has been developed as a vibrant and engaging digital platform to strengthen the area's tourism and heritage offering. Funded through the Just Transition Fund Scheme, the project delivers a refreshed online presence with improved user experience and an integrated booking system, making it easier for visitors to access tours, events and related experiences online. The enhanced platform will support promoting of the destination and more streamlined management of bookings and enquiries.

please click on the link below to the new Battle of Aghrim website.

<https://battleofaughrim.info/>

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#### SHANNON BANK PARK OUTDOOR POOL – OFFICIAL OPENING

The official opening of the Shannon Bank Park outdoor pool in East Galway marked a significant milestone for the local community and wider region, with Minister Peter Burke in attendance at the launch. Funded through the Just Transition Fund Scheme, this successful intercounty project between East Galway and Offaly has delivered a high-quality outdoor recreational amenity that will provide lasting social, tourism, health and wellbeing benefits



for the area. The Just Transition Fund Activator worked closely with the trustees throughout the development process to support the successful delivery of the project.

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SHANNON BANK PARK OUTDOOR  
SWIMMING POOL, OFFICIAL  
OPENING



MINISTER PETER BURKE  
OPENS THE SHANNON  
BANK PARK OUTDOOR  
SWIMMING POOL,  
JOINED BY COUNCILLORS  
FROM THE BALLINASLOE  
MD AND  
REPRESENTATIVES FROM  
OFFALY COUNTY  
COUNCIL

Galway County Council has also provided support towards the provision of lifeguards for this facility.

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#### TIMMY MALLET VISITS IRELANDS HIDDEN HEARTLANDS

Timmy Mallett, an influencer, television presenter and artist, has been actively showcasing Ireland's Hidden Heartlands (IHH) with a focus on East Galway, through his social media platforms, highlighting the region's landscape, heritage and visitor experiences to a broad online audience.

His digital reach spans Instagram, Facebook and YouTube, with a combined following in tens of thousands and content generating several hundred thousand views, delivering strong engagement within a niche travel and cultural audience. This activity continues to enhance the profile of East Galway and supports wider tourism promotion across the Irelands Hidden Heartlands.

<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/17PoYfkq5E/>

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/18Yyu8i7og/>

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#### JCWL GLOBAL UNESCO GEOPARK RATIFICATION

April 2026 marked a significant milestone for Joyce Country and Western Lakes with the official ratification of the region as a UNESCO Global Geopark by the UNESCO Executive Board in Paris on 23 April 2026.

The announcement generated extensive regional and national media coverage, including RTÉ radio and television, print and online media, alongside strong social media engagement and stakeholder participation. A programme of promotional activity was undertaken to celebrate the achievement, including the launch of a new community video showcasing all 20 Geopark communities and highlighting the area's landscapes, culture and tourism experiences. The UNESCO designation has significantly enhanced the international profile of the Geopark, strengthened awareness of the region as a sustainable tourism destination and created valuable long-term promotional assets for ongoing destination marketing.



MEMBERS OF THE GEOPARK  
PICTURED OUTSIDE AT THE LARCHES  
FINNY

## INTEGRATION

We welcomed 2 new team members this month. Mícheál MacDonnchadha joined the team as Integration Support Worker, and Niamh Spellman started as Assistant Staff Officer. We are delighted to have them on board.



Preparations for the Galway County Africa Day event continued, with the Planning meeting working on the run up to the day, including promoting the event across the media, with interviews for Galway Bay FM and Go-Com Radio.

Integration Support Worker, TJ Hughes delivered UNHCR Supportive Spaces training to IPAS staff, helping to increase awareness of the challenges facing IPAS residents amongst IPAS and

accommodation centre staff.

Information clinics continued across the County, with increased queries in relation to options for Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection, from both accommodation providers in the Offer a Home Scheme and from residents of accommodation centres. This is due to the imminent changes of the ARP scheme and the ending of the BOTP accommodation programme in March 2027.

## LOCAL COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

A series of Public Consultations have been organised across County Galway to engage directly with local communities and gather input to inform future planning and priorities for our Community Safety Plan.

To date, three Public Consultations have taken place in Ballinasloe, Tuam, and Loughrea.

These sessions were held in the local libraries on:

- Ballinasloe Library – Friday, 24<sup>th</sup> April 2026
- Tuam Library – Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> May 2026
- Loughrea Library – Friday, 8<sup>th</sup> May 2026

All three events generated very positive engagement, with strong attendance from members of the public and constructive discussions taking place. The consultations also benefited from the participation of members of the Local Community Safety Partnership, who contributed to discussions and engagement.

Looking ahead, further consultations are scheduled to continue this engagement process. Upcoming sessions will take place:

- An Cheathrú Rua Library – Friday, 15<sup>th</sup> May 2026 (11am – 1pm)
- Oughterard Library – Friday, 15 May 2026 (2pm – 4pm)

We look forward to meeting residents in these areas and continuing to build on the positive



momentum established in earlier consultations. Engagement to date highlights a strong willingness among communities to participate and contribute to shaping local safety and wellbeing initiatives.

LCSP TEAM, L-R: JO MULLINS & MARIE NICHOLSON AT PUBLIC CONSULTATION – BALLINASLOE LIBRARY

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#### AFRICIA DAY – PALACE GROUNDS, TUAM SATURDAY 10<sup>TH</sup> MAY

Galway County Local Community Safety Partnership was delighted to be in attendance at Africa Day on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May, in the Palace Grounds, Tuam, as part of its ongoing community engagement.

The purpose of attending this event was to:

- Engage with diverse communities in an inclusive and welcoming setting, ensuring that all voices are heard in shaping community safety priorities.
- Raise awareness of the LCSP and its role, helping the public better understand how community safety initiatives are developed and delivered locally.
- Promote the Community Safety Survey, encouraging feedback and input from attendees to ensure it reflects the needs and experiences of all communities.
- Build relationships and trust with local residents and community groups, particularly those who may not typically engage through formal consultation processes.

- Encourage participation in ongoing consultations, including upcoming public meetings across the county.

Attendance at Africa Day provided an important opportunity to connect with a broad cross-section of the community in a positive and accessible environment, supporting the development of a more inclusive and representative Community Safety Plan.



HEALTHY IRELAND LCSP TEAM JO MULLINS AND MARIE NICHOLSON WITH CATHAOIRLEACH DAVID COLLINS AT AFRICA DAY ON SATURDAY 10TH MAY IN TUAM.

## HEALTHY COUNTY GALWAY

### RETIREMENT PLANNING SEMINAR

A Retirement Planning Seminar is scheduled to take place in Ballinasloe Library in May 2026, led jointly by Healthy Ireland at Your Library and Healthy County Galway. The initiative forms part of an approach to support wellbeing through accessible, community-based settings.



The seminar will take a holistic approach to retirement planning, addressing key areas including physical activity, nutrition, mental wellbeing, financial preparedness, social welfare information and social participation. By bringing together statutory, community and voluntary partners, the event aims to support individuals approaching retirement to plan positively for this life transition and to increase awareness of local services and supports available within County Galway.

This joint initiative aligns with Healthy Ireland priorities around positive ageing, prevention and reducing social isolation, and reflects Healthy County Galway’s commitment to tackling health inequalities at local level.

It also supports wider local authority objectives by promoting wellbeing, strengthening community resilience and cross-sectoral collaboration to improve quality of life for older adults across the county.

### UNDERSTAND TOGETHER CAMPAIGN – CLIFDEN AWARENESS EVENT UPDATE

The *Understanding Together* dementia awareness event, held last Tuesday, was well attended and greatly received by the local community in Connemara as well as local businesses and key stakeholders. The event formed part of a wider dementia-inclusive initiative aimed at raising awareness of dementia and supporting the development of dementia-inclusive communities across Connemara.



The programme featured a range of speakers who delivered informative and engaging talks on brain health, lived experience of dementia, and the role of community-based supports such as Dementia Cafés. Representation from partner organisations and stakeholders involved in the initiative further strengthened the event, highlighting the collaborative approach underpinning this work.

The event also provided an important platform to promote the Connemara Memory Café Initiative, greater awareness of dementia and connection between community members, services, and support organisations.



As a key follow-on action, dementia awareness training delivered by the HSE Dementia Service has been scheduled. This training will take place in Clifden Library on 25th May, from 7.00pm to 8.30pm, and represents a further practical step in building capacity and understanding within the community.

Overall, the event demonstrated strong partnership working and meaningful community engagement, and it marks an important milestone in the ongoing development of dementia-inclusive communities in the area.

## ACORN TABLETS INITIATIVE

The Acorn Tablet lending initiative is being led jointly by Galway Libraries in partnership with Healthy County Galway and Age Friendly. The initiative supports digital inclusion by making age-friendly tablets available for loan through selected library branches across the county, providing accessible opportunities for older people and adults with low digital confidence to engage with technology in a supported community setting.

The Acorn tablets are designed specifically with ease of use in mind, featuring simplified screens, large icons and clear layouts. The initiative will support access to online services, communication tools and digital resources, helping users to remain connected with family, services and community life. Library staff have been trained to provide guidance and support during the set up and lending period, helping to build confidence and digital skills among participants.



This initiative aligns with Healthy Ireland priorities around inclusion, positive ageing and reducing social isolation, and reflects Healthy County Galway's commitment to addressing the wider social determinants of health at local level. Additionally, it also aligns with national library priorities within the Skills for Life portfolio, and the Adult Literacy for Life Strategy, reinforcing the library services ethos of inclusive, accessible and welcoming community services.

## HEALTH AND WELLBEING EVENTS IN MAY



During May, Healthy Galway will actively participate in and support a number of community-based initiatives aimed at promoting health, wellbeing and community safety. This includes a Community Comeback Event in Kilconly Community Centre, delivered in collaboration with Muintir na Tíre and An Garda Síochána, showcasing supports from over 30 agencies and providing free health checks, information and refreshments.

Healthy Galway will also support and attend a Community Health and Wellbeing Event in Lackagh Parish Centre, focused on preventative health, wellbeing information and community



engagement. These events support community reconnection, access to supports and improved health outcomes at local level.



Healthy Galway was also in attendance at Africa Day celebrations last Saturday, where attendees were provided with access to information on health and wellbeing. Healthy Galway also supported the event through the funding of healthy snacks and refreshments, contributing to a positive, inclusive and health-promoting community celebration.

## HUMAN RESOURCES, CITY & COUNTY LIBRARIES & ENVIRONMENT

### LIBRARY SERVICES

#### RIGHT TO READ

April saw the launch of 'Spring into Storytime' across the county.

28 events took place with 382 children attending, ranging from babies to 12-year-olds

Storyteller Ana Aguilar facilitated two events on April 16<sup>th</sup> in Eyrecourt and Woodford libraries, with 15 children attending in Eyrecourt library and 18 attending in Woodford library, both from 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> class. Ana told oral stories and invited the children to tell their own stories



STORYTELLER ANA AGUILAR IN EYRECOURT AND WOODFORD LIBRARIES

Author and storyteller Katherine Scanlon facilitated two events on April 30<sup>th</sup> for Ballygar and Moylough libraries, held in the local community hall. 32 children attended in Ballygar, while

51 attended in Moylough, with ages ranging from 8-10 yrs. Katherine read her book 'Clipper the Hurl's Amazing Adventure' and discussed writing and creativity with the children



AUTHOR KATHERINE SCANLON  
IN BALLYGAR AND  
MOYLROUGH LIBRARIES

AUTHOR KATHERINE SCANLON WITH LIBRARIAN ANN  
D'ARCY BURKE

A total of 2,500 events took place across the county, from story times, music, craft, community meetings and Lego sessions



### SCHOOLS LIBRARY SERVICE

The *Stories from the Garden* event hosted in Brigit's Garden this spring was a very successful and enjoyable day for all involved. Forty-one children and their teachers from Kilcoona National School took part and thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

The day began in the Hazel Room, where Moth & Butterfly enthralled the children with wonderful tales from Ireland and its natural landscape.

Following the storytelling, the group explored Brigit's Garden with the education team, focusing on themes of biodiversity, sustainability, and respect for the natural environment. This learning was reinforced through a hands-on activity, with each child planting sunflower seeds to bring back to school, creating a tangible link between the day's learning and ongoing environmental awareness.

Overall, the programme was engaging, educational, and very well received. It successfully blended storytelling, music, and outdoor learning while promoting biodiversity and environmental stewardship. The event highlighted the value of creative, nature-based experiences and demonstrated how libraries can support learning and curiosity well beyond books and buildings.

This project was an initiative of the Schools Library Service and kindly funded by Creative Ireland and Rosina Joyce, Biodiversity Officer, Galway County Council

## AGE FRIENDLY SERVICES

The Acorn Age-Friendly Tablet Lending Service was launched across libraries in Athenry, Ballinasloe, An Cheathrú Rua, Loughrea and Tuam, offering free tablet loans to adult members. Delivered in partnership with the Galway County Council Age Friendly Team and Healthy Ireland, this initiative supports digital inclusion for older people and aligns with national library priorities under the Skills for Life portfolio and the Adult Literacy for Life Strategy. The tablets are designed for ease of use, with large icons and simple layouts, and come preloaded with guides to support activities such as video calls, email and online access. Library staff are trained to assist users getting set up on the tablet and throughout the loan period. Special thanks to Margaret Garvey (Tuam Library) for her informative



demonstration of the functionality of Acorn tablets.

LIBRARY STAFF MARGARET GARVEY, JOSEPHINE VAHEY, MELÍOSA MCINTYRE AND ANNE MONAGHAN TETLOW AT THE LAUNCH OF THE ACORN TABLETS INITIATIVE

JONATHAN HOWARD SKELLHORN AND SENIOR EXECUTIVE LIBRARIAN, JOSEPHINE VAHEY



## LOCAL STUDIES

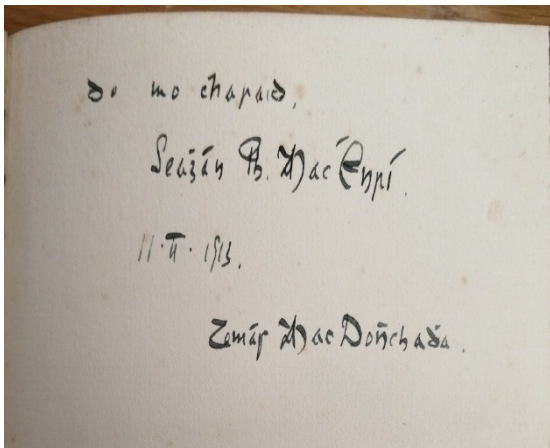
The Easter rising began 110 years ago, on 24th April 1916, which was Easter Monday that year. Galway Public Libraries special collections hold this unique item, which once belonged to one of the signatories of the 1916 proclamation, Tomás McDonagh. It is a signed copy of his thesis, published in 1913. It was presented by Tomás to Professor Seaghan P Mac Enri,



lecturer in modern Irish at University College Galway, and a friend of his from Gaelic League circles, and through their mutual love of the Irish Language. Tomás has signed his name in Irish on the flyleaf of this copy gifted to his friend, with the date 1913. Tomás was executed by firing squad on 3rd May 1916, at just 38 years of age, leaving behind his wife, his two small children, and a successful academic career.

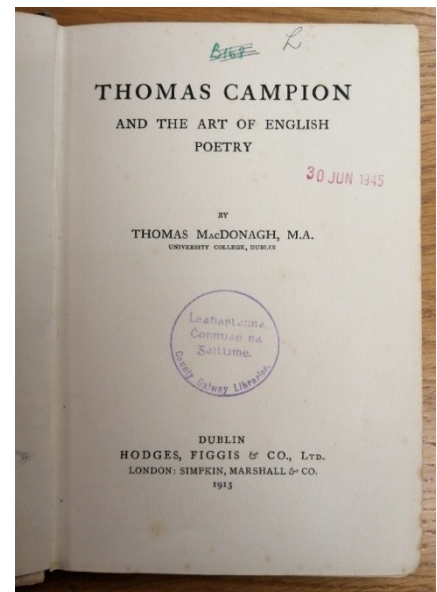
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THOMAS MCDONAGH, SIGNATORY OF THE 1916 PROCLAMATION



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TITLE PAGE OF THOMAS MCDONAGH'S THESIS



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## LOCAL STUDIES ENQUIRIES AND REQUESTS

It has been another busy and fascinating period, with a wide range of enquiries highlighting the depth and diversity of interest in the collections.

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### EMAIL ENQUIRIES

We received approximately **45 email enquiries**, covering an impressive variety of topics. Many related to **family history research**, with people tracing ancestors and seeking specific details from the records. One such enquiry involved locating the date of birth of a child born on **Árainn in the early 1900s**, successfully uncovered through a combined search of the **1901 Census** and **irishgenealogy.ie**.

Another memorable enquiry came from **Australia**, where a researcher was tracing an ancestor who had been an inmate of **Mountbellew Workhouse** before being sent to Australia under an **assisted emigration scheme in 1851**, travelling aboard the ship *Palestine*. Remarkably, detailed information about this woman was found in the **digitised Board of Guardian Minutes and workhouse records** held in the Council Archives.

Other email queries ranged from a licensed premises on **Inis Oírr in the 1930s**, traced through an advertisement in the **British Newspaper Archive**, to requests for **burial records**, access to the **map collection**, census summary material from the **1840s**, and even historical **Galway Gaol maps**. Each enquiry offered a unique glimpse into the past and an opportunity to connect researchers with valuable archival sources.

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## PHONE CALLS

In addition, there were approximately **10 phone enquiries**. These included requests for information on **Encumbered Estates Court rental books**, access to **photographs of Galway Courthouse**, and historical **property valuation records**. One caller was also seeking a copy of an item written by **Connemara MP William O'Malley**, demonstrating continued interest in Galway's political history.

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## VISITS

We welcomed around **20 visitors**, both drop-in and by appointment. Most visits were focused on accessing the **British Newspaper Archive** and the **Irish Newspaper Archive online**, requesting printed pages, and researching **Galway hurling matches from the 1970s**. There was also strong interest in the **map collection**, with visitors spending time exploring historic maps in person.

Overall, the level of engagement across emails, phone calls, and visits reflects a vibrant and ongoing public interest in Galway's rich archival heritage.

## BALLYBANE LIBRARY

In keeping with our efforts to link with community groups, we hosted the "Galway City Council Community Safety Clinic". This clinic was attended by Age Action, Our Community Garda and many of our local Councillors. This was greatly appreciated by the local community.

Our Ciorca Comhrá is a big hit with the more senior members of the Eastside with up to 12 people meeting weekly for laughs, songs and even a cúpla focal. We welcomed Ruth Kelly of GABES back for a summer term of guidance in all online activities for adults and this is always well attended by our neighbours, indeed their laughter fills the library every Tuesday morning. The last day in April saw 20 childcare students from Belfast, on a cross-border trip to ATU, visit the ENYA exhibition in the library where DCU Artist in Residence gave them a talk on Theatre and Childcare.



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## GALWAY CITY COUNCIL COMMUNITY SAFETY CLINIC

Our library events for children continue apace including our popular Lego afternoons each Thursday. Clodhna Noonan, Early Years artist in residence with DCU, held a lively Storytime session on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> of April and 22 children attended.



STORYTIME WITH CLIODHNA NOONAN,  
EARLY YEARS ARTIST IN RESIDENCE IN  
DCU

Music Generation have begun their summer term in the library and up to 60 adults and children are now attending each Wednesday. Library staff are also continuing with the Friday morning Rhyme time for local children, and there is a regular attendance of approximately 28 adults and children, including many grandparents. Library staff run arts and crafts with a literary and frequently an environmental theme, and some of their marbling work is pictured.



MARBLING CREATED IN ART WORKSHOP

## CLIFDEN LIBRARY

We launched April in the Clifden Library with the celebration of Easter. More little voices filled the library and treated us to their great artwork. We found plenty of beautiful books for our display to mark the arrival of Easter. It's a busy time in Clifden with the beginning of the tourist season in full swing, so we had more international visitors pop in to visit.

Later in the month we were lucky to have two Saturday afternoons of songs and storytelling to help celebrate Spring into Storytime. Lynn Saoirse joined us with a box of musical instruments including a harp and families enjoyed the interactive songs and storytelling.

Clifden traditional music festival continued the musical theme in the library. We were delighted to exhibit the first Trad themed art competition. The exhibition was from 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> classes from Scoil Mhuire National School as part of the Irish language plan. There were some very talented young artists, and we are glad we didn't have the tough job of selecting a winner. This exhibit brought some new faces to the library and filled the walls with colour.

April was world Autism Month, a time to recognise, celebrate and support the Autistic community. We have some great titles in our children's collection which we currently have on display.



ART DISPLAY TO MARK CLIFDEN'S TRADITIONAL MUSIC FESTIVAL

## EUROPE DIRECT @ BALLINASLOE LIBRARY

In April, Ballinasloe Library provided a varied and well-supported programme of events, featuring history talks, wellbeing initiatives, art exhibitions, energy saving talks, book clubs, and Europe Direct engagement. These initiatives develop from the centrality of the library to the local community who use it as a space for learning, creativity, and wellbeing.

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## EUROPE DIRECT: SUSTAINABLE & ENERGY EFFICIENT HOUSE ADVICE – 16TH APRIL



Ballinasloe Library hosted a packed talk by Dr Orla Nic Suibhne, SEAI Sustainable Energy Community Mentor. She gave practical advice and guidance on home energy efficiency, offering valuable insights about how to retrofit the home for greater energy efficiency and where to access vital resources, both locally and nationally.

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DR ORLA NIC SUIBHNE, SEAI SUSTAINABLE ENERGY COMMUNITY MENTOR WITH JOE JENNINGS, MANAGER EUROPE DIRECT, BALLINASLOE

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## WONDER WANDER WALKING TRAIL LAUNCHED IN BALLINASLOE LIBRARY – 17TH APRIL

A new Wonder Wander trail was launched with much excitement in Ballinasloe Library. Thanks to Cllr Peter Keaveney, who kindly launched the event in the Gallery, and to Ballinasloe and District Heritage Society and the National Built Heritage Service (NBHS) who developed the trail. The walking trail map celebrates the rich heritage and history of Ballinasloe, showcasing the historic buildings and places valued by local communities. Maps are available for free in the library.



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CONOR JOHNSTON, CHAIR OF BALLINASLOE AND DISTRICT HERITAGE SOCIETY, SPEAKING AT THE WONDER WANDER BALLINASLOE TRAIL LAUNCH ON 17TH APRIL

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## THE WOODLAWN ESTATE: A TALK BY BRÍD MERCER - 24TH APRIL

Ballinasloe Library hosted the last 'Town Talks' series organised by Ballinasloe and District Heritage Society. Bríd Mercer spoke on the history of the Woodlawn estate, from its creation to the War of Independence. The brilliant presentation was very well attended and had many reminiscing about the once glorious building.

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## AUTISM AWARENESS EVENT, GALWAY TRAVELLER MOVEMENT – 30<sup>TH</sup> APRIL

Galway Traveller Movement held their Autism Awareness Event in the Gallery of Ballinasloe Library. Autism awareness is vital for promoting understanding, acceptance, and inclusion and helps to transform people's attitudes. The children enjoyed sensory toys, courtesy of the GRD's Parentchild+ programme, and playing in the library. This event was supported through the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP).

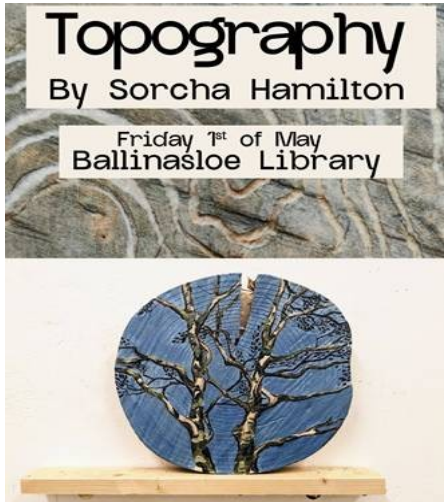
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## WEEKLY BABY RHYME TIME

Ballinasloe Library continues to hold a weekly Baby Rhyme Time facilitated by Music Generation County Galway. Families and little ones sang, danced, and had lots of fun. It remains a joyful weekly opportunity for families to share songs, rhythm, and early literacy experiences together.

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## EXHIBITION: TOPOGRAPHY BY SORCHA HAMILTON



Local artist Sorcha Hamilton exhibited her interesting paintings on slices of wooden trunks in the main library space. She also spent the day drawing and speaking with the community about the development of her style.

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## TOPOGRAPHY: AN EXHIBITION BY SORCHA HAMILTON

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## EXHIBITION: LEATH ACRA (HALF ACRE) BY YVONNE DEVINE ARTWORKS

The wonderful renderings of nature were exhibited for the month of April in the Gallery space.

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## LEATH ACRA: AN EXHIBITION BY YVONNE DEVINE



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## GALWAY CITY LIBRARY

Galway City Library was delighted to host an event for Galway's Deaf Community, about Generative AI, on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> April. This talk was delivered by tutor Martin McDonnell from GRETB, and was signed by Tony and Niamh from Chime, the national charity for Deaf and hard of hearing people.



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## TALK ON GENERATIVE AI FOR MEMBERS OF GALWAY'S DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING COMMUNITY



On Tuesday 28 April we hosted a talk on the history of Headford Lace, as part of a week of lace-related activities taking place across the county.

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## PRESENTATION ON LACE MAKING

We hosted a series of lace workshops throughout the week – on Carrickmacross lace, Youghal lace, and a crochet lace workshop. The events were well-attended, and participants were very enthusiastic about their new skills.



ATTENDEES AT THE LACE MAKING WORKSHOPS IN GALWAY CITY LIBRARY

## LOUGHREA LIBRARY

### RIGHT TO READ

Throughout the period, the library welcomed a wonderful series of school visits from classes at St. Ita's National School. Pupils from across the school community, ranging from younger classes through to senior pupils, visited the library to explore its collections, discover the joy of reading, and engage with the space as a place for learning and curiosity. These visits provided valuable opportunities for children to connect with books in a welcoming environment and to build positive relationships with library staff.

The library also hosted a visit from Loughrea Community Preschool, where the youngest visitors enjoyed a lively storytime session with a staff member. The visit combined listening, creativity, and play, with activities including planting seeds, colouring, and LEGO play. The session offered children an early, positive experience of the library as a place of imagination and fun.



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## VISIT FROM LOUGHREA COMMUNITY PRESCHOOL

The monthly Loughrea Library Book Club continued to provide a welcoming forum for readers to come together, share opinions, and enjoy lively discussion around selected titles.

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## FAMILY TIME AT THE LIBRARY

Family-focused activities filled the library with energy and creativity. A toddler storytime paired with LEGO Duplo play invited young children and their parents to share stories and enjoy playful learning together. Seasonal craft activities transformed the library into a creative space, where families could make Easter cards, decorate paper eggs, and engage in LEGO free play.

A hands-on craft workshop encouraged children to create pompom Easter chicks and bunnies, allowing participants to develop fine motor skills while having fun in a relaxed, social setting.



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## MAKING POMPOM EASTER CHICKS AND BUNNIES

LEGO free play sessions ran throughout the week, offering children a chance to drop in, experiment with building, and collaborate with others in an informal environment. These sessions proved especially popular and sustained interest across the week.

Board game afternoons provided a quieter but equally engaging opportunity for visitors to



enjoy friendly competition and shared play. LEGO free play also continued during the weekends, ensuring there was always something creative happening in the library.

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#### LEGO FREEPLAY IN LOUGHREA LIBRARY

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### AGE-FRIENDLY INITIATIVES



The library continued its strong commitment to age-friendly programming through a series of art workshops hosted in collaboration with the local Active Retirement Group. Led by artist Luci Kershaw, participants worked creatively over several sessions to produce personal memory books. These workshops encouraged self-expression, storytelling, and social connection, and were warmly received by those taking part.

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#### CRAFT WORKSHOP WITH LOUGHREA ACTIVE RETIREMENT GROUP

An information session on the Meals4Health home delivery service, delivered in partnership with COPE Galway, provided valuable information and support to attendees, helping to raise awareness of services available within the community.

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## INFORMATION SESSION ON MEALS4HEALTH DELIVERY SERVICE



Weekly adult craft sessions offered a relaxed and sociable space for participants to work on creative projects, share skills, and enjoy informal conversation in a supportive environment.



The period concluded with a community social morning, where people were invited to drop into the library to connect with others over tea and coffee. Attendees enjoyed reading newspapers, playing board games and cards, completing crosswords, and simply spending time together in a friendly, inclusive setting. This event reinforced the library's role as a welcoming community hub for connection and wellbeing.

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## COMMUNITY SOCIAL MORNING

## CLIFDEN LIBRARY

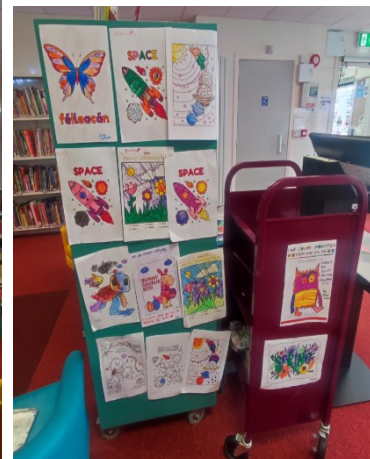
We started April in Clifden Library with the celebration of Easter. More little voices filled the library and treated us to their great artwork. We found plenty of beautiful books for our display to mark the arrival of Easter. It's a busy time in Clifden with the beginning of the tourist season in full swing, so we had more international visitors pop in to visit.

Later in the month we were lucky to have two Saturday afternoons of songs and storytelling to help celebrate Spring into Storytime. Lynn Saoirse joined us with her box of musical instruments including a harp and families enjoyed the interactive songs and storytelling.

Clifden traditional music festival continued the musical theme in the library. We were delighted to exhibit the first Trad themed art competition. Which was on display from 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> classes from Scoil Mhuire National School as part of the Irish language plan. There were some very talented young artists, and we are glad we didn't have the tough job of selecting a winner. This exhibit brought some new faces to the library and filled the walls with colour.



April is world Autism Month a time to recognise, celebrate and support the Autistic community. We have some great titles in our children's collection which we currently have on display.



## LEABHARLANN NA CEATHRÚN RUA

### AN CEART CHUN LÉITHEOIREACHT

#### CLUB LEABHAR

Mar is gnáthach, bhí ár gClub Leabhar againn, ar 30 Aibreán. Bhí “An Chláirseoir” le Diarmuid

Johnson á phlé acu, agus neart moladh a thabhairt don úrscéal. Cé go meastar go raibh an úr scéal beagán dúshlánach, mhoill siad go mór é agus cheap siad gur b’fhiú an stró a bhain leis . Bhí seachtar i láthair. Beidh briseadh ag an gclub don samhraidh, iad ag siúl le bheith ar ais arís ag deireadh Meán Fómhair.

#### CUIARTEANNA EILE Ó SCOILEANNA & GRÚPAÍ ÁITIÚLA

Bhí cuairteanna rialta an mhí seo againn ón mbunscoil áitiúil, ón gClub Suaimhneas, ó na scoileanna speisialta agus na heagraíochtaí cúraim. Bhí áthas orainn freisin fáilte a chur roimh ghrúpa ó Scoil Leitir Móir an mhí seo.

Bhí maidin Comhrá agus Caife againn le Pobal Rua sa leabharlann ar 29 Aibreán. Bhailigh an phobal le chéile chun comhrá agus cúpán caife (nó tae!) a bheith acu. Bhí 12 duine i láthair, agus muid ag súil go mór go mbeidh ócáid eile mar sin a bheith againn an mhí seo chugainn.

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## SCÉALTA EILE

Tháinig athruithe móra ar Leabharlann na Ceathrún Rua an mhí seo. Tá foireann níos mó againn arís, agus thapaigh muid an deis chun rannóg na bpáistí a atheagrú. Tá aiseolas iontach faighte againn cheana féin ó tuismitheoirí, múinteoirín agus, and grúp is tábhachtaí uiligm na gasúir!

Tá athrú tagtha ar rannóg na ndaoine fásta freisin. Rinne muid atheagrú ar na seilfeanna do na leabhair ficsein agus chuir muid na seánraí is mó a bhfuil móiréilimh orthu ina rannóga féin. Tá súil againn leanacht leis an obair seo ryder rannóg neanhfhicsean agus san ranóg Gaeilge an mhí seo chugainn.

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## RIGHT TO READ

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### BOOK CLUB

As per usual, we had our Club Leabhar, on April 30th. The group discussed “An Chláirseoir” by Diarmuid Johnson, and they had much praise for the novel. Though the novel was considered a bit challenging, they highly recommended it and said the difficulties associated with it were worth it. Seven were in attendance. The group will have a break for the summer, but they hope to be back again at the end of September.



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TAISPEÁNTAIS DE LEABHAIR A RINNEADH SCANNÁIN DÓIBH/ A DISPLAY OF BOOKS THAT WERE ADAPTED INTO FILMS

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## VISITS FROM SCHOOLS AND OTHER GROUPS

We had regular visits this month from the local primary school, from Club Suaimhneas, from the special schools and care groups. We were also delighted to welcome a group from Scoil Leitir Móir this month.



We had a “Comhrá agus Caife” coffee morning with Pobal Rua in the library on April 29th. The public gathered to chat and have coffee (or tea!). We had 12 attendees, and we are hoping to have another event like this next month.

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CUPÁN AGUS COMHRÁ LE POBAL RUA.

PHOTO CREDIT: RHONA NÍ CHEARBHAILL

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## OTHER NEWS

This month spelled a wave of transformation for Leabharlann na Ceathrún Rua. Now back to fuller staffing, we were able to begin rearranging the children’s section. We have received very positive feedback already from parents, teachers and most importantly, the children!



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RANNÓG NA BPÁISTÍ SA LEABHARLANN. / THE CHILDREN'S SECTION IN THE LIBRARY.

The adult section has also undergone some changes. We have rearranged the shelving in the fiction section and made some new genre sections for our most requested genres. We hope to continue this work in the non-fiction and Irish language sections in the coming weeks.

## MOBILE LIBRARY

As part of the Bealtaine Festival, celebrating the arts and ageing, Galway Mobile Library staff delivered flower-themed creative workshops throughout the month of May. Sessions included making bookmarks with dried flowers, greeting cards with pressed flowers, and decorative photo frames.

Workshops took place in nursing homes in Castlegar, Ballyglunin, Kinvara, Moycullen and Kilconnell. Residents enjoyed celebrating the arrival of spring through the vibrant colours and creative activities, which encouraged interaction and engagement.

Staff thoroughly enjoyed hosting the sessions and found them highly rewarding. The workshops provided a positive and meaningful experience for both residents and staff, highlighting the value of creative engagement.

An initiative of Galway Mobile Library, kindly funded by Creative Ireland.

## ORANMORE LIBRARY

April was a busy month at Oranmore Library. Our schedule of Easter Activities for children proved very popular and the library was a hive of activity every day throughout the Easter holidays. These events took place alongside our usual Book Club meetings, Poetry Reading Meeting, Storytimes and DUPLO mornings.

Staff at Oranmore Library were kept on their toes with Arts & Craft sessions, LEGO free play, Storytimes, DUPLO mornings, Jigsaw sessions, creating book displays for Cúirt and Earth Day as well as displaying new books received, creating posters to advertise all this locally and through social media.

Oranmore Library also hosted the launch of the new Radon Monitor Loan Scheme which is now available through several branches throughout Galway Public Libraries including Oranmore. This service has proved popular with a waiting list forming almost immediately.



CATHAOIRLEACH OF GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL, CLLR.DAVID COLLINS, COUNTY & CITY LIBRARIAN, LIZ KEANE, AND SENIOR EXECUTIVE LIBRARIAN SIOBHÁN ARKINS AT THE LAUNCH OF THE RADON MONITOR LOAN SCHEME

## EASTER ACTIVITIES:

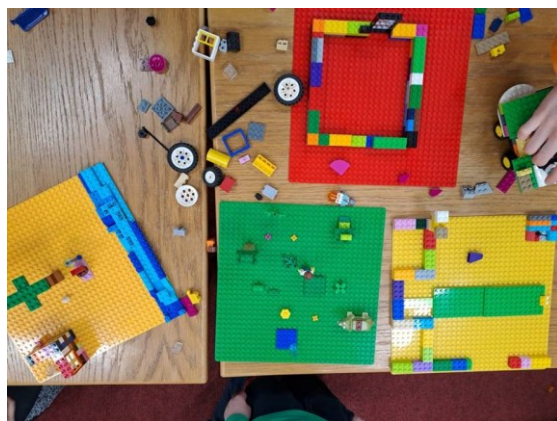
### EASTER ACTIVITIES AT ORANMORE LIBRARY



LEGO sessions inspired children to use their imaginations using the LEGO bricks. The children created a spooky aquarium, the Queen's house with a multi-eyed security guard, a beach scene, a dinosaur park and a specialised ninja vehicle.



### LEGO FREEPLAY AT ORANMORE LIBRARY



The Arts & Crafts sessions involved making Easter bunnies with paper plates and Easter chicks with cardboard, wool, paper and googly eyes. There were also giant Easter eggs to colour and Easter themed colouring pages available.



MAKING EASTER BUNNIES AND EASTER CHICKS



## BOOK DISPLAYS AT ORANMORE LIBRARY



## PORTUMNA LIBRARY

April was another busy and uplifting month in Portumna Library, reaffirming our role as a welcoming, shared space at the heart of the community.

Our much-loved **Ciorcal Comhrá** continued to thrive, taking place every second Tuesday. For over an hour, the library was filled with *craic agus comhrá* with people of all ages and all levels of Irish coming together. These sessions remain age-friendly, inclusive and hugely enjoyable for everyone involved.

Our **Adult Book Club** met for its monthly get-together, where members enjoyed a lively discussion on “*Anxious People*” by Fredrik Backman.

Thursday afternoons belonged to our **Scrabble for Adults**, providing a relaxed and sociable way to stretch the mind and connect with others.

Our **Community Jigsaw Table** proved to be a major hit this month. A 1,000-piece puzzle invited everyone to dip in, add a few pieces and enjoy the shared challenge – so popular that we may need to think about booking time slots!

Fridays were dedicated to **Freeplay LEGO and DUPLO**, alongside **Storytime**, delivered flexibly depending on staffing levels. These sessions continue to be a favourite with our younger visitors.

Every day, the library offers a wide range of **puzzles, word searches, colouring sheets and activities** suitable for all ages, ensuring there is always something to enjoy.

Our **Games Shelf** is constantly in use and has become a wonderful way for borrowers to connect with one another in an informal and friendly setting.

We always look forward to the **weekly visits from the members and staff of the Portumna Hub branch of Ability West**, whose regular presence adds greatly to the life of the library.

The **Print Service** remains exceptionally busy and continues to draw in people who might not otherwise visit the library, helping us reach new users within the community.

It's fantastic to have a **free, welcoming space in the community** — somewhere everyone can call their own, drop into without an appointment, and choose to be active or simply enjoy the atmosphere.

## TUAM LIBRARY

Tuam's regular library events continued; weekly baby & toddler rhyme times, adult craft sessions and Lego free play Saturdays. Regular book clubs were held for adults (2 groups) and young adults. The monthly breastfeeding support group facilitated by the Tuam public



health nurse was attended by local mothers who really appreciate the support. Regular school visits by local primary and secondary schools have continued.

.....  
TUAM LIBRARY'S MONTHLY SOUNDBITES  
CONTINUED WITH 16 ATTENDEES.

A weekly story time session was started for children and has been gaining attendance each week. A one-off Easter craft workshop was held for children with 12 attendees. Regular school visits by local primary and secondary schools have continued.

High Cross College secondary school exhibited a collaborative art piece throughout April, and the launch was well attended by students, families and others.

.....  
HIGH CROSS COLLEGE ART EXHIBIT



## WESTSIDE LIBRARY

April was a busy and diverse month for events at Westside Library, with programming reflecting strong community partnerships, youth engagement, and inclusive, socially

conscious initiatives. Alongside thirteen established weekly and monthly programmes supported by staff and community partners, we were delighted to welcome the Galway Filipino Irish Community Committee, who now hold their regular meetings in our auditorium.

During the month of April, the library hosted **52 events** with a total attendance of **730 participants**.

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## SEEDS & STORIES

April was “Spring Into Storytime” month and Westside Library celebrated with 4 Storytelling sessions and a workshop entitled “Seeds & Stories”. This was a hands-on staff-led workshop where little gardeners aged 4-8 years could explore nature through a seed planting

workshop, followed by a cosy nature-themed storytime.



Westside Library hosted the launch of In Our Eyes, a photography exhibition from Galway Volunteer Centre capturing perspectives of Galway City through the experiences of new residents. Officially opened by the Mayor of Galway City, Cllr. Mike Cubbard, the exhibition highlights a participant led project that supported skills development in photography and storytelling. The exhibition remains open to the public for next month.



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MAYOR OF GALWAY CITY,  
CLLR. MIKE CUBBARD,  
LAUNCHING 'IN OUR EYES'  
PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION

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## GRÚPA TUISMITHEOIRÍ AGUS LEANAÍ



Our Irish language Parent & Child group with Julie Anne De Brún returned in April for another enjoyable monthly session. Facilitated by Gaillimh le Gaeilge, these gatherings continue to offer families a fun and welcoming way to use and enjoy the Irish language together.

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JULIE-ANNE DE BRÚN HOSTING 'SCÉALAÍOCHT AGUS CEOL' FOR CHILDREN AND PARENTS

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## DEBS DRESS POP-UP SALE



As part of our *Skills for Life* programming, Westside Library hosted a Pre-Loved Debs Dress Sale, offering affordable and sustainable options for young people preparing for Debs and TY balls. With over 80 dresses on offer, the event supported reuse and sustainability aims and generated strong community engagement. This event was very positively received by the local community, and young adults travelled from various parts of the county to either sell or



purchase dresses, with some doing both. We hope to make this an annual feature of our events calendar.

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## AKIDWA COMMUNITY EVENT

Westside Library was delighted to host AkiDWA, a national network of African and migrant women living in Ireland for a community event in the library, bringing people together in a fun and welcoming setting. Everyone was invited to connect, share their culture, swap experiences, and enjoy a range of activities, highlighting the library as a relaxed and inclusive space for community connection.



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## AKIDWA COMMUNITY EVENT

## ENVIRONMENT

### DOG CONTROL

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#### PROMOTION OF RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERSHIP

624 dog licenses were purchased during the month of March, 402 of which were purchased at the local post office. Door to door licensing campaigns were carried out by our dog warden and community warden service in a number of housing estates in Ballinasloe, Tuam and Letterfrack during the month of April.

Galway County Council continues its partnership with MADRA on their neutering campaign for dogs, 'Millie's Fund'. This campaign continues to gain traction amongst the dog owning public with the campaign now widened to include male dogs. 36 neutering vouchers have been issued to dog owners to date in 2026.

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#### DOG CONTROL & ENFORCEMENT

1 fixed penalty notice was issued by the dog warden service for offences under the Control of Dogs Act 1986 As Amended during the month of April. 19 fixed penalty notices have been issued year to date by the dog warden service with 3 paid in full and a further 4 being paid via agreed payment plans. The remaining fixed penalty notices issued are being processed through the system.

2 outstanding fixed penalty notices issued at the end of 2025 were also paid in full during the month of April.

Galway County Council attended Doire an Fheich District Court on 12th April last in relation to an outstanding fixed penalty notice issued for an offence under the Control of Dogs Act 1986 As Amended. The fixed penalty notice was subsequently paid by the defendant in court, and it was agreed that the matter be adjourned to give the defendant an opportunity to finalise measures he had initiated to ensure that his dog is kept under effective control in future. These measures will be reviewed by the dog warden service in advance of the next court sitting of the case in June.

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## DOG SHELTER

7 dogs came through the Council's dog warden shelter during the month of April.

## ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING & ENFORCEMENT

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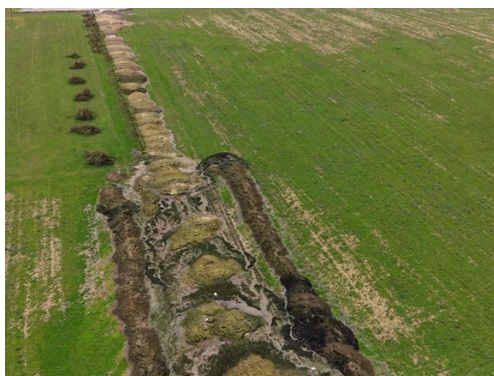
### AIR / NOISE POLLUTION MONITORING & ENFORCEMENT

Staff attended the Local Authority Air Quality Network spring meeting in Portlaoise where various speakers presented on air quality monitoring and air pollutants. Included on the day was a presentation from the DCEE (Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment) on Persistent Organic Pollutants. Also given on the day was an update on the PEACEPLUS Partnership for Evidence and Action on Clean Air- a cross-border funding programme designed to support peace and prosperity across Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland.

Staff also attended training with the EPA on Odour Impact Assessment and the use of their 'Guidance document - AG5' in response to complaints of odour. Practical training is to be provided in the coming weeks.

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### AGRICULTURE MONITORING & ENFORCEMENT



Galway County Council chaired 2 meetings with the EPA and Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine regarding organic waste material discharging near a watercourse.

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AGRICULTURAL WASTE STOCKPILED ILLEGALLY,  
ADJACENT TO A WATERCOURSE

Returns for Q1 2026 were submitted to the EPA detailing all activity by the Environment Section relating to Agriculture. These returns included the following:

- Review of 31 sewage sludge spreading applications
- 21 farm complaints
- 34 farm planning applications reviewed

Three waterbodies were identified to conduct farm inspections in Q2 of this year. These will be in at-risk waterbodies Castlodge 010 and Eyrecourt 010, where agriculture is deemed a significant risk. Shiven south, which is not at risk, will also be covered. This is in order to assist with retaining this status.

A court hearing regarding pollution from a farmyard was due to be heard during the month but the case appealed to the High Court and is now listed for hearing in May.



The IFFPG (Irish Farm Film Producers Group) have set their collection dates for the country for 2026. Galway County collection dates below for your information.

Galway	
Headford Mart	Tues 28th April
Tuam Mart	Thur/Fri 28/29th May
Gort Mart	Tues 2nd June
Athenry Mart	Fri 5th June
Loughrea Mart	Tues 9th June
Portumna Mart	Thur 11th June
Ballinasloe Mart	Tues 16th June
Mountbellew Mart	Thur 18th June
Maam Cross Mart	Tues 14th July (Hrs 9am – 12pm)
Clifden, Sweeneys Yard (Opp Mart)	Tues 14th July (Hrs 2pm – 4pm)

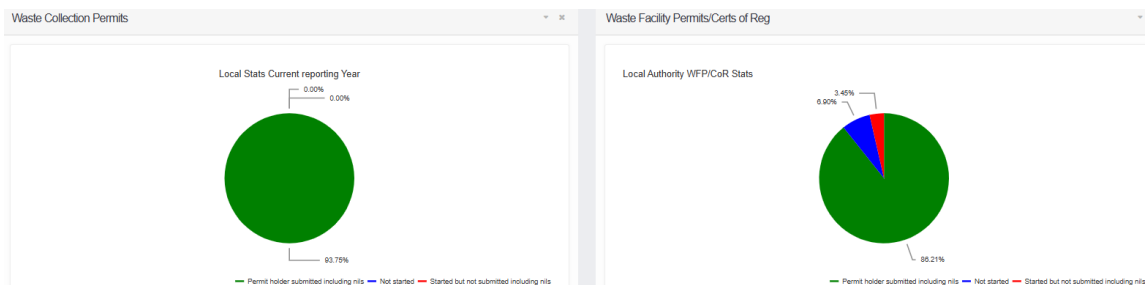
### LITTER ENFORCEMENT

6 fines were issued by our community warden service for offences under the Litter Pollution Act 1997 As Amended during the month of April. As of the end of April, 46 fines have been issued with 19 paid in full, 1 further fine being paid in instalments, 4 cases referred for legal proceedings and 18 fines issued still being processed through the system.

1 case was before the district court in Tuam on 21st April 2026 in respect of littering offences but was adjourned until the 23rd June 2026 as witnesses were unavailable to attend on the April date.

### WASTE ENFORCEMENT

The Annual Returns made by permitted Waste Collectors and Facilities/Certificates of Registration sites for 2025 were made available on the NWCPO portal for validation by Waste Enforcement Officers. This year there are 80 collection permits and 29 facility/COR's data to be validated for Galway County. This considerable body of work will continue over the next few months.



Staff attended a workshop on the regulating of End of Waste (Article 28) - Recycled Aggregates during April. To date 1 site in County Galway has begun the process of becoming compliant with the requirements this entails. In order to legally recover material from waste and for that material to cease to be waste (meet end-of-waste), the producer (waste operator) must hold an appropriate waste authorisation and any other relevant consents, which may include appropriate planning permission; applicable end-of-waste

criteria must be available to utilise; and the producer must demonstrate that the applicable end-of-waste are met.

The concept of end-of-waste established in the European Waste Framework Directive (WFD) was adopted in domestic law through Article 28 of the European Communities (Waste Directive) Regulations 2011, as amended. End-of-waste status gives waste holders the opportunity to demonstrate, with an appropriate level of rigour, that:

A waste material can be 'fully recovered' and no longer be defined as waste.

The waste can be used as a 'secondary' resource in place of and fulfilling the same role as a non-waste derived or virgin 'primary' resource.

New innovations can transform waste into a valuable resource.

The fully recovered material can be used without causing overall adverse impacts to the environment or human health.

Staff made a presentation to the SPC on the work carried out by the Waste Enforcement team each year in line with the RMCEI (Recommended Minimum Criteria of Environmental Inspections) targets set and the NEPS (National Enforcement Priorities) set by the EPA.

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## CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT

A Septic Tank inspectors network workshop took place which was attended by local authority staff from across the country. Topics covered during this workshop included:

- Updates on grant scheme
- National inspection plan report 2025
- Advisory notice tracking
- Presentations on closure of advisory notices including enforcement, prosecutions and engagement
- Pre-consultation for NIP 2027-2031

Planning for Septic tank inspections for 2026 commenced. Waterbodies where septic tanks are identified as a pressure on water quality are being chosen. These include:

- Traheen 010 (near Clifden)
- Derryehorraun 010 (near Clifden)
- Letternoosh 010 (near Clifden)
- Owenriff South 010 (Indreabhán)

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## TRAINING

Chemical awareness training took place in the Maldron Hotel, Galway covering all aspects of health & safety, clean-up procedures, etc.

Two staff members from the Water Quality team attended a pilot training programme at Roscrea training centre for Section 4 (Water Pollution Act) licensing. The training manuals

are being updated at present, and this course will reflect those updates. Local authority staff, with varying degrees of experience on this type of licensing, were in attendance.

One of the water quality team attended EPA training in relation to private water supplies.

This training covered:

Introduction to private supplies guidance

Consultation with HSE

Drinking water regulations and food business operators

Source protection risk assessment

EPA audits of monitoring programmes

## BATHING WATERS & WATER SAFETY

### BEACH LIFEGUARD RECRUITMENT

Beach lifeguard induction will take place on Thursday, 21 May 2026. Galway County Council plans to employ 53 lifeguards for the 2026 bathing season who will be deployed across 16 designated bathing areas, comprising 10 locations within the county and 6 within Galway City. As part of the compulsory induction programme, lifeguards will receive Manual Handling training, First Aid training in line with Water Safety Ireland and the Beach Lifeguard Manual, Child Protection training, and a briefing on Galway County Council's First Aid Policy with a focus on activity-based risk assessments. There will also be an overview of Galway County Council's Safety Management System and Safety Statement, guidance on personal protective equipment (PPE) and training on GDPR obligations, the Council's Dignity at Work Policy, managing aggressive behaviour, and customer service standards. This comprehensive induction course ensures lifeguards are fully prepared to deliver a high standard of public safety throughout the bathing season.

## ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS & EDUCATION

### GREEN SCHOOLS

Galway County Council continues to support the Green Schools programme, and 28 schools renewed their Green Flag for 2026.



### NATIONAL SPRING CLEAN 2026

234 groups or individuals registered for National Spring Clean 2026 in April. Community groups continue to be supported in local clean ups.



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## RELOVE FASHION COMPETITION 2026

Young people from all over Ireland gathered at Dublin City University (DCU) on the 15th of April for the largest Relove Fashion Final in the competition's history, celebrating creativity, innovation and sustainability in fashion. Four entries from County Galway made it to the finals where 2 regional awards and 1 national award was won by County Galway schools and individuals.



## HOUSING

### VACANT HOMES

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#### RETRO FIT RIG WEEK: VACANT HOMES INFORMATION EVENTS

The Vacant Homes Officer (VHO) attended the Retrofit Rig Weeks in An Cromptán, An Cheathrú Rua on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> of April and The Fire Station, Clifden on Thursday 07<sup>th</sup> of May. The VHO provided information on the Local Authority Home Loan (LAHL), Housing

Grants, and the Vacant Homes Schemes including the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grants (Croí Cónaithe Scheme) at both events.



L-R: MARION NÍ CHADHAIN, ÚDARAS NA GAELTACHTA, COLM MAC EACHMHARCAIGH VACANT HOMES CO-ORDINATOR FOR THE GAELTACHTS, MICHELLE CONNELLAN VACANT HOMES OFFICER.

L-R: PARAIC BARRETT WESTERN ENERGY AGENCY, MICHELLE CONNELLAN VACANT HOMES OFFICER, JOE DEMPSEY RETROFIT RIG & MOUNT LUCAS TRAINING CENTRE



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#### VACANT PROPERTY REFURBISHMENT GRANTS (CROÍ CÓNAITHE SCHEME)

There continues to be a high level of interest in the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grants (Croí Cónaithe Scheme). Galway County Council has received 725 applications since the beginning of the scheme with 526 applications approved to a value in excess of 30 million

euros, a further 40 applications are in progress with the balance having been withdrawn or rejected due to ineligibility for the scheme. 140 Vacant Property Refurbishment Grants, with a total value of €7,667,962.40 have been paid to applicants to date, representing a significant investment in local communities.

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING

### GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL ANNOUNCES 106 AFFORDABLE HOMES FOR ATHENRY

Galway County Council, in association with Highgate Properties Limited, has announced the delivery of 106 affordable homes at the Fearann na hEascrach development in Athenry. The homes, located on the Raheen Road near the town's train station and local amenities, are being delivered under the Government's Delivering Homes, Building Communities policy. The scheme will be completed in three phases. The first phase, now nearing completion, includes 33 homes made up of 32 three-bedroom houses and one four-bedroom unit. A further 48 homes in the second phase are due in the second quarter of 2027, with 25 more to follow in the third phase in the third quarter of that year.



PICTURED AT ÁRAS AN CHONTAE AT THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE FEARANN NA HEASCRAH DEVELOPMENT IN ATHENRY. L-R: DAITHI FLOOD, SENIOR EXECUTIVE ENGINEER; DAMIEN MITCHELL, DIRECTOR OF SERVICES FOR HOUSING (GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL); DAVID HEANEY, COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR, ASPECT DESIGN TO FINISH LTD; FERGAL O'MAHONY, CEO, HIGHGATE GROUP; LIAM CONNEALLY, CHIEF EXECUTIVE; JOHN WATERS, ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER; KAREN O'DONNELL, SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER (GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL). CREDIT GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL.

Applications for the affordable homes will be accepted through an online portal, which will open on Thursday, 21 May at 10am. The application window will remain open until 11 June. An information evening for interested applicants will take place at the Raheen Woods Hotel on Thursday, 14 May at 7pm. Further information on the Fearann na hEascrach scheme, including the Scheme of Priority, application details and required documentation, is available at [www.galway.ie/affordable](http://www.galway.ie/affordable).



AN ARTIST'S IMPRESSION OF THE FEARANN NA HEASCRACH DEVELOPMENT IN ATHENRY, CO GALWAY.

## SOCIAL HOUSING STOCK

Galway County Council in association with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) continue to upgrade the energy efficiency of local authority properties. These upgrade works make these homes easier to heat and retain warmth and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the national effort to combat climate change.

It is expected that 140 local authority homes will be retrofitted by Galway County Council in 2026. The works include the installation of new windows & external doors, the replacement of the heating system with an energy efficient air to water heat pump, the improvement of attic & wall insulation, and the installation of photovoltaic solar panels.

## HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS

Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) – National Update and GCC Position

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## INTRODUCTION

The Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) is a national social housing support administered by local authorities on behalf of the Department of Housing. It assists households with a long-term housing need to secure accommodation in the private rented sector. Payments are made directly to landlords, with tenants paying a differential rent to the local authority. HAP is a key component of social housing delivery, including for households exiting homelessness.

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## NATIONAL POSITION (11 MAY 2026)

- 47,856 active HAP tenancies nationally
- Net reduction of 1,807 tenancies in 2026
- Average weekly set-up: 111 tenancies
- Pipeline remains active (tenancies signed and due to commence)
- Position: The scheme is currently experiencing overall contraction in active tenancies.

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## GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL POSITION

- 1,253 active tenancies
- 2026 activity:
  - 51 new tenancies
  - 74 exits
  - Net reduction: -23
- Weekly trend: low (approx. 1–3 tenancies)

Position: GCC is experiencing a moderate reduction in caseload, aligned with national trends.

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## NATIONAL CONTEXT

- GCC is a mid-tier authority by scale
- Patterns of exits exceeding new entries are consistent across authorities
- No evidence of divergence from national performance

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## HOMELESS HAP

- 326 GCC cases vs 31,253 nationally
- Represents a modest share nationally, reflecting regional demand

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## CONCLUSION

HAP activity in 2026 is showing a declining trend nationally, with exits continuing to exceed new tenancies. Galway County Council is operating in line with this national pattern, with a moderate reduction in active tenancies and no divergence from peer authorities. Tenancy amendments and other changes has increased.

## LOCAL AUTHORITY HOME LOANS

Housing Loans have successfully held fortnightly information sessions in Gort, Ballinasloe and Portumna through April 2026. These open days provide one to one guidance and clarity re Housing Loan application criteria and process for applicants. Information regarding The Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant (used alongside the Local Authority Purchase and Renovation Loan), Housing Adaptation Grants for Older People/Disabled People and Affordable Housing Schemes were also available at these information sessions. All information sessions are advertised on social media, with an information brochure on loans



published and available at all Municipal District offices. Information sessions have been scheduled for Loughrea and Tuam and will be advertised on social media and all councillors will be informed via email. The Housing Loans team has also held successful fortnightly information sessions on the Local Authority Home Loan and the Local Authority Purchase and Renovation Loan schemes in Áras an Chontae. These sessions will increase awareness of the availability of the loan and reduce the number of invalid applications received.

TARA ROGERS, LORRAINE GREALISH HARRINGTON AND ANDREA MCDERMOT OF GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL

LORRAINE GREALISH HARRINGTON, GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL LOANS TEAM



BREAKFAST BRIEFING ON HOUSING DELIVERY IN COUNTY COUNCIL

A breakfast briefing was hosted by Galway County Council on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2026, held at the Lady Gregory Hotel, Gort. It focused on bringing together key stakeholders, developers and interested parties to discuss opportunities and processes related to Turnkey and Part V Housing projects in County Galway for Social and Affordable Schemes.



JOHN WATERS, AFFORDABLE HOUSING OFFICER & KAREN O'DONNELL, SEO HOUSING PRESENTING AT THE EVENT



DAMIEN MITCHELL DIRECTOR OF SERVICES HOUSING SPEAKING AT THE EVENT.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL LIAM CONNEALLY SPEAKING AT THE EVENT.



The briefing offered an opportunity to provide information, guidance, and support to help developers make well-informed decisions to meet housing delivery targets. Developers were urged to engage with the Housing Department officials, ask questions, and collaborate to ensure shared success in meeting housing targets. The event was well attended by members from the construction industry; attendees actively engaged in discussions and shared their perspectives on housing delivery in the County.



DAITHI FLOOD AND ALAN BROGAN HOUSING DEPARTMENT PRESENTING AT THE EVENT.



Presentations were provided by officials from the Local Authority's Housing Department on a range of issues, including the existing social housing demand and supply situation, the Design Manual for Quality Housing, Developer Led Infrastructure, Housing Activation office, the Part V now Part VII of the Planning act. Vacant Homes Grants. Developers were also advised of the details regarding a published Call of Expression of Interests for the delivery of social and affordable housing via Advance Purchase (Turnkey) and Housing activation projects.

A key part of the breakfast briefing was to facilitate direct engagement with developers and key stakeholders on the importance of embracing a collaborative approach to boosting the supply of social housing units in County Galway, the event provided insights into Galway County's housing supply and demand and encouraged developers to focus on areas with the greatest housing need and shortages, thereby ensuring maximum impact from their projects. Galway County Council's Expressions of Interest process for Social and Affordable Housing will be launched this week. This event was used as an opportunity to encourage developers to engage with it.



GER SCULLY SEO HOUSING PROVIDING A PRESENTATION ON GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL SOCIAL HOUSING DEMAND AND SUPPLY DASHBOARD

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## PART 8 PROPOSAL FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF 28 HOUSING UNITS AT ST JOSEPH'S ROAD PORTUMNA

An application under Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended), for a proposed 28 no. residential development at Raheen, Athenry was lodged on 13th February 2026. The proposed dwellings are two-storey in height, comprising of 18 no. 3-bedroom houses and 10 no. 2-bedroom houses. The proposed development also includes the construction of hard and soft landscape works including new roadways and paths, car parking spaces, cycle parking, public open space, public lighting, signage, boundary treatments and all associated infrastructure and site developments work necessary to facilitate the proposed development.

Further to a planning review and report, a Chief Executive Report was issued to the elected members of Athenry-Oranmore M.D. This report was considered at the Athenry-Oranmore



MD Meeting on the 12th May and approved.

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FIGURE 1: 3-D MODEL OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

## PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE, FIRE & EMERGENCY & CLIMATE CHANGE

### PIERS AND HARBOURS

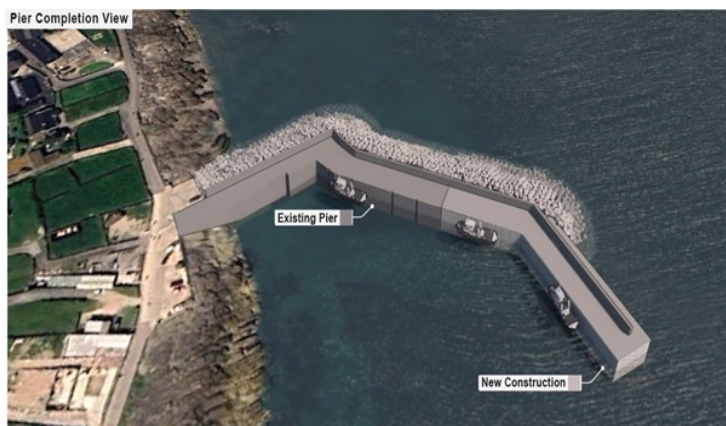
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#### INIS OÍRR PIER REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Works on site have commenced on the Inis Oírr pier redevelopment project. A total funding package of €35.75 million has been approved for works which comprise the construction of a protective breakwater along with a 90m long extension. This will provide much improved protection to vessels in the harbour than is currently afforded while also resulting in a total length of 135m of additional berthage.

The completed scheme will ensure that wave heights within the harbour are greatly reduced

increasing safety and extending the time period the pier is usable, contributing significantly to the island's commercial potential while ensuring enhanced quality of life.



VIEW OF COMPLETED PROJECT

The works programme extends over two summer seasons, with completion projected for the latter part of 2027.

Significant progress as has been made to date, the key elements of which are outlined below:

- All key construction plant has been mobilised to site. This includes jack up barge and crane for installation of rock armour and pier extension units and jack up barge and excavator for dredging operation.
- Import of stone fill to rear of existing pier as first step in breakwater construction is underway. Currently using the road between the slipway and the pier to transport this material, inside 4 to 6 weeks this will no longer be necessary, and all material will be placed directly from the sea.
- The dredging crew are on site, and this operation is about to commence. Approval to install temporary Aids to Navigation has been received. Blasting required for to complete the dredging is scheduled for later in summer and there has been significant communication with all relevant stakeholders in relation to this.
- Traffic management on the island is in place and is working well.
- Casting of rock armour units is approximately 70% complete.
- Casting of the pier extension units is also progressing well and is on programme.
- Overall, from a programme perspective, the work is on track to meet projected stage of completion by the end of this summer. Ongoing situation with regard to fuel price instability is a risk and this is being monitored.
- Engagement and co-ordination with pier users and island residents is an important feature of the project and will continue through to its completion.

## TAKING IN CHARGE

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

The Table A hereunder outlines output for 2026.

Table A – Taking in Charge

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

In addition to the above, the following is position @ 06/05/2026

Applications received	3
Estates – advertised for Taking in Charge	0
Estates – Works Complete	2
Estates – TIC Led Estates – Works in Hand	27
Estates – Developer led Estates	36
<i>Bond Claims</i>	3

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

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

### SAFETY (HAZARD) ALERTS

One Safety Alert was issued during the period:

- **Working in vertical service riser shafts of multi-storey buildings**

All Safety Alerts (current and past) are on the **Intranet/SharePoint** for reference and action.

### LIBRARY STAFF CONFERENCE

The Senior Executive Health and Safety Officer attended the Library Staff Conference (14 April) and updated staff on:

- The Health and Safety Policy (reviewed by the Chief Executive in January)
- Our safety management system (ISO 45001)
- 2025 incident trends, including common library issues and lone working
- Serious incident response and the need to report all accidents, incidents and near misses
- Staff supports, including the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

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## QUADRA - INTERNAL AUDITS

The **ISO45001 Internal Audit Schedule 2026** is on the **Intranet/SharePoint**. The first of 22 audits was completed in **April (Fire)**, starting the 2026 programme. The Health and Safety team can support sections ahead of their audit if required please get in touch.

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## HSA / NSAI AUDITS

No HSA audits have taken place to date. External HSA audits are now expected from mid-May 2026 (starting in depots). Please close any outstanding actions from 2025 audits and ensure local records, procedures and controls are audit ready.

The first NSAI audit is scheduled for 21 May 2026 and will involve NRPO, Galway City Fire Station, Galway City Library and County Hall. The Health and Safety Department will engage with sections in advance and are available to support preparation.

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## HEALTH CHECKS 2026

Free staff Health Checks will be delivered countywide by **Medmark Occupational Healthcare** from **15 June 2026**. The Health and Safety team is confirming on-site arrangements with Medmark (room, contacts, access/WiFi). Please keep an eye on your emails for booking details.

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## ACTIVE TRAVEL

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### ACTIVE TRAVEL FOOTPATH AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS



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### ORANMORE TO TRAIN STATION ACTIVE TRAVEL SCHEME

Section 38 Consultation completed. Consultants preparing Section 38 Report.

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### BALLINASLOE ACTIVE TRAVEL SCHEME

- Positive feedback received from Pobal regarding Expression Of Interest submission from EU Just Transitional Fund START fund. Funding Application due 2nd of June.
- Section 38 Consultation completed. Consultants preparing Section 38 Report.

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## PEDESTRIAN CROSSING IN PORTUMNA



Works are ongoing, with civil works completed. Awaiting ESB connection to switch on pedestrian crossing lights.

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## KINVARA PEDESTRIAN CROSSING

Topographical survey completed on site, deliverables due early May. Tendered Road Safety Audits stage 1 and 2.

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## SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL (SRTS) PROGRAMME UPDATE



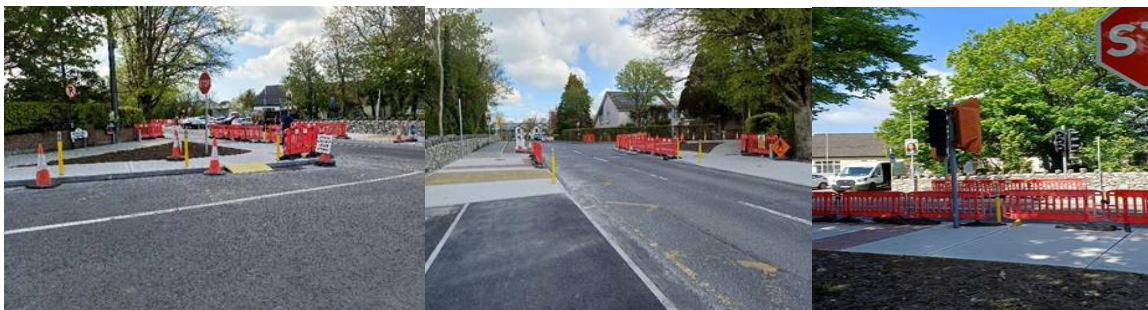
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### R1 SRTS

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#### SCOIL ÍOSA, ORANMORE

Construction works are progressing on site – works are 85% complete.



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#### CALASANCTIUS COLLEGE & GAELSCOIL DE HIDE

Calascantius & Gaelscoil De Hide tenders closed and evaluation carried out.

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## SCOIL CHROI NAOFA, ATHENRY

Phase 4 Planning approval granted by the NTA.

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## R2 SRTS

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## SCOIL NA BHFORBACHA

Tender Documents in Final preparation with expectation to publish in mid-May.

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## GORT COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Detailed design has commenced.

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Bus Stop Enhancement Works which include bus shelter installation at Dunmore, Oughterard, Letterfrack and Oranmore Village

This Section 38 was opened on consult.ie on Friday May 1<sup>st</sup> and will continue to run till Friday May 15<sup>th</sup>.

## CLIMATE CHANGE

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### COMMUNITY CLIMATE ACTION FUND

Communities are currently implementing projects under the 1<sup>st</sup> round of the Community Climate Action Fund including. Recently completed projects include:

- Pobal Tír an Fhia Community Centre - Comhairle Ceantar na nOileán - Solar panels, bike stand, paint reuse project, WEEE repair centre & tool library.
- Colga Football Club – Solar panels
- Leitir Mealláin Community Centre – Comhar Chuigeal – Solar panels, Community Planting



- Inishbofin Community Centre - Inishbofin Development Company – Building retrofit works, bike stand, community planting, water conservation measures.



## OILEÁIN ÁRANN DECARBONISATION ZONE FUND

Communities are also completing projects under the 1st round of the Oileáin Árann Climate Action Fund. The €60,000 fund was open to organisations, businesses and communities of Oileáin Árann. Coláiste Ghobnait Iarbhuscoil on Inis Oirr recently installed a bike shelter (shown above) with support from this fund.

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

THINKING OF SOLAR PV?  
HAVE QUESTIONS?  
JOIN US FOR  
**PV Tea**

An informal chat with homeowners on the island who already have Solar PV over a cup of tea. A chance to ask questions & find out if Solar PV is the right choice for you!

**Tuesday 24 Feb, 6-7pm**  
**Ionad Colm Ó hlarnáin, Kilonan**

Refreshments provided by Galway County Council

AG SMAOINEAMH AR PAINEIL  
FHÓTAVOLTACH A FHÁIL? AN  
BHIFUL CEISTEAINNA AGAT?  
BÍSE LINN  
**PV Tea**

Comhrá agus cupán tae neamhghoirmiúil le húinéirí t'áitiúla a bhíful paineíl greine acu cheanna. Deis ceisteanna a chur agus a fháil amach an é an rogha cheart duitse!

**Dé Máirt 24 Feabhra 6-7 i.n**  
**Ionad Colm Ó hlarnáin, Cill Rónáin**

Soláistí curtha ar fáil ag Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe

In February, the Climate Unit provided funding support to the Comharchumann Fuinneamh Oileáin Árann to host a PV Tea on Inis Mór to encourage and support homeowners.

## UPCOMING CLIMATE ACTION EVENTS

The 2nd round of the Oileáin Árann Climate Action Fund will be opening for applications in

Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May  
Halla Rónáin  
12-3pm

Galway County Council  
**CLIMATE ACTION  
GNÍOMHÚ AR SON NA HAERÁIDE**  
Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe

**OILEÁIN ÁRANN  
DECARBONISING ZONE FUND**

- Last year's fund enabled up to **70 households** get a low cost, detailed **Home Energy Assessment**
- Have your say about what **YOU** would like from this year's fund to address climate change
- We want to hear from **individuals, community organisations and businesses**

Register before 7<sup>th</sup> May for free transfers from Inis Oirr & Inis Meáin

Light lunch provided

099 70301 info@aranislandsenergycoop.ie Halla Rónáin, Inis Mór

the coming months. In May, the Climate Unit will be hosting a community engagement workshop in Inis Mór to shape the 2026 fund and future climate action priorities.

### MAJOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (MEM)

#### MAJOR EMERGENCY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (MEDC)

The Galway County Council MEDC meeting took place on 17th April 2026 (rescheduled from its original date). The meeting covered the 2026 regional work programme, the schedule of MEDC meetings for the remainder of the year, and an update from the National Working Group. The National Working Group has indicated that each region should run themed MEM seminars, and planning for this will follow. The 2026 Work Programme was circulated to all MEDC members following the meeting. The next MEDC is scheduled for 18th May 2026.

#### INTERAGENCY TRAINING

Interagency On-Site Coordination (OSC) Training was delivered on 22nd April 2026 at the Connacht Hotel, Galway. The course was organised through the West Region Emergency Management Working Group (WREMWG) Training Subgroup. 18 places were allocated across the three Principal Response Agencies (6 HSE, 6 An Garda Síochána, 6 Local Authority, with 2 from each of Galway, Mayo, and Roscommon). The draft training report was circulated on 30th April for review, with comments requested by 7th May. The report will be brought to the next WREMWG meeting on 12th May for approval.



#### INTERAGENCY ON-SITE COORDINATION TRAINING INTERAGENCY COORDINATION

A Local Coordination Group meeting on Principal Emergency Services Vehicle Fuel took place on 9th April 2026. The meeting was attended by representatives of all three Principal Response Agencies, including Paul Brophy (HSE), Inspector Conway, Raymond J (An Garda Síochána), and Assumpta Feeney (Circle K), along with CFO Gerry O'Malley and Gabriel Glynn (HSE). Two Further Local Coordination Group Meetings were held over the following weekend with the Principal response agencies coordinating the Emergency Service Response to the Fuel Protests.

Galway Fire and Rescue Service (GFRS) participated in two meetings of the National Severe Weather and Flood Coordination Group on 1st and 2nd April 2026, convened by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in advance of potential severe weather over the Easter weekend.

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## REGIONAL MEM

The West Region MEM Regional Working Group Report to the National Working Group was submitted on 17th April 2026. The report confirmed the following exercise schedule for 2026:

- Tynagh Power Plant (lower tier COMAH): Tabletop exercise, Q3 2026
- Aer Arann / Indreabhán Airport: Tabletop and practical exercise, Q4 2026
- Galway East Exercise (AGS led): Tabletop exercise, Q4 2026
- Ireland West Airport Knock: Practical exercise completed 27th January 2026

The next WREM WG meeting is scheduled for 12th May 2026 at the Roscommon Civil Defence Building. The next Regional Steering Group meeting is scheduled for 29th May 2026.

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## COMAH SITES AND EMERGENCY PLANNING

Planning is progressing for the Tynagh Power Station (lower tier COMAH) tabletop exercise scheduled for Q3 2026. No other COMAH site exercises are due in 2026.

Work continues on the review of the joint Galway County and City Major Emergency Plan. The revised [GCC MEP Revised 2026 DRAFT](#) was updated in March 2026 and remains under review.

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## UPCOMING

- WREM WG Meeting: 12th May 2026, Roscommon
- MEDC: 18th May 2026
- West MEM Regional Steering Group: 29th May 2026
- University Hospital Galway Emergency Traffic Management Plan site visit: scheduled for May 2026
- Indreabhán Airport Response Plan Review May 2026

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## CIVIL DEFENCE

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### ACTIVITIES

Units provided medical/first aid cover at various events across the City and County each weekend, supporting their communities.

Assistance with the provision of medical cover was provided to Mayo Civil Defence during a marathon in Westport.

Two volunteers from Galway Civil Defence took part in the Rescue Organisation Ireland competition in Hacketstown, Co. Carlow. This was the first time a crew participated in the competition, where they learned valuable skills and techniques to bring back to their units.

## TRAINING

The Clonberne Unit took part in a joint RTC exercise with Tuam Fire Service at Tuam Fire Station. Tuam Fire Service demonstrated their cutting and extrication skills, while the unit showcased their casualty care and ambulance skills.

Eleven volunteers completed Floodwater Responder training over a three-day period. This included both volunteers requiring recertification and new Floodwater Responders. This was the first of three courses planned for 2026.

Three volunteers from Galway County units completed Level 1 and 2 Powerboat training in Galway. This is the initial course required to become a member of the boat operations team.

Six new volunteers completed their Cardiac First Response (CFR) course and will now progress to the First Aid Response (FAR) course later in the year. CFR certification is a compulsory requirement to be operational.

Seven volunteers completed their Manual Handling course in Galway. Manual Handling certification is also a compulsory requirement to be operational.

## COMMUNITY WARDENS

In May, a training day on Activity Risk Assessments (ARAs) was held in the Council Chamber. The session covered ARAs relating to roads, environmental work, and general operational activities. The training was attended by 14 Community Wardens and provided a valuable opportunity for both learning and collaboration.

The day also gave the team a chance to reconnect, take photographs, and mark an important occasion—saying goodbye to Rory O'Connor, who will retire on 11th May after 26 years of dedicated service.





With all fleet vehicles present at the County Buildings, the opportunity was taken to apply additional branding to the front of the vans. The updated branding was very well received by the team and will help make the vehicles more easily recognisable while on patrol.



In addition, a talk on Child Safeguarding was organised and delivered by Kieran Keon, Senior Principal Social Worker, which was highly informative and beneficial for all in attendance.

GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL PLANNING DATA

Key Statistics: 1 <sup>st</sup> January – 30 <sup>th</sup> April 2026	
Applications Received/Valid	757/592 (78%)
Granted	516
Grant Rate	85%
Refused	94
Breakdown of Decisions Granted Outline (3)	
Permission (397)	
Retention (98)	
Permission Consequent (1)	
Extension of Duration (17)	
Percentage of applications received via Portal/Hardcopy	87%
Stage 1LRD	1
Stage 2 LRD	2
Major Meetings	4
SID Meetings	
Red III Applications	8

Key Statistics: 1 <sup>st</sup> January – 30 <sup>th</sup> April 2026	
<b>Exempted Development Applications (under Section 5)</b>	63
Exempt	24
Not Exempt	19
FI	4
Withdrawn	
Decision Pending	14
Appealed	2

Commencements and Completions 1 <sup>st</sup> January – 30 <sup>th</sup> April 2026	
Submitted and Validated Commencement Notices	296
Submitted and Validated Certificates of Completion	43

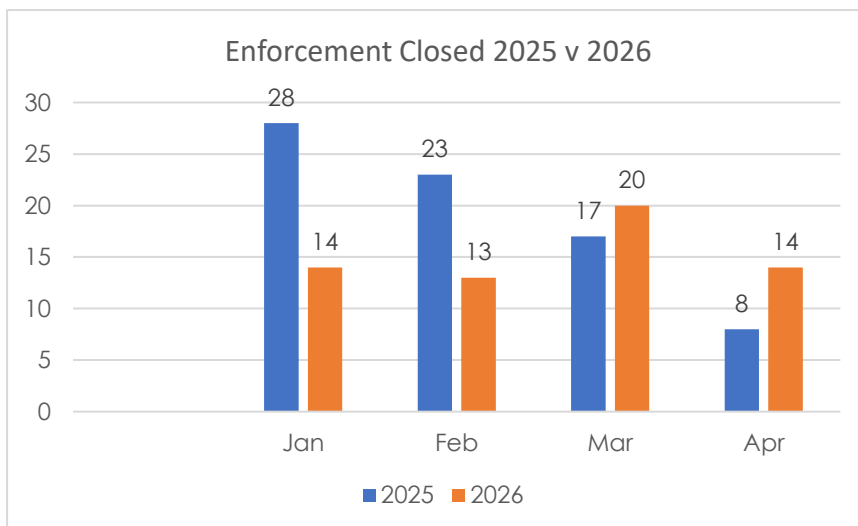
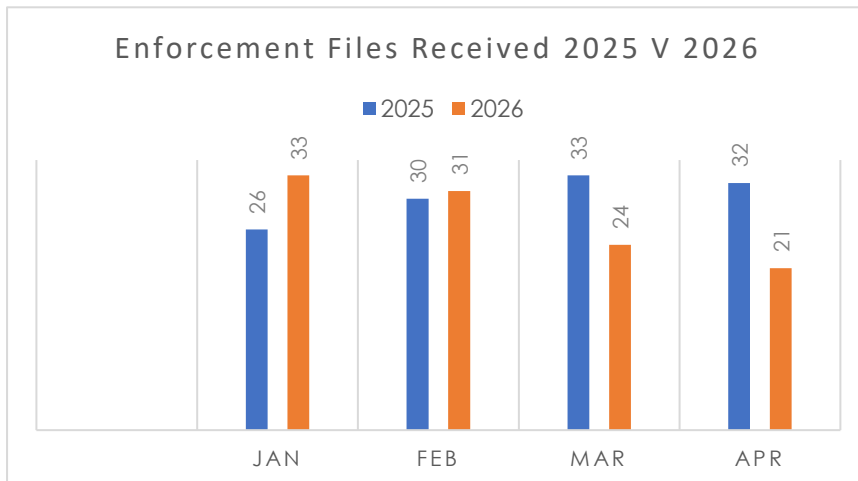
PLANNING MEETINGS BY MONTH 2026

PPM per MD per Month	January	February	March	April
<b>Athenry/Oranmore</b>	3	3	3	<b>4</b>
<b>Ballinasloe</b>	0	4	1	<b>7</b>
<b>Connemara N &amp; S</b>	7	0	8	<b>6</b>
<b>Loughrea</b>	5	1	5	<b>9</b>
<b>Tuam</b>	2	0	2	<b>7</b>
<b>Total per month</b>	17	8	18	<b>33</b>

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## ENFORCEMENT

There are 26 cases listed for court hearing and mention to date in May



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## KEY PLANNING UPDATES

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### CDP MONITORING REPORT

Currently being prepared by Forward Planning Team.

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### MONITORING OF GALWAY COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2022-2028

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

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### URDF

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

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

Main rail infrastructure works (Passing Loop; Platform) set to commence at Oranmore Train Station.

Towns and Cities Regeneration Investment Fund (URDF Call 4) was announced in March. Two funding applications were submitted by Forward Planning **Category 1A** Preliminary Vehicular Access Design from R 446 to Garraun Lands. **Category 1B** Ecopark planning and construction.

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## REGIONAL SPATIAL AND ECONOMIC STRATEGY

The review of the RSES commenced in March with the publication of the Pre-Draft Consultation. Forward Planning are currently preparing a submission. Closing date 22nd May 2026 at 6pm.

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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Householder and Business Survey has been published on the Councils consultation portal. **Closing date for completion of survey 22 May 2026.**

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## BRIARHILL URBAN FRAMEWORK PLAN LANDS

Works under way to agree City/County Position Paper with respect to Eastern Environs LTP and Area Based Transport Assessment, now in the context of the recent ACP decision on the N6GCRR.

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## DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTIONS

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

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## CAHEROYN URBAN FRAMEWORK PLAN (ATHENRY)

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

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## UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

Student placements with students from MA in Planning and Development at UG completing a 12-week work placement programme across the Planning Section. Commencing 11 May 2026.

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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & ENTERPRISE

### LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE GALWAY

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

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

### 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.

#### MAY SCHEDULE:

Social media | 01.05 & 29.05

Instagram Advanced | 05.05 & 12.05

Costing & Pricing for Your Business | 06.05

Cross Border Sales, Funding, Support & Advice | 11.05

Intro to TikTok for Business | 02.06



### BUSINESS ADVISORY CLINIC



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

aspiring or existing business promoters.

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

### MENTORING

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

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

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### START YOUR OWN BUSINESS PROGRAMME (SYOB)

LEO Galway organizes a SYOB programme monthly, with up to 16 participants on each programme. The next SYOB is an evening programme, starting on May 12<sup>th</sup> from 6.30pm to 9.30pm, twice a week over four weeks. Topics discussed are as follows:

May 12th	Business & Self Appraisal, Goal Setting, The Business Plan
May 14th	Legal Structures, Registration, Responsibilities, Records
May 19th	Record Keeping & Taxation continued, VAT & Cash Flow
May 21st	Marketing & the Business Plan, Research
May 26th	Market Research, Product and Promotion
May 28th	Market Research, Competition, Costing & Pricing,
June 2nd	Networking, Marketing review, Leo Galway Guest, Funding and Supports.
June 4th	Personal Management, Going forward with your business plan

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### THE STRATEGIC GROWTH PROGRAMME FOR BUSINESS LEADERS

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

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

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### IDEA TO IMPACT



This is A 'hands-on' immersive entrepreneurial program designed for entrepreneurs serious about starting their business, starting on May 12<sup>th</sup>. There are 3 phases to this program consisting of several modules.

The Idea to Impact programme run by LEO Galway is a practical support initiative designed to help early-stage entrepreneurs or people with business ideas move from concept to execution, providing structured guidance, mentoring, and training over a short period to validate ideas, develop viable business models, and build the

confidence and skills needed to start and grow a sustainable business.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### EDGE26 | IRELAND'S CREATIVE ECONOMY SUMMIT – 21 MAY 2026



LEO Galway is proud to be a supporter of EDGE26, Ireland's Creative Economy Summit, taking place in Galway on 21 May 2026. EDGE26 is Ireland's national gathering for the creative industries, bringing together where creativity, technology, and enterprise converge. The summit will welcome founders, studio leaders, investors, policymakers, and researchers to explore the future of the creative economy. The event will examine how innovation, intellectual property, and emerging technologies are transforming the digital creative industries, with sectors

represented including: Film, Animation, Games, Immersive, Design Creative, Tech & Music Tech

By supporting EDGE26, LEO Galway continues its commitment to strengthening Galway's position as a national and international hub for creative and innovation-led enterprises. Head of Enterprise, Caroline McDonagh will moderate the panel discussion: The Creative Economy in Action - Real Companies, Real Growth

21 May 2026 | Dexcom Stadium, Galway

## PAST EVENTS

### AI WORKS FOR IRELAND – GALWAY



There is a significant gap between understanding AI in theory and applying it in day-to-day business operations, with many business owners seeking practical steps rather than trend reports. To address this, partnerships with the Local Enterprise Offices, Enterprise Ireland, and the Enterprise Europe Network brought a series of face-to-face clinics nationwide. Beginning with Galway on April 30th, followed by Cork and Monaghan, these sessions brought together Aimee Connolly and local SMEs to move beyond high-level theory and demonstrate how AI tools were being used in practice to support business growth.

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## LEO GALWAY PARTNERS WITH PORTERSHED TO CELEBRATE 10 YEARS OF INNOVATION

LEO Galway was delighted to celebrate 10 years of tech innovation and support in Galway with the PorterShed. As part of the celebrations, Spark — a one-day conference held on Thursday, 23 April at Dexcom Stadium, Galway — brought together founders, entrepreneurs, and angel investors from across the tech ecosystem.

Spark delivered a full day of insight, inspiration, and connection, highlighting Galway’s role as a growing hub for innovation and enterprise.



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## STUDENT ENTERPRISE PROGRAMME – NATIONAL FINALS



ALICE MONAGHAN, PRESENTATION COLLEGE ATHENRY PICTURED WITH CAROLINE MCDONAGH, LEO GALWAY.

LEO Galway proudly celebrated the success of Alice Monaghan from Presentation College Athenry, who won Best Sales and Marketing in the Junior Category at the National Student Enterprise Awards in Mullingar, alongside her teacher Monica Moroney, with her business ‘Purely Crafted’ specialising in handmade and customised craft products.

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## ENTERPRISE IRELAND’S START UP DAY AT THE AVIVA STADIUM

Representatives from Local Enterprise Offices across the country attended Enterprise Ireland’s Start Up Day at the Aviva Stadium last Wednesday, highlighting the vital role LEOs play in supporting new businesses nationally. The event provided a valuable opportunity to reconnect with key business leaders and speakers, including



Orlaith Ryan of Shorla Oncology (Tipperary) and John Mackey of MBryonics (Galway), both of whom began their growth journeys with support from their Local Enterprise Office.

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## LEO GALWAY CLIENT SUCCESS STORY

Aoife from IPPM (International Pelvic Physiotherapy Management) was recognised at the All-Ireland Private Healthcare Excellence Awards 2026, receiving the Highly Commended Award for Digital Innovation in Healthcare for their Home Pelvic Routine Programmes, alongside a win in the Excellence in Female Healthcare category. As a new LEO client, IPPM's success reflects the impact of the support and guidance provided throughout their growth journey by LEO Galway.



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EOIN CONNAIRE, LEO GALWAY, AOIFE NI EOCHAIDH, IPPM AND SANDRA REGAN, LEO GALWAY

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## WEST REGIONAL ENTERPRISE PLAN

West Regional Enterprise Plan Chairperson Elaine Murphy and Manager Kenny Deery met with Paul Sweetman, Chief Executive of the American Chamber of Commerce in Ireland (AmCham). This is a follow on to meetings held with Colm O'Callaghan, Head of Public Affairs and Advocacy at the Chamber.

The focus of these discussions is to create a greater understanding of the opportunities and challenges that exist with the AmCham member companies who are located in the West. Learnings from these discussions will be very helpful in developing and influencing policy, but equally how the various working groups within the Enterprise Plan can help these large employers, e.g.; skills development.



A secondary but important objective of these meetings is to gain AmCham's support, and that of their members for large scale and strategic infrastructure projects across the region, e.g.; the Strategic Development Zone at Ireland West Airport among others.

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L-R: ELAINE MURPHY, WEST REGIONAL ENTERPRISE PLAN CHAIRPERSON, PAUL SWEETMAN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN IRELAND (AMCHAM), & KENNY DEERY, WEST REGIONAL ENTERPRISE PLAN MANAGER

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### TOWN CENTRE FIRST (TCF) PROGRAMME

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#### ATHENRY

The Athenry Town team have been working closely with the TRO and Consultants LUC in the final stages of completing the TCF plan. The plan is now going through environmental screening and will be formally launched in June.

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#### BALLINASLOE

The Ballinasloe Town Team continue to work with the Paul Hogarth Company in development the final Town Centre First Plan. The plan is complete and going through environmental screening with a formal launch programmed for June.

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#### OUGHTERARD

The Town Regeneration Officer (TRO), Hazel Fox, is continuing to support local communities in establishing Town Teams and an Expression of Interest for Town Team Members will be announced in the next few weeks.

The TRO continues to support additional Town teams in Oranmore, Gort and Headford.

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### TOWNS AND CITIES REGENERATION INVESTMENT FUND

Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, James Browne TD announced a new Towns and Cities Regeneration Investment Fund to replace the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) which will provide greater focus on disadvantaged areas and widen the scope of eligibility to include more smaller towns.

This fund replaces the URDF, the eligible areas under this fund in County Galway include the metropolitan area (Oranmore), Tuam and Ballinasloe.

There are 2 categories of funding available under the new scheme:

- Category 1A – Plan and Project Pipeline Development – focuses on supporting local authorities in creating a pipeline of future projects for delivery in later years of the National Development Plan and to create momentum in delivery under the new Fund. This funding will be made available to progress certain plans (area masterplans, Town Centre First Plans, etc) or initial design works for specific projects.
- Category 1B – Project Delivery - focuses on the delivery of capital projects within the short to medium term. Proposals for funding under this Category will be targeted at the implementation and construction of capital works projects that have been sufficiently advanced in design, planning or feasibility to progress in the coming months

The deadline for submitting applications was the 1st May 2026. The Economic Development and Planning Section submitted 6 applications under this call, these included;

Category 1A	
1 <sup>st</sup> Application	Station Quarter Tuam
2 <sup>nd</sup> Application	Design of Vehicular Access at Garraun, Oranmore
3 <sup>rd</sup> Application	Ballinasloe Fair Green Masterplan
Category 1B	
1 <sup>st</sup> Application	The Shambles Tuam
2 <sup>nd</sup> Application	Eco Park, Garraun, Oranmore
3 <sup>rd</sup> Application	St. Michaels Square Ballinasloe

## PORTUMNA

### PORTUMNA COURTHOUSE

Since opening in September 2025, Portumna Courthouse has become an active site of civic and creative engagement in the community and will soon host monthly Artist Meetups and markets.

In addition to creating five new jobs in the Courtyard cafe and providing a co-working space for local entrepreneurs and remote workers, the facility provides space for workshops, classes, consultations and meetings.

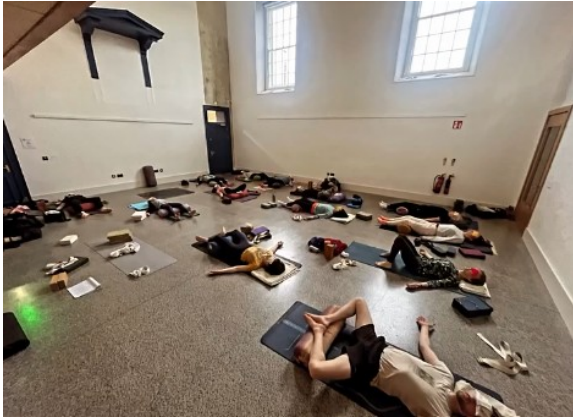


Recent activities include Affordable Housing drop-in information sessions, and Active Pole classes hosted by Galway Sports Partnership, Girl's Leadership training led by Portumna Rugby Club, as well as regular community led yoga and fitness classes. Regular meetings are hosted by Active Retirement, Portumna Area Lions Club, Tidy Towns and Shorelines Arts Festival have hosted readings and a Seachtain na Gaeilge storytelling event.

Generously supported by grant funding from Creative Ireland, activities in the Courthouse reflect an active and engaged cross-section of a vibrant and creative community. This generative and collaborative approach to placemaking is sparking curiosity with the Regeneration Team welcoming a delegation of 25 from Leitrim County Council on 6<sup>th</sup> May, to learn more about the project from start to current operations.

### PORTUMNA & AREA ACTIVE RETIREMENT AT THEIR WEEKLY MEETING IN THE PORTUMNA COURTHOUSE





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RESTORATIVE YOGA WITH ELLEN BAGGS,  
THURSDAY MORNINGS



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STORYTELLING BY DIARMUID DE FAOITE FOR SEACHTAN NA GAEILGE, HOSTED BY  
SHORELINES ARTS FESTIVAL

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LIAM HANRAHAN, DIRECTOR OF  
SERVICES – ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING  
WELCOMES LEITRIM COUNTY  
COUNCIL TO THE PORTUMNA  
COURTHOUSE ON 6TH MAY



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### PORTUMNA PUBLIC REALM

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The Portumna Public realm enhancement scheme part 8 planning application is approaching submission readiness.

Engagement is continuing with a view to purchasing 2no. town centre plots of land to increase the provision of off-street parking to support town centre businesses.

## LOUGHREA

### RRDF PROJECT – LOUGHREA TOWN HALL

The Barrack Street elevation was unveiled as the scaffolding came down, offering a first look at the completed project and gaining local endorsement.

Finna Construction are progressing with works internally and to the rear of the site with a projected completion date of early October 2026.

[Expressions of Interest](#) are now being accepted for the rental of desks and office pods on the enterprise floor.



## Boost for Loughrea as Expressions of Interest sought for use of Town Hall

**BY DECLAN VARLEY**  
For generations, the Town Hall in Loughrea stood as one of the town's most recognisable landmarks, a building woven into the social and cultural life of the community. In recent years, however, the historic structure had fallen silent, its prolonged dereliction becoming a source of disappointment for many local residents who long hoped to see the building restored to its former prominence. Now, after years of anticipation, that vision is finally becoming a reality as the long-awaited Loughrea Town Hall regeneration project moves steadily towards completion.

In a significant milestone for the redevelopment, the exterior scaffolding surrounding the building has recently been removed, revealing a striking transformation that has already attracted widespread local attention. A fresh new facade and carefully restored exterior now present a modern and welcoming appearance while still respecting the character and heritage of the original structure. For many in the town, the unveiling represents more than cosmetic change — it is a visible symbol of renewal, confidence and investment in the future of Loughrea.

The ambitious refurbishment project,

led by Galway County Council's Urban and Rural Regeneration Team, has been designed to ensure the building becomes a dynamic and versatile community hub capable of serving a wide range of needs for decades to come. Once complete, the redeveloped Town Hall will provide a blend of enterprise, cultural and community facilities, aimed at supporting both local economic development and social activity within the town.

Among the most exciting additions is a newly designed dedicated workspace floor which will offer modern and accessible facilities for businesses, entrepreneurs and remote workers. The workspace area will include two 2-seater pods and two 4-seater pods, creating flexible options for small teams and collaborative working. A meeting room, reception desk, breakout space and canteen facilities will further enhance the offering, creating a professional environment that can support innovation, networking and enterprise growth in the heart of Loughrea.

**Renewed optimism**  
The renewed optimism surrounding the project has been evident throughout the town in recent months, particularly as visible progress on the building has accelerated. Residents who passed the scaffold-covered structure for years can

now finally see the scale of the transformation taking shape. For many, the redevelopment is about far more than bricks and mortar; it represents a restoration of civic pride and a reaffirmation of the importance of preserving community spaces within growing towns like Loughrea.

The strategic location of the Town Hall in the centre of Loughrea is also expected to play a key role in its future success. Positioned within easy reach of local businesses, schools, community organisations and visitors, the facility has the potential to become a daily focal point of activity. The combination of enterprise facilities, flexible community spaces and cultural amenities under one roof creates opportunities for collaboration and interaction that could significantly strengthen community ties while

supporting local economic activity. For entrepreneurs and remote workers in particular, the addition of modern workspace facilities comes at an important time. As flexible and hybrid working arrangements continue to evolve, demand for high-quality shared working environments in regional towns has increased considerably.

The inclusion of dedicated pods, meeting facilities and breakout areas within the Town Hall redevelopment offers a valuable alternative to commuting to larger urban centres and may help attract new professional activity into the town centre.

Likewise, the planned performance and event space is expected to provide a major boost to cultural life in the area. Local theatre groups, musicians, schools and

community organisations will have access to a modern venue capable of hosting a wide variety of events and gatherings. This could open the door to a more vibrant calendar of performances, exhibitions, workshops and festivals, further enhancing Loughrea's reputation as an active and welcoming community.

**Creating vibrant communities**  
The project also aligns with wider efforts to support balanced regional development and town centre regeneration across rural Ireland. By investing in existing buildings and repurposing vacant or underused properties, local authorities can help create sustainable and vibrant communities while protecting the architectural heritage that gives towns their distinct identity. The Loughrea Town Hall

project is increasingly being viewed as a strong example of how thoughtful regeneration can breathe new life into a historic building while adapting it to meet modern needs. As the completion date draws closer, Galway County Council continues to encourage engagement from the public and potential users of the facility. Expressions of Interest are now being actively sought in conjunction with the provision of services and workspace opportunities within the Town Hall. This process is designed to identify businesses, organisations, service providers and community groups interested in becoming part of the new facility from the outset.

The council believes that early engagement will help ensure the building evolves into a lively and sustainable

hub that reflects the needs and ambitions of the local community. From enterprise support services and training initiatives to arts programming and community activities, there is significant potential for collaboration within the new Town Hall environment.

For local businesses and organisations, the current Expressions of Interest phase represents an important opportunity to secure a presence within one of the town's flagship regeneration projects. Interest is expected to be strong given the quality of the facilities, the central location and the unique mix of commercial, cultural and community functions that the building will offer.

Requests for further information regarding the project and office space opportunities can be directed to Galway County Council's Urban and Rural Regeneration Team via [regeneration@galwayccoco.ie](mailto:regeneration@galwayccoco.ie). With completion anticipated in October 2026, the countdown is now firmly underway for the reopening of a building that many feared might never regain its former significance. Instead, Loughrea Town Hall appears set to begin an entirely new chapter — one that will place community activity, enterprise development and cultural expression at the very heart of the town once again.



## COTTAGE ON CHURCH STREET - LOUGHREA

It is proposed to develop the site of the derelict cottage on Church Street, Loughrea. The proposal will include the replacement of the existing cottage, which dates back to the early 1800's, with a 'shadow' structure of the cottage itself. The intention is to retain the presence and form of the cottage which contributes to the character of the street. The new structure will form a gateway to the open space to the rear which will be shared with the town hall and potentially be the location of the trader's market and community events. The facade of the new structure will fold back so as to form a covered, outdoor traders space. When the facade is in the closed position it will secure the gateway to the site beyond. A structural report has been prepared which recommends the removal of the cottage. A planning application for the replacement structure will be lodged in the coming weeks.



## ORIS PROJECT – LONG POINT

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The Regeneration team submitted a Part 10 Planning Application to An Coimisiún Pleanála 27/09/2024 and a response to further information sent in July 2025. We still await the Decision Order.

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## ATHENRY

### RRDF PROJECT – PUBLIC REALM ENHANCEMENT SCHEME

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Following a detailed application by the Regeneration Team, Athenry was granted €6,075,518.40 Rural Regeneration Development Funding for the Athenry Public Realm Enhancement Scheme Phase1 and the redevelopment of Somers House Burke's Lane to provide a Community and Enterprise Hub.

The detailed design of the public Realm scheme (drainage, m&e, alignment, pavement) continues, led by Tobin Engineers. Liaison with Uisce Eireann and ESB to facilitate the construction of public realm scheme in parallel with works required by these statutory undertakers.

The project will be divided into two separate contracts given the requirements of ESB for undergrounding their services and incorporating SIRO broadband services. The project should commence Q3 2026.

### RRDF PROJECT – ATHENRY COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE HUB

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Fire Safety and Disability Access Certificates have been granted with tender documents currently under review.



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PROPOSED SHOPFRONT

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PROPOSED MULTI-PURPOSE MEETING / SEMINAR ROOM



## CAR PARK SITE

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Design works are progressing on the site, and a Part 8 planning application is due for submission in Q3 2026.

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## TUAM

### TUAM TOWN HALL

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Decisions pending on Fire Safety and Disability Access Certificates and tender documents are currently being developed.

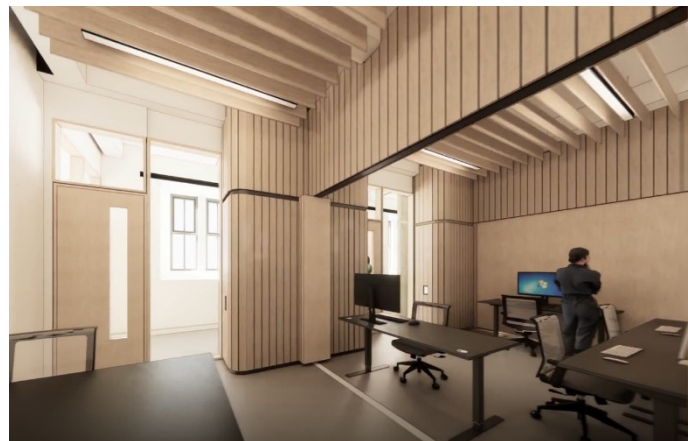


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PROPOSED MULTI-FUNCTION SPACE

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PROPOSED CO-WORKING / OFFICE SPACE



### TUAM STATION BUILDING: REPURPOSING, RENOVATION AND EXTENSION

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The renovation and extension of the Tuam Station Building has been designed in-house by the Regeneration Team. Funding was sought and granted by the NWRA through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) THRIVE of €6.6 million euros. The project will now go through the formal tender process, and contract award is expected by Q3 2026.

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## CLIFDEN

The Clifden Part 10 planning application to An Coimisiún Pleanála was approved in November 2025. Phase 1 of the project, the Beach Road Quay and Harbour Park are now undergoing costing and detailed design to submit for capital funding under the Rural Regeneration Development Fund (RRDF) in July 2026.

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## GORT

### GORT PUBLIC REALM

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The Gort Public Realm scheme was granted planning Permission by An Coimisiún Pleanála in January and is now subject to a Judicial Review by an individual, which has held the project in abeyance until the case has proceeded through the courts. In the interim, the car park site at Barrack Street.

### BARRACK STREET, GORT.

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Barrack Street, Gort - Archaeological Testing at site GA 122-097 recorded as the potential site of King Guaire's Castle.

Through Time Ltd Archaeology has been appointed to conduct excavations at the site to determine if King Guaire's Castle was indeed located at the former military barracks parade ground. There is no record of previous excavations having been undertaken at the site and therefore this is a brilliant opportunity to uncover an important piece of the history of Gort Inse Guaire.

Halfway through the six days of excavations no evidence of the castle has been found, however a variety of interesting discoveries have been made which piece together an intriguing picture of post-medieval and 17th century life on Barrack Street.

A shard of post-medieval glass has been discovered which predates the military barracks. The location of the water pump, which was surrounded by cut stone flags, clay brick drainage channels, and cobbles, has also been discovered.



## SISTERS OF MERCY CONVENT

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The Regeneration Team submitted a successful application for funding under Category 2 of the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund to purchase the former Convent and Primary School in Gort Town Centre. This project was identified as a priority within the Gort TCF Plan. The property purchase is now going through the conveyance, and a completion is anticipated in July of this year. The Regen Team will then progress to the design stage of the project, engaging further with key stakeholders as well as the broader local community.

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## ORANMORE

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## RINVILLE PARK SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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The plan for Rinville is currently going through environmental screening and the final document is projected to be published by Q4 2026.

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## HERITAGE OFFICE

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'DUTY: ASPECTS OF THE HISTORY OF AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNA IN GALWAY /  
DUALGAS: GNÉITHE DE STAIR AN GHARDA SÍOCHÁNA IN NGAILLIMH'



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AT THE LAUNCH OF THE BOOK WERE (LEFT TO RIGHT): CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT SEÁN COLLERAN, NORTH WESTERN REGION; LIAM HANRAHAN, GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL; CO-EDITORS SUPERINTENDENT DAMIEN FLANAGAN AND MARIE MANNION, HERITAGE OFFICER, GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL; COUNCILLOR DAVID COLLINS, CATHAOIRLEACH, GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL; ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER CLÍONA RICHARDSON, NORTH WESTERN REGION; LIAM CONNEALLY, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL AND CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT GERRY ROCHE, GALWAY DIVISION. PHOTO CREDIT: SEAN LYDON PHOTOGRAPHY.

A new bilingual book exploring the rich history and enduring legacy of policing in Galway will be officially launched at the Garda Northwestern Regional HQ in Murrough, Galway, on Wednesday 29th April 2026.

‘Duty: Aspects of the History of An Garda Síochána in Galway / Dualgas: Gnéithe de Stair an Gharda Síochána in nGaillimh’ offers a compelling insight into the lives, work and contribution of Gardaí from the foundation of the force in 1922 to the present day.

This collaborative publication between An Garda Síochána and the Heritage Office of Galway County Council brings together personal accounts, historical records and community perspectives.

It was launched by Cllr David Collins, Cathaoirleach, Galway County Council and Assistant Commissioner for the Northwestern Region, Cliona Richardson.

The book reflects the many facets of Garda life in Galway – from the origins of the Civic Guard and the legacy of the RIC to community policing, uniforms and transport. Rather than presenting a single chronological narrative, the book captures the human stories behind the uniform, highlighting the experiences of retired members alongside contributions from historians and local voices. These pieces provide valuable context and community perspectives, enriching the historical narrative with local voices and insights.

Chief Superintendent of the Galway Garda Division, Gerry Roche, said he hoped readers would find the book engaging and informative. “It is a reflection not only of local policing history, but of the social and cultural fabric of Galway through the lens of the Garda service,” he said.



CHIEF FIRE OFFICER GERRY O'MALLEY; CO-EDITORS SUPERINTENDENT DAMIEN FLANAGAN AND MARIE MANNION, HERITAGE OFFICER, GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL; LIEUTENANT COLONEL MÁIRTÍN Ó COFFAIGH, DÚN UÍ MHAOLÍOSA, GALWAY AND ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER CLÍONA RICHARDSON, NORTHWESTERN REGION. PHOTO CREDIT: SEÁN LYDON, PHOTOGRAPHY

Book editor, Superintendent Damien Flanagan, said: “The book reflects the deep connection between the Gardaí and the communities they have served over generations. It brings together voices, memories and records that might otherwise have been lost, offering a meaningful insight into both our shared history and the values of service, integrity and commitment that continue to define policing in Galway today.”

The book traces key moments in the development of policing in Galway, including the arrival of the first Civic Guard contingent in September 1922, marking the beginning of a new chapter in Irish policing.

It explores the transition from earlier policing structures and reflects on the challenges faced during the formative years of the State. Through these accounts, readers gain insight into how policing adapted over time in response to social, political and cultural change.

Importantly, the book also highlights the distinctive character of Galway, examining the unique context of policing in Gaeltacht and island communities. It sheds light on how



language, geography and tradition have shaped the delivery of policing services in these areas, offering a perspective that is both locally grounded and nationally significant.

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MAUREEN AND CON MULVEY,  
KILTULLAGH AT THE BOOK LAUNCH.  
PHOTO CREDIT: SEÁN LYDON  
PHOTOGRAPHY

Co-Editor Marie Mannion, Heritage Office with Galway County Council, said: “Publications such as this matter. They help us understand where we have come from, but they also prompt reflection on the values that must guide us into the future,” adding her thanks to the Commemoration Unit of the Department of Culture, Communications and Sport for funding the project.”

Illustrated with a selection of historical photographs, the book provides a valuable visual record of Garda life across generations. While some images reflect the limitations of their time, they remain an important part of the historical archive and enhance the reader’s understanding of the past.



GINA O'SHAUGHNESSY,  
ASSISTANT STAFF OFFICER,  
GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL &  
ANTOINETTE LYDON,  
OUGHTERARD HERITAGE AT THE  
LAUNCH OF 'DUTY: ASPECTS OF  
THE HISTORY OF AN GARDA  
SÍOCHÁNA IN GALWAY /  
DUALGAS: GNÉITHE DE STAIR AN  
GHARDA SÍOCHÁNA IN  
NGAILLIMH' PHOTO CREDIT:  
SEÁN LYDON, PHOTOGRAPHY

Councillor David Collins, Cathaoirleach of Galway County Council said: “This book is far more than a historical record. It is a collective memory. It brings together official sources, personal recollections, photographs and local perspectives to tell the story of policing in Galway as it was lived, in towns and villages, in rural communities, on the islands and in the Gaeltacht. It reminds us that the history of An Garda Síochána is inseparable from the social history of this county.”



GUESTS WHO ATTENDED THE  
BOOK LAUNCH. PHOTO  
CREDIT: SEÁN LYDON,  
PHOTOGRAPHY

A significant portion of the material was preserved thanks to the dedication of Mary Flanagan, who safeguarded many important Garda books and records over the years at Mill Street Garda Station.

‘Duty: Aspects of the History of An Garda Síochána in Galway / Dualgas: Gnéithe de Stair an Gharda Síochána in nGaillimh’ is more than a historical account of policing in Galway, it is a tribute to the values of duty, service and community that have defined An Garda Síochána since its foundation.

BERNIE FERRIS, MAIGH CUILLIN, MARIANNE TEN CATE, MAIGH CUILLIN & MARY O’ SHEA, MAIGH CUILLIN AT THE BOOK LAUNCH. PHOTO CREDIT: SEÁN LYDON, PHOTOGRAPHY



The book honours the dedication, professionalism and resilience of those who have served, while also recognising the deep and enduring relationship between the Gardaí and the people of Galway.

It is available from Garda Northwestern Regional Headquarters in Murrough, Galway or Galway County Council Heritage Office or download from <https://www.garda.ie/en/about-us/our-history/duty-galway.pdf>

## GALWAY AND MAYO ICAN REGIONAL MEETING – 16 APRIL 2026



GALWAY AND MAYO ICAN REGIONAL MEETING IN OUGHTERARD, COURT HOUSE. PHOTO CREDIT: MARIE MANNION

The Galway and Mayo Irish Community Archive Network (iCAN) Regional Meeting was held on 16 April 2026 in Oughterard Courthouse. The meeting brought together iCAN member groups from across both counties to share updates on current and planned heritage initiatives. Presentations and updates were provided by Oughterard Heritage (host group) and Ballinrobe Historical, along with contributions from other Galway and Mayo iCAN member groups. Key areas of discussion included heritage conservation projects, digital and community engagement initiatives, collaboration with schools, forthcoming Heritage Week activities, and developments within the iCAN network. The meeting supported continued collaboration, information sharing, and strategic engagement among community heritage groups in the region.



GALWAY AND MAYO ICAN GROUPS AT GLENGOWLA MINES. PHOTO CREDIT: LORNA ELMS

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## JOYCE COUNTRY & WESTERN LAKES GEOPARK – UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPARK DESIGNATION

On Thursday, 23 April 2026, the Joyce Country and Western Lakes (JCWL) Geopark received its UNESCO Global Geopark accreditation. This designation marks JCWL as the first UNESCO Global Geopark in Connacht and the fifth on the island of Ireland. Uniquely, the JCWL UNESCO Global Geopark is the first UNESCO site to include a Gaeltacht region, both nationally and internationally.

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## UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPARKS OFFICIAL CERTIFICATION CEREMONY IN UNESCO PARIS.



IN ATTENDANCE CLLR DAVID COLLINS, CATHAOIRLEACH, GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL, LIAM HANRAHAN, DIRECTOR OF SERVICES, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING, GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL, MARIE MANNION, HERITAGE OFFICER, GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL WITH BENJAMIN THÉBAUDEAU, GEOLOGIST, JOYCE COUNTRY AND WESTERN LAKES GEOPARK, MAYO COUNTY COUNCIL DELEGATION, GEOLOGICAL SURVEY IRELAND, ÚDARÁS NA GAELTACHTA AND GEOENTERPRISE. PHOTO CREDIT: MAYO COUNTY COUNCIL

This high-profile international recognition acknowledges the JCWL Geopark's outstanding natural beauty, distinctive culture, rich heritage, strong community spirit, and the central role of the Irish language within the Gaeltacht. The UNESCO Global Geopark encompasses 20 communities across north County Galway and south-west County Mayo, including the Gaeltacht. These communities work collaboratively to protect and promote their shared cultural and heritage assets while sustaining their individual identities.

The JCWL Geopark now joins a network of UNESCO Global Geoparks on the island of Ireland, including the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark (Co. Clare), the Copper Coast UNESCO Global Geopark (Co. Waterford), Mourne Gullion Strangford UNESCO Global Geopark (Co. Down and Co. Armagh), and Cuilcagh Lakelands UNESCO Global Geopark, spanning Co. Fermanagh and Co. Cavan.

Tomás Ó Síocháin, CEO of Údarás na Gaeltachta, said, "The ratification of Joyce Country & Western Lakes as a UNESCO Global Geopark is a landmark achievement that celebrates the extraordinary natural heritage and living Irish language culture of this remarkable region. Údarás na Gaeltachta is proud to support this recognition, which will open new doors for



sustainable tourism, community development, and economic opportunity for the Gaeltacht communities at its heart.”

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CLLR DAVID COLLINS, CATHAOIRLEACH OF THE COUNTY OF GALWAY AND CLLR SEAN CAREY, CATHAOIRLEACH, MAYO COUNTY COUNCIL.  
PHOTO CREDIT: MARIE MANNION

Cllr David Collins, Cathaoirleach of Galway County Council, said, “UNESCO Global Geopark status shines a well-deserved spotlight not just on our unique landscape, but on the people who live and work here and have cared for it over generations. While the economic benefits are clear, there’s also a strong conservation element to this award, supporting communities to protect our natural heritage, biodiversity and way of life, and ensuring this special part of Galway and Mayo is preserved and respected into the future.”

Cllr Sean Carey, Cathaoirleach of Mayo County Council, said, “This recognition of the Joyce Country and Western Lakes Geopark as a UNESCO Global Geopark is a significant milestone for the county and local community in the area. Here in Mayo, we have always recognised the uniqueness of this stunning landscape and its geological heritage – but this designation will see this recognised on the world stage.”

Koen Verbruggen, Director of Geological Survey Ireland, said, “We at Geological Survey Ireland are delighted to see Joyce Country and Western Lakes Geopark join the UNESCO Geopark family in Ireland... The UNESCO recognition is based on the unique geology of international importance in the region and... will generate increased awareness of geosciences and the promotion and protection of our geological heritage.”

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DELEGATION FROM GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL AND MAYO COUNTY COUNCIL. PHOTO CREDIT: MAYO COUNTY COUNCIL



Niall Ó Donnchú, Director General of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, said, “The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS)... warmly welcomes the announcement that the Joyce Country & Western Lakes Geopark will receive its UNESCO Global Geopark accolade on 23rd April 2026. This brings significant opportunity for community development, education and training; business enterprise and tourism ventures.”

Seán O’Cionnaigh, Cathaoirleach of Comharchumann Dhúiche Sheoigheach Teo, said, “The JCWL UNESCO Global Geopark status celebrates our special landscape and the people who have looked after it for generations... It supports communities in caring for the environment and preserving our language, traditions and way of life.”

Trish Walsh, Chair of JCWL GeoEnterprise, said, “UNESCO Global Geopark status is an international brand of quality that will help attract investment and market the region for sustainable growth and development... empowering local people and stakeholders in managing their own heritage.”

Miriam Kennedy, Head of the Wild Atlantic Way, said, “Fáilte Ireland warmly welcomes the ratification of the Joyce Country and Western Lakes Geopark as an official UNESCO Global Geopark... recognising the region’s outstanding geological heritage and its deep cultural significance.”

To mark the UNESCO designation, a programme of community-led celebratory events took place from Thursday 23 April to Sunday 26 April 2026. These events reflected the ethos, character, culture and heritage of the JCWL communities and were created and delivered by local, multi-generational participants within the Geopark.

## PLANNING

## BIODIVERSITY

### WINGS – GALWAY COUNTY BIODIVERSITY CONFERENCE

WINGS – Galway County Biodiversity Conference 2026 represented a highly successful biodiversity awareness and engagement initiative, delivering a full-capacity event with 100 attendees and a waiting list, clearly demonstrating strong public interest and demand for biodiversity-focused events across County Galway. This positive outcome is further reinforced by post-event evaluation, with anonymous survey results indicating overwhelmingly positive feedback; 95% of respondents reported maximum satisfaction with the event, while 91% stated they are very likely to apply what they learned within the next year, highlighting strong potential for tangible on-the-ground impact.

The conference, held on 29 April 2026 in the Lough Rea Hotel & Spa, attracted participants from a wide geographic spread including Cleggan, Gort, Ballygar, Portumna and Loughrea, reflecting effective outreach and countywide engagement. The event was organised by Galway County Council’s Biodiversity Office and delivered under the Galway County

Heritage and Biodiversity Plan 2024–2030, with support from the National Parks and Wildlife Service through the Local Biodiversity Action Fund 2026.

The programme focused on Galway’s winged wildlife while also addressing wider biodiversity themes, bringing together a strong panel of expert speakers covering birds, bats, butterflies, bumblebees, wetlands, community action and the role of the arts in biodiversity engagement. The quality and breadth of the programme contributed significantly to the overall success of the event and ensured accessibility for a broad audience.

Community engagement was a key strength of the conference, with strong participation from community groups, Tidy Towns and local organisations. There was clear evidence of meaningful engagement on the day, with attendees expressing a strong interest in applying what they had learned within their own communities and progressing practical biodiversity actions. The event also facilitated valuable connections between local communities, subject matter experts and the local authority, strengthening collaborative approaches to biodiversity protection and enhancement.



WINGS CONFERENCE  
SPEAKERS AT LOUGHREA  
(LEFT TO RIGHT) LARRY  
FULLAM, KARINA  
DINGERKUS, JESMOND  
HARDING, KAY SYNOTT,  
ROSINA JOYCE, KATE  
MCANEY, LIAM  
HANRAHAN, GORDON  
D'ARCY AND JOHN LUSBY.

FULL HOUSE AT THE BOOKED-  
OUT WINGS CONFERENCE AT  
LOUGHREA HOTEL AND SPA  
ON THE 29TH APRIL.



A particular highlight of the conference was the launch of the bilingual booklet *Butterflies of County Galway*, authored by Kay Synott, with every attendee receiving a copy. This provided a tangible, high-quality resource to support ongoing biodiversity awareness and education at local level.

The conference delivered directly on strategic objectives to raise awareness, build capacity and support community-led action in line with both the National Biodiversity Action Plan and Galway County Council's biodiversity commitments. It also provided a clear pathway for continued engagement, with participants encouraged to take part in follow-on initiatives including the Loughrea Biodiversity Festival and the 24-hour BioBlitz scheduled for 21–22 May 2026.

Overall, the WINGS Conference can be considered a high-impact and cost-effective initiative, achieving strong attendance, broad geographic reach and demonstrable behavioural intent among participants. It provides a positive and scalable model for future biodiversity engagement activities and highlights the ongoing appetite among communities in County Galway to actively contribute to biodiversity conservation.



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GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL STAFF ITA GORDON, ANNE POWER, ROSINA JOYCE AND GINA O'SHAUGHNESSY WERE THE EVENT MANAGERS AT THE WINGS CONFERENCE IN LOUGHREA. MARY DUANE WAS ALSO PART OF THIS TEAM AND ENSURED THAT EVERYTHING RAN TO TIME.

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## NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY WEEK 2026

Galway County Council Biodiversity Office is delivering and contributing to a comprehensive programme of events across County Galway for National Biodiversity Week (15–24 May

2026), engaging communities, schools, landowners and partner organisations in biodiversity awareness, citizen science and practical action.

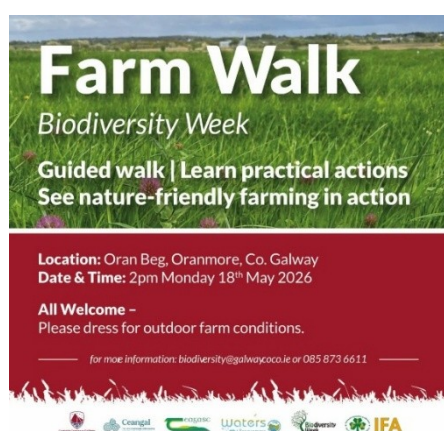
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## COASTWATCH SEAGRASS EVENT, KINVARA

The Biodiversity Office is supporting and contributing to a Coastwatch-led seagrass event in Kinvara, focused on coastal biodiversity and citizen science engagement. The event will highlight the ecological importance of seagrass habitats for biodiversity, water quality and climate resilience, while demonstrating practical survey and monitoring approaches. It also provides an opportunity to strengthen collaboration with marine stakeholders and coastal community groups and promote greater public understanding of Ireland's coastal ecosystems.

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## FARM WALK – ORANMORE



A biodiversity farm walk near Oranmore, taking place on Monday 18th May as part of National Biodiversity Week, will be hosted on the farm of Karina Finn, IFA representative on the Galway County Council Heritage and Biodiversity Forum. The event is being delivered in collaboration with the Biodiversity Office, IFA, Teagasc and the Local Authority Waters Programme, and will feature Ms Finn alongside Teagasc advisor Nicky Byrne, showcasing nature-friendly farming in practice. The walk will focus on red clover silage fields and demonstrate how grasses, clover and herbs can support productive agriculture while enhancing biodiversity, improving soil health and providing habitat for pollinators and wildlife. Input from Janet Laffey, Community Water Officer with the Local Authority Waters Programme, and Rosina Joyce, Biodiversity Officer, will highlight how these measures also contribute to improved water quality, linking farm management directly to wider environmental outcomes and providing practical actions for attendees.

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## BUTTERFLY MONITORING WORKSHOP – BRIGIT'S GARDEN

A hands-on butterfly monitoring workshop will take place at Brigit's Garden, Rosscahill, aimed at enabling participants to move from awareness to active biodiversity recording. Led by Kay Synott in collaboration with the Biodiversity Office, the session will provide training in identifying common butterfly species, recognising key habitats and host plants, and submitting records through national schemes such as FIT Counts and the Butterfly Monitoring Scheme. The workshop is targeted at Tidy Towns groups, community organisations and biodiversity volunteers, building local capacity for ongoing citizen science and contributing to national biodiversity datasets.



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## HEDGEROW WALK – MAD YOLK FARM, CRAUGHWELL

A guided hedgerow walk will take place at Mad Yolk Farm, Craughwell, led by Dan Monaghan of Hedgerows Ireland as part of the Loughrea Biodiversity Festival programme. The walk will highlight the ecological, cultural and landscape value of hedgerows in Ireland, with a focus on their role in supporting biodiversity, pollinators and wildlife corridors. Participants will also gain practical insight into best-practice hedgerow management for biodiversity, supporting improved management of this key habitat at local level.

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## LOUGHREA BIODIVERSITY FESTIVAL AND BIOBLITZ (21–22 MAY 2026)



The flagship event for the week is the Loughrea Biodiversity Festival and BioBlitz, delivered in partnership with MKO, local schools, the Galway Bay Southeast Catchment Community Forum, and a wide network of community stakeholders. Taking place over 24 hours from 19:30 on 21 May to 19:30 on 22 May, the event will focus on Loughrea Lake and surrounds, with ecologists and volunteers working intensively to record as many species as possible.

A BioBlitz is a collaborative, time-bound biodiversity survey bringing together scientists and the public to identify as many species as possible within a short period, combining citizen science, education and community engagement.

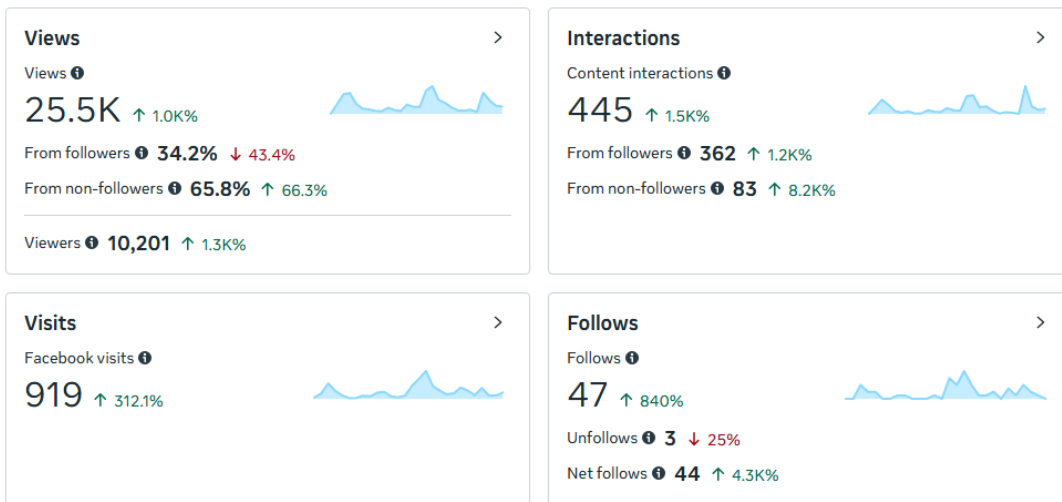
Alongside species recording, a public event hub at the Fair Green will host a programme of free guided walks, talks and demonstrations, making biodiversity accessible to all ages. The initiative is engaging local schools, the Tidy Towns group and Loughrea Anglers, demonstrating strong community participation and cross-sector collaboration.

The Biodiversity Office acknowledges and thanks the Loughrea Municipal District Office for its support in facilitating the Loughrea Biodiversity Festival and BioBlitz.

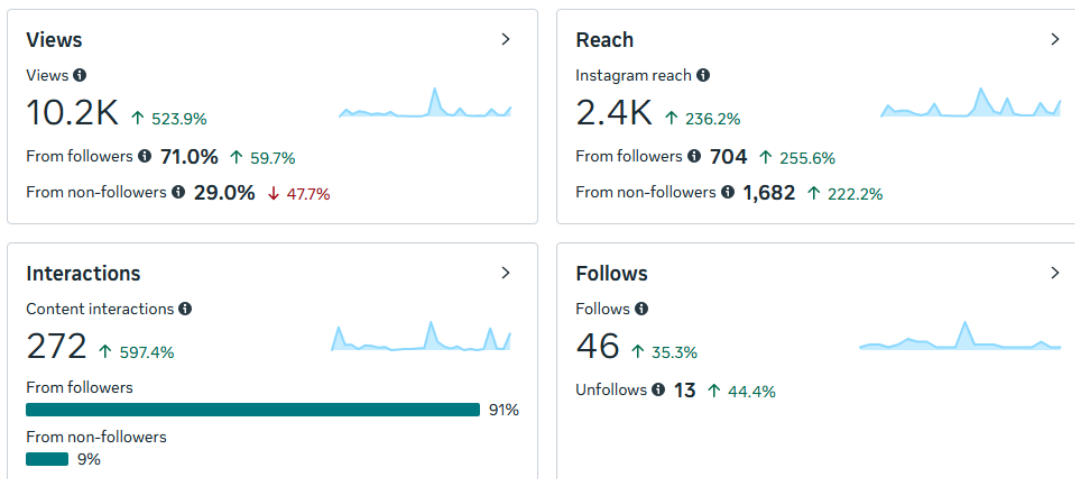
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## SOCIAL MEDIA OUTPUT

There has been strong engagement across both social media platforms run by the Biodiversity Office, strengthening the impacts from events such as the WINGS Conference. The stories and reels produced as part of the that event saw a significant increase in followers and interactions. Reels produced were also added as collaborative content to Galway County Council's main account, with over 7,300 views.



FACEBOOK PERFORMANCE FOR GALWAY COUNTY BIODIVERSITY OFFICE FOR THE PERIOD 14 APRIL 2026 - 11 MAY 2026



INSTAGRAM PERFORMANCE FOR GALWAY COUNTY BIODIVERSITY OFFICE FOR THE PERIOD 14 APRIL 2026 - 11 MAY 2026

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT UPDATE

ATHENRY MUNICIPAL DISTRICT UPDATE

The Annual Schedule of Proposed Works for the Municipal District, including the proposed 2026 Annual Roads Programme, was presented to the elected members at a special meeting held on 31 March. Members were advised that the 2026 Roads Programme comprises the following elements:

- 23 Restoration Improvement (RI) projects, with a total allocation of €2,423,237
  - o John Madden and Sons Ltd has been appointed as the main contractor.

- 13 Restoration Maintenance (RM) projects, with a total allocation of €550,598
  - Colas Surfacing Ltd is the preferred tenderer.
- 5 Discretionary Grant projects, with a total allocation of €83,467
  - High-PSV chippings are being delivered for direct labour gangs.

In addition, the programme includes funding allocations for:

- National, Regional, and Local Road maintenance
- Climate adaptation schemes
- Low-cost safety schemes
- Bridge repair works
- Local and regional road drainage works

Contractors are currently being procured for a selection of these works.

Under the Early Start Programme, resurfacing works were recently completed in Kiniska, covering approximately 1 km of pavement. Surfacing works were also completed on Church Street, Athenry.

Ahead of the main resurfacing season, crews are completing advance works, including road edging and drainage improvements, to support the resurfacing programme.

Crews have also remained focused on network maintenance, completing the water table programme on approximately 70 km of regional roads and more than 80 km of local roads. They have also been addressing the high number of potholes that developed across the network.

Below are sample photos of ongoing works:



NEW PEDESTRIAN  
CROSSING @ CAHEROYN,  
ATHENRY



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DRAINAGE WORKS @ MONEYTEIGUE



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DRAINAGE WORKS @ SLIEVEFINN



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RESURFACING WORKS @ CHURCH STREET ATHENRY



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DRAINAGE WORKS @ CAHERNAFINISKER

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## DRAINAGE WORKS @ CAHERCRIN



## BALLINASLOE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT UPDATE



The April Meeting of the Ballinasloe MD was held in the new facilities at the Glenamaddy GAA grounds.

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PHOTO TAKEN OF ELECTED MEMBERS, STAFF OF GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL AND GLENAMADDY GAA CLUB DURING THE TOUR OF THE NEW FACILITIES AT THE GLENAMADDY GAA GROUNDS

During April 2026, Ballinasloe MD technical teams assessed tenders received as part of the annual roadworks programme. The Contractors for the overlays and surface dressing contracts have been appointed.

In April 2025 works were completed on 2 restoration improvement advanced projects with overlays on the L-8726 at Ballinakill, Eyrecourt and L-34172 Donaree, Cappataggle Donaree. Works will have commenced in May 2026 on the overlay and surface dressing contracts under the restoration improvement (a further 33 projects) and restoration maintenance (38 projects) grant categories funded through the Department of Transport. Preparation of roads in advance of the contractors commencing is ongoing by Ballinasloe area crews with patching, verge cutting, drainage works and grass clearance from roads.

Road Junction Signage works at Atticora Junction on the R357, and footpath works at Hawthorn Estate in Ballinasloe supported by Elected Representatives NOM allocations were commenced. It is expected that these works will be completed during May 2025.

Works to replace dangerous and damaged walls along the R446 at Aughrim was ongoing in April and are expected to be completed in early May 2026. A new footpath was constructed in Williamstown National School junction by contractor.

A workshop was held on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2026 on the ORIS Feasibility Study – Ballinasloe Town Outdoor Park, this was attended by elected members and council staff with a good contribution made to the site selection process. Prior to the meeting there was a walkover of potential sites. The next workshop is scheduled for 16<sup>th</sup> June 2026.

Grass cutting and maintenance was undertaken in the Creagh Cemetery, Ballinasloe.

SDS were appointed as designers for the Refurbishment of the St. Michael’s Public Toilets, Ballinasloe.

Below are a brief set of examples of the works undertaken throughout Ballinasloe MD in April 2026.



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NEW FOOTPATH COMPLETED AT WILLIAMSTOWN NATIONAL SCHOOL JUNCTION.



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FINISHED SURFACE DRESSING ON TOP OF THE OVERLAY OF THE L-8726 AT BALLINAKILL, EYRECOURT.



ADVANCED  
WARNING SIGNAGE  
ON THE  
R357 APPROACHING  
ATTICORA JUNCTION.



FOOTPATH REPAIR WORKS AT HAWTHORN ESTATE,  
BALLINASLOE



REPLACEMENT OF RETAINING WALL  
ALONG R357 AUGHRIM.

ROADS PROGRAMME IN FULL SWING ACROSS THE MD

The 2026 Roads Programme has commenced. Aided by good weather, real progress has been made in the past few weeks. The 2026 Roads Programme includes 52 RI (Restoration Improvement) projects, 18 RM (Restoration Maintenance – Surface Dressing) projects and 6 DG (Discretionary Grant) projects.

McGraths Limestone Cong Ltd commenced work on the Bound Overlays programme (40 projects in total) in the Moycullen and Oughterard areas in Conamara South and to date have completed 25% of the overall number. Colas Contracting Limited have also started on the Surface Dressing Programme in Conamara South, which is more weather sensitive and can be susceptible to weather delays.

Direct Labour staff across the MD have also commenced on their Programmes and are progressing well. These not only include road surfacing works, but also ongoing advance RI Preparation works, Drainage works and continuous maintenance.

Sample photos of works to date are below.



CS-RM-01 DERRYINVER - 1.7KM SURFACE DRESSING BY DIRECT LABOUR STAFF IN CONAMARA NORTH

CN-RM-02 RENVYLE – 1.8KM SURFACE DRESSING BY DIRECT LABOUR STAFF IN CONAMARA NORTH





COLAS CONTRACTING HAVE STARTED ON THE CONAMARA SOUTH SURFACE DRESSING PROGRAMME. PHOTO TAKEN ON CS-RM-07 NEAR BEARNA GOLF CLUB, A 2KM LONG STRETCH



STAFF IN CONAMARA SOUTH SURFACING A ROAD RECENTLY TAKEN IN CHARGE IN TISMEÁIN, AN CHEATHRÚ RUA WITH NOM FROM LOCAL COUNCILLORS

CURRENT PHOTO OF THE RAISED TABLE PEDESTRIAN CROSSING WHICH IS BEING CONSTRUCTED IN AN SPIDÉAL BY WARD BRO'S WITH COMMUNITY RECOGNITION FUNDING FROM THE DRCD





PRE AND POST WORKS PHOTOS WHICH DEMONSTRATE THE IMPROVED FOOTWAY WIDTH WHICH GIVES EXTRA COMFORT FOR PEDESTRIANS ACCESSING THE NEW CROSSING POINT

## LOUGHREA MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

### PRIMARY FOCUS OF ACTIVITY

Work on the 2026 Roads Programme has ramped up over the last few weeks. The 2026 Programme includes 53 Restoration Improvement Grant (RIG) projects, 23 Restoration Maintenance Grant (RMG) projects, and 9 Discretionary Grant (DG) projects.

Tenders for our bound RIG programme have been awarded and works have commenced. Tenders for Surface Dressing and Road Recycling works have also been issued and returned. These tenders are currently being assessed. A tender for a selection of unbound RIG works will be issued shortly.

Operationally, we continue to address NOM funded projects, complete improvement works at our Depots, carry out localised drainage maintenance, road repairs and all other routine maintenance work as resources allow.

A high-level overview is as follows:

- 53 No. Restoration Improvement Grant projects - 12 Complete (22%)
- 23 No. Restoration Maintenance Grant (RMG) projects – Yet to commence
- 9 No. Local Tertiary Roads – Yet to commence.
- 4 No. Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Schemes – Yet to commence
- 3 No. Low-Cost Safety Improvement Works – Yet to commence
- LIS and CIS Schemes – Yet to commence

A sample of works on-going is as follows:



LOUGHREA ROADS DEPOT -  
NEWLY INSTALLED SECURITY  
FENCING AND CONCRETE  
APRON AT  
STORAGE/LOADING BAYS

RESURFACING  
AND VERGE  
TREATMENT  
ON R355 AT  
BALLINLUG,  
LOUGHREA



L-8759 CAPIRA  
ROADWORKS

ROAD  
RESURFACING  
AT R352  
CLONCO





GORT ROADS DEPOT –  
INSTALLATION OF ROAD MARKINGS  
TO ENHANCE SAFETY

OVERLAY  
WORKS AT  
KILMURRY,  
KILLIMOR ON  
THE L4314



## TUAM MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

### PRIMARY FOCUS OF ACTIVITY

Galway County Council hosted a significant community event at the Palace Grounds, Tuam, on 17 April 2026 to mark:

- Official opening of the Children’s Stimulation and Sensory Garden
- Opening of the 3x3 Basketball Court
- Raising of the Green Flag and Green Heritage Site Flag

The event was well attended, demonstrating strong community engagement and ownership.

It was led by the Cathaoirleach of Tuam MD, Cllr Karey McHugh, and attended by Cllrs Donagh Killilea, Shaun Cunniffe, and Siobhán McHugh, alongside Council staff, community representatives, and local residents.



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## CHILDREN'S STIMULATION AND SENSORY GARDEN

- Funded under the **Community Recognition Fund** (€74,680 announced August 2024), with additional support from elected members and local contributions.
- Aligns with national objectives supporting communities accommodating new arrivals.
- Delivered through strong collaboration between:
  - Galway County Council
  - Tuam Women's Shed (project originators and key contributors)
  - Rural and Community Development Team
  - Project delivery staff and contractors

An inclusive, accessible facility designed for children of all abilities, providing long-term community, educational, and recreational benefits.



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CATHAOIRLEACH OF TUAM MD  
CLLR KAREY MCHUGH  
PLANTING A TREE IN THE  
SENSORY GARDEN

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CLLR SIOBHAN MCHUGH RYAN, PETER  
MCGRATH, DERMOT MCGRATH,  
SHEILA MCGRATH, DAVID MCGRATH,  
CLLR KAREY MCHUGH FARAG, CLLR  
SHAUN CUNNIFE, CLLR DONAGH  
KILLILEA AT THE UNVEILING OF THE  
NEW SENSORY GARDEN



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## 3X3 BASKETBALL COURT AND ACTIVE AMENITIES

- Delivered in partnership with **Galway Sports Partnership** (Participation Nation Fund).
- Additional enhancements:

- **BoxUp equipment unit**
- **FitStick Trail signage**

(Funded through **Healthy Galway County / Healthy Ireland Fund**)

Enhanced opportunities for physical activity, social interaction, and community wellbeing, with free and accessible recreational infrastructure.



CATHAOIRLEACH OF TUAM MD CLLR  
KAREY MCHUGH WITH ANDREW MCBRIDE  
CO-ORDINATOR GALWAY SPORTS  
PARTNERSHIP AT 3X3 BASKETBALL COURT  
OPENING



LAURENCE GAUGHAN HEALTHY IRELAND,  
ANDREW MCBRIDE SPORTS COORDINATOR  
GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL • RURAL, COMM  
& TOURISM DEV & INTEGRATION AND CLLR  
KAREY MCHUGH FARAG



## GREEN FLAG & GREEN HERITAGE SITE FLAG



Formal raising of both flags during the event.

Recognition of high standards in:

- Park management and maintenance
- Biodiversity and environmental quality
- Accessibility and heritage conservation

The Palace Grounds continues to act as a flagship park within the County.



The event represents a key milestone in the ongoing development of the Palace Grounds and demonstrates:

- Commitment to inclusive and accessible infrastructure

- Strong community-led and partnership-based delivery
- Ongoing investment in health, wellbeing, and recreation
- Maintenance of high environmental and heritage standards

Galway County Council is progressing an application to enter the Palace Grounds, Tuam in the Pride of Place Awards, reflecting the significant enhancement of the park and the strong level of community involvement.

The application will recognise the contribution of local community groups, particularly the Tuam Women’s Shed, the effective collaboration between the Council, elected members, and funding partners, and the delivery of high-quality public amenities that provide lasting social, environmental, and wellbeing benefits.

Preparation of the application will be undertaken in partnership with local stakeholders and relevant Council services.

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### R332 KILBANNON SCHEME UPDATE



Works progressing well with the scheme approx. 20% complete and on programme, with additional resources assigned to maintain momentum. Site clearance, fencing, ducting and significant earthworks completed across Phases 1 and 3, with culvert works and capping now underway.



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## TUAM TOWN WORKS

Works have commenced on a section of new footpaths and pedestrian crossing to provide linkage to Tuam Rugby Club Facilities on the Dublin Road.



Mise, le meas,

**Chief Executive  
Galway County Council**

**21<sup>st</sup> May 2026**