Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

TURASCÁIL BAINISTíOCHTA
MANAGEMENT REPORT



Bealtaine 2026
May 2026

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CORPORATE SERVICES & RURAL, COMMUNITY & TOURISM DEVELOPMENT & INTEGRATION

CORPORATE SERVICES

CATHAOIRLEACH'S CHARITY BALL 2026



An Cathaoirleach of the County of Galway, Cllr. David Collins hosted this year's Cathaoirleach Charity Ball on Sunday 31st May 2026 in the Raheen Woods Hotel, Athenry to help raise vital funds for two deserving beneficiaries, Epilepsy Ireland and National Breast Cancer Research Institute. A wonderful night was enjoyed by all with great company and a bit of craic!

CATHAOIRLEACH COUNCILLOR DAVID COLLINS WITH DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE EILEEN RUANE



CATHAOIRLEACH COUNCILLOR DAVID COLLINS WITH COUNCILLOR MICHAEL 'MOEGIE' MAHER



CATHAOIRLEACH COUNCILLOR DAVID COLLINS WITH SEAN KYNE T.D.



CATHAOIRLEACH COUNCILLOR DAVID COLLINS AND MC FOR THE EVENING RONAN LARDNER

A GESTURE OF APPRECIATION FROM THE CATHAOIRLEACH

In advance of the conclusion of his tenure, the Cathaoirleach kindly arranged for a sweet trolley to be provided to staff at Áras an Chontae as a gesture of appreciation and goodwill. This thoughtful initiative was warmly received by staff and served as a meaningful acknowledgement of their continued commitment and contribution throughout his term in office.



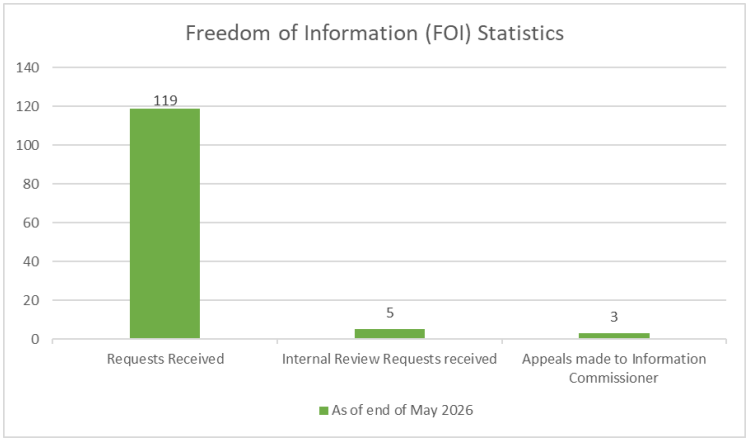
PATRICIA MANNION PICTURED AT THE SWEET TROLLEY PROVIDED AT ÁRAS AN CHONTAE AS A GESTURE OF APPRECIATION FROM THE CATHAOIRLEACH, CLLR. DAVID COLLINS



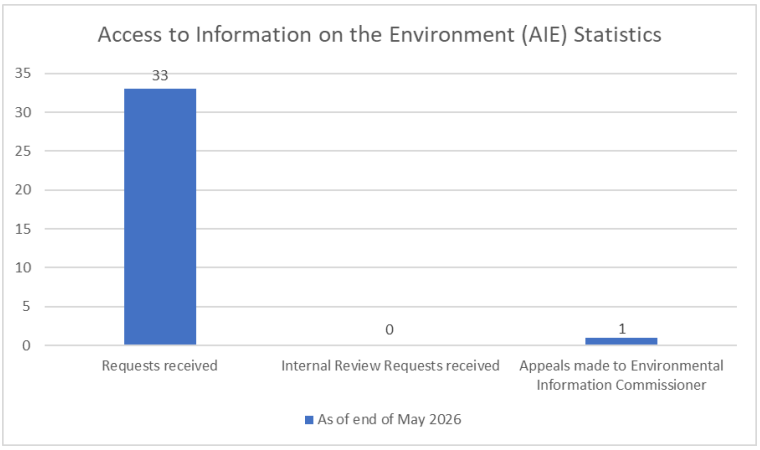
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION, ACCESS TO ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION & DATA PROTECTION

2026 YEAR TO DATE STATISTICS TO 31.05.2026

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

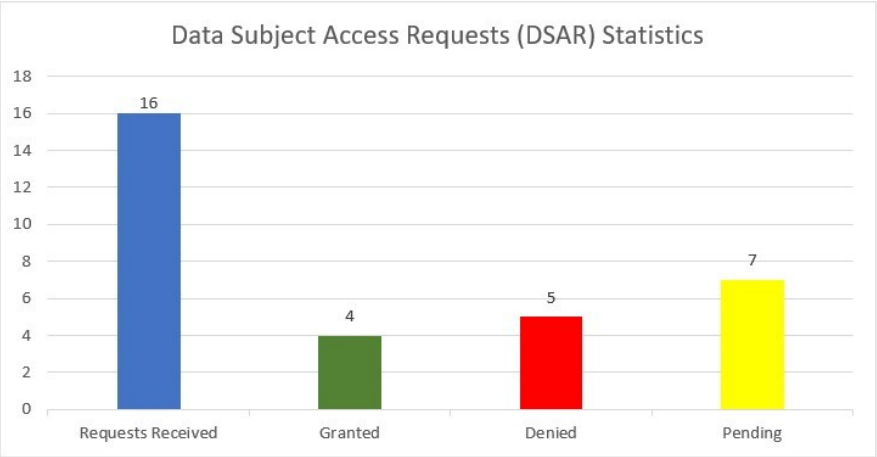


ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON THE ENVIRONMENT



DATA PROTECTION

DATA SUBJECT ACCESS REQUESTS STATISTICS

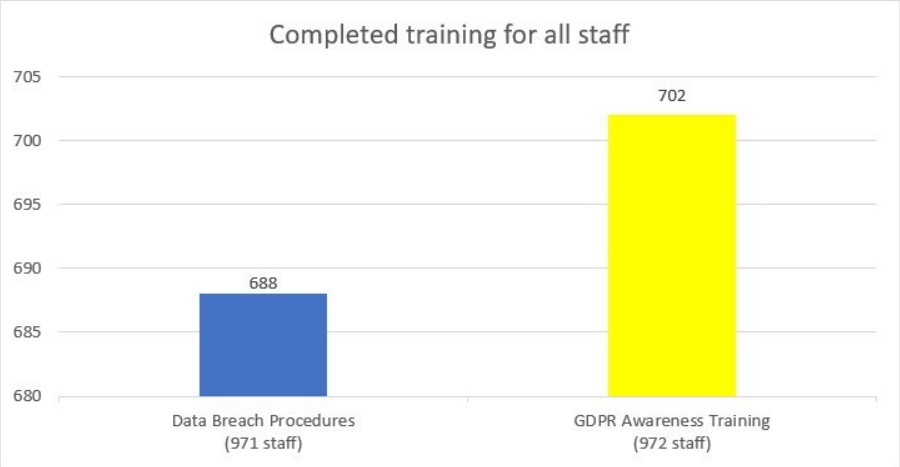


16 Requests received:

- 14 Subject Access Requests
- 2 Third Party Subject Access Requests (An Garda Síochána, etc…)

4 granted, 5 denied and 7 pending decisions.

GDPR/DATA PROTECTION TRAINING:



All staff are required to complete mandatory data protection training throughout the year covering GDPR awareness and data breach procedures.
Additionally, two unit-specific courses have been developed for HR and IT teams.

DELIVERING ON COMPLEX BUILDING MAINTENANCE – THE ROLE AND IMPACT OF THE FACILITIES TEAM

Galway County Council's Facilities Team continues to demonstrate strong leadership and technical expertise in delivering complex building maintenance and conservation projects, as shown through recent works completed at:

1. Maam Courthouse and

2. Loughrea Library.

These projects highlight both the Facilities team day to day operational capability as well as their strategic contribution to national policy objectives and the Council's reputation for excellence.

At Loughrea Library, the team addressed critical water ingress issues, protecting an essential public asset. The use of specialist contractors with rope access systems reflects a commitment to innovation, compliance, and best practice in health and safety, aligned with the Council's ISO 45001 Health & Safety Management System. This demonstrates a culture where safety, quality, and service delivery are integrated.

Furthermore, recent works at Maam Courthouse, a protected structure of significant cultural value to the County of Galway, further demonstrate our Facilities team's expertise. Delivery required a coordinated, multi-disciplinary approach, including:

- Navigating derogation licensing with the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) due to a Horseshoe Bat roost
- Engaging ecological consultants (MKO) to ensure compliance with environmental legislation
- Securing Section 57 approval and working closely with our very experienced Conservation Officer
- Coordinating with ESB Networks to safely de-energise the building
- Preserving ecological pathways and addressing invasive species challenges

This coordination reflects the complex regulatory environment in which local authorities operate, balancing heritage conservation, biodiversity protection, and infrastructure renewal.

These projects support national and regional policy frameworks, including the National Planning Framework and Project Ireland 2040, where local authorities like Galway County Council play a key delivery role. The Facilities Team exemplifies this by delivering place-based outcomes that enhance community assets while safeguarding environmental and cultural heritage.

Furthermore, the successful delivery of such projects reinforces Galway County Council's position as a high-performing, solution-focused local authority, demonstrating professionalism, innovation, and accountability.

Our Facilities Team are:

- Protecting and enhancing heritage assets as well as critical infrastructure assets
- Demonstrating leadership in compliance and environmental stewardship
- Supporting the delivery of national strategic objectives at a local level
- Reinforcing Galway County Councils' reputation for excellence

Their work is central to ensuring the continued provision of safe, sustainable, and high-quality facilities for communities now and into the future, within the full expanse of the county.





MAAM COURTHOUSE BEFORE AND AFTER PHOTOS







LOUGHREA LIBRARY

DELIVERING ON THE AUGHRIM SUMMER SERIES 2026 – LOCAL PRESS PAYS ATTENTION TO DEVELOPMENTS AT THE BATTLE OF AUGHRIM VISITOR CENTRE

Last months' management report captured the full expanse of the Battle of Aughrim Visitor Centre, Summer Series 2026 programme – organised and launched through the Facilities team.



The first of these events takes place on Friday June 12th on The Architectural Legacy of James Forth Kempster.

Local press media appear to have an appetite for reporting on recent developments at the Centre...Ballinasloe Life magazine reported as above in their most recent publication Vol. 16 Issue 2: June/July 2026:



CULTURE 43

Busy Summer Ahead For Aughrim Centre

By Colm Croffy

The Battle of Aughrim Visitor Centre has been reopened this May for the 2026 summer season. The centre will welcome visitors till Sunday 27 September.

Following a highly successful 2025 season, Galway County Council has once again worked in close partnership with the Cath Eachroma Community Group to deliver an exciting and engaging programme of events for the year ahead. This continued collaboration reflects a shared commitment to celebrating, preserving, and promoting the rich heritage of the Battle of Aughrim and the wider East Galway region.

The Cath Eachroma Community Group, through its dedication and volunteer-driven approach, continues to serve as a powerful example of how grassroots community engagement can thrive when guided by passion, historical awareness, and a strong sense of local identity. Working together, the council and community partners remain focused on ensuring that the centre's legacy is protected, respected, and thoughtfully re-imagined for future generations.

This collaborative approach has delivered tangible results. Visitor numbers increased by 20% during the 2025 season, with similar growth anticipated in 2026. Feedback from visitors has been very positive, with increased attendance reflecting a growing public interest in the centre's programming. In particular, the success of the Summer Series has demonstrated a strong appetite for high-quality, heritage-based cultural initiatives within the local community and beyond.

Emily Dickinson, Consultants, John Neary Tourism Officer, Galway County Council, Cllr Dr. Evelyn Parsons at the Community Consultations in the Rectory last month.

The centre also received national attention earlier this year, featuring on TG4's Ceolaireacht recently. The programme showcased a traditional music session hosted at the visitor centre, highlighting the vibrant and creative traditional music culture of East Galway.

Galway County Council launched a new website for the centre, enhancing accessibility and visitor engagement. A new online booking facility will be introduced as part of this development, making it easier than ever for visitors to plan their visit and engage with the centre's events and offerings.

Staff and volunteers at the Battle of Aughrim Visitor Centre. Pictured left to right are: Ronan Killeen, Galway County Council; Joseph Treacy, The Cath Eachroma Community Group; Joe Tully, The Cath Eachroma Community Group; Breege Lynn, Galway County Council; George Geraghty, The Cath Eachroma Community Group

Meanwhile the consultants appointed to undertake the EU Just Transition funded feasibility study on the future development of the site had a very busy series of consultative meetings in the Rectory early last month; in the hope of capturing community and local ideas for the development of the centre and battlefield.

Tourism Officer John Neary confirmed to the different workshops and public that it is envisaged that the Report will issue towards the end of August.

The 2026 season promises to be a busy and rewarding summer at the Battle of Aughrim Visitor Centre, continuing its role as a focal point for heritage, culture, and community collaboration in County Galway.

Opening hours are: 10.30am – 4.30pm Tuesday – Saturday, and 2 – 5pm on Sundays. The new website address is: https://battleofaughrim.info/

OUR LEISURE CENTRES – POWERING A GREENER FUTURE

We are delighted to announce the completion of the new Solar PV array installation to the Ballinasloe Leisure centre. This project was initiated approximately 12months ago in partnership between the Corporate Services Facilities team, Coral Leisure Ltd and Exemplar Energy. The project underwent rigorous planning, design and procurement process to ensure a successful outcome of such a project. The team are already progressing a similar project for the Tuam Leisure Centre which we hope will be completed later this year.

These Solar PV system upgrades represent a major investment in sustainability and the future of our community leisure spaces.

The new rooftop system in Ballinasloe will generate approximately 100,000 kWh of clean, renewable electricity every year, helping to reduce reliance on grid electricity and lower the carbon footprint for the Leisure Centre.

- 236 solar panels installed
- 130kWp Solar PV System
- Approx. 100,000 kWh generated annually
- Approx. 25 Tonnes of CO_2 Emissions will be avoided each year



This project is another important step in both Galway County Councils' and Coral Leisure's commitment to sustainability, energy efficiency, and provision of high-quality facilities for Leisure Centre members and the local community.

Together, we're building a cleaner, greener future for Ballinasloe...and Tuam (when their Leisure Centre PV system is installed later in the year.

RECREATION AND AMENITIES

Playground Inspector training took place on May 22nd and can confirm that 21 were trained on the night and two were accommodated for training at Clare County Council on June 10th .

SOCIAL MEDIA

OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITY

Followers

SOCIAL NETWORK	#
Facebook Page	23,092
LinkedIn Page	3,395
Instagram Business	3,295

New followers

SOCIAL NETWORK	#
Facebook Page	138
Instagram Business	73
LinkedIn Page	40

Posts

SOCIAL NETWORK	#
Facebook Page	125
Instagram Business	124
LinkedIn Page	48

Post impressio...

SOCIAL NETWORK	#
Facebook Page	289,595
Instagram Business	39,852
LinkedIn Page	5,680

Total posts on all Social Media Platforms for May was 297, 56% 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



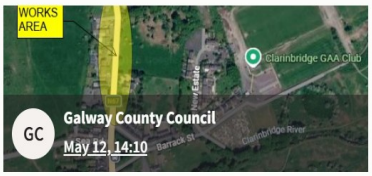
Loughrea Town Hall Nears Completion Galway County Council's Urban and Rural Regeneration Team announces the pending completion of the Loughrea Town Hall

9,696 follower views



Press Release For Immediate Release Friday, 29 May 2026 Galway County Council Signs Contracts for Two New Mobile Library Vehicles Galway Public Libraries is set to

6,778 follower views



Dear All, Please be advised that John Madden & Sons Ltd will be carrying out roadworks on the N67 in Clarinbridge on behalf of Galway County Council tomorrow, To

5,943 follower views

INSTAGRAM TOP THREE POSTS

Top posts



Is ábhar mórtais é do Comhairle Contae na Gaillimhe 3 Theach Inacmhainne Cuid V nua i láthair go bródúil atá ar díol ag An

1,199 views



Stádas Buí – Foláireamh Ardteochta do Chlár, Ciarraí, Luimneach, Tiobraid Árann, Gaillimh, Cill Chainnigh, Laois, Uíbh Fhailí

1,185 views



COMING SOON.. Galway County Council proudly presents 33 new homes for sale at Fearann na hEascrach, Raheen Road

1,183 views

LINKED IN TOP THREE POSTS

Top posts



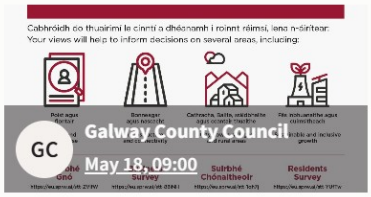
Is ábhar mórtais é do Comhairle Contae na Gaillimhe 3 Theach Inacmhainne Cuid V nua i láthair go bródúil atá ar díol ag An

374 impressions



Glao 2 um Nuashonrú ar Stáisiún Traenach Oranmore ó Chiste Forbartha Athghiniúna Uirbí Beidh laghdú ar líon na spásanna

357 impressions



Comhairliúchán Poiblí Oscailte maidir le Straitéis Forbartha Eacnamaíochta do Chathair agus do Chontae na Gaillimhe

308 impressions

COMMUNITY, RURAL & TOURISM DEVELOPMENT & INTEGRATION

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

AGE FRIENDLY

Five applications from the county have been submitted to the 2026 National Age Friendly Recognition and Achievement Awards.

- Palace Grounds Tuam from the Community section in collaboration with Tuam MD, Tuam Tidy Towns and Tuam Women's Shed (Outdoor Spaces and Buildings theme)
- Healthy Galway which is also coordinated by the Community section under the Community Support and Health Services theme
- Galway Library service under the Respect and Social Inclusion theme.
- Joint collaboration between the HSE and Forum Connemara under the theme of Social Participation, Respect and Social Inclusion.
- Collaborative project between our Creative Ireland programme and Galway City Council.

COMHAIRLE NA NÓG

The Steering Committee convened in early June to plan two regional meetings of Comhairle members. These will take place at dates to be confirmed in September. There will be a regional meeting in Connemara and East Galway. The annual conference is scheduled to take place on October 15th.

LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The next meeting of the LCDC committee will take place on 14th July at 10.30 a.m. online. The SICAP mid-year reports for the three Lots will be presented and discussed at this meeting. Other items include Internal Audit Report, update on Community Support Centres and Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS).

Pobal and DRCDG are currently organising three SICAP Regional Support Workshops for frontline LDC and LCDC staff. The focus of this year's workshops is on Human Rights and Equality. Promoting a human rights and equality framework is a horizontal principle of the SICAP programme, and the purpose of the workshops is to provide an opportunity to share learning and experiences on applying the principles of human rights and equality to the delivery of SICAP.

Staff from the local development companies and Community Department will be attending the event which takes place in the Strand Hotel Limerick on the 10th of June.

HEALTHY GALWAY

DEMENTIA CAFÉ INITIATIVE



The launch of the Memory Café Cois Fharraige is now scheduled to take place on the 17th of June. This café will replace the Leitir Mealláin and An Cheathrú Rua cafés, which had previously been relocated due to low attendance. The new café will be held in Tearmann Éanna, an Tulach, Cois Fharraige.

There is already an established cohort of individuals with dementia attending the day centre at this location, and those who previously

attended the An Cheathrú Rua and Leitir Mealláin cafés will now have the opportunity to attend this café on a monthly basis.



In addition, a further Memory Café is scheduled to launch in Carna in June, supported by the local community group, Cairdeas Carna. As part of the ongoing dementia initiative, a fortnightly coordination meeting is held with facilitators to plan and schedule café activities. The involvement of Healthy County Galway in this initiative extends beyond programme delivery, with a strong emphasis on promoting brain health. Accordingly, all activities, talks, and opportunities for social connection incorporate elements of dementia awareness, inclusivity, and health education.

Planning is also currently underway to establish another café in Loughrea, supported by Healthy County Galway in partnership with Alzheimer's Society of Ireland and Galway Rural Development. The proposed launch date for this café is Wednesday, 15 July.



The HSE-delivered dementia training in Clifden was very successful. In response to identified demand among carers in the Connemara region, a further training session is planned for September. This session will adopt a hybrid delivery model, combining in-person attendance with online streaming, to ensure accessibility across the wider Connemara area.

RETIREMENT PLANNING SEMINAR



The Retirement Planning Seminar was successfully delivered in Ballinasloe Library in May 2026, led jointly by Healthy Ireland at Your Library and Healthy County Galway.

The seminar formed part of a wider approach to supporting wellbeing through accessible, community-based settings. It provided attendees with practical information and gu idance to support financial, social, and health planning for retirement. The event was well attended and positively received, highlighting the value of delivering preventative wellbeing initiatives at local level.



UPDATE ON WELLBEING EVENTS IN MAY

MEN'S HEALTH WEEK 2026

Men's Health Week takes place this June, highlighting the importance of supporting men's physical and mental wellbeing across our communities. Evidence shows that men are more likely to experience poorer health outcomes and often delay seeking help, even when support is available.



This year's theme,"One Step at a Time," encourages men to take small, positive actions to improve their health and to check in with themselves and others. It reinforces the message that even the smallest step can make a meaningful difference.











Across County Galway, a range of events will take place throughout the week, including wellbeing sessions, community activities, and targeted supports for men. These initiatives, supported by Healthy Galway, will take place in Athenry, Clifden, Headford, Clonbur and Maam Cross, and aim to create welcoming and supportive spaces where men can connect, access information, and be encouraged to prioritise their health.

RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Minister for Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht, Dara Calleary TD, has announced the launch of the 2026–2027 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS), which supports the development and enhancement of outdoor recreational

infrastructure in rural areas. Galway County Council, working with local communities and stakeholders, will progress applications under the scheme.

ORIS provides funding across three measures:

- Measure 1: up to €40,000 for small-scale repair, maintenance, and promotion
- Measure 2: up to €200,000 for medium-scale upgrades and new amenity development
- Measure 3: up to €500,000 for large-scale and strategic projects

A Project Development Measure (PDM) also supports the advancement of "shovel-ready" projects, allowing up to four applications (max €100,000 combined), with additional provision for equestrian trails and Gaeltacht/offshore island projects (up to €50,000 each).

All projects must meet scheme requirements, including planning, environmental screening, and landowner consent. Key deadlines are expected in August and November 2026, with application forms to issue shortly on Galway.ie.

ORIS continues to support a range of projects across Galway, including upgrades to the Western Way, improvements along the Kylemore Road–Hymany Way, works at Glinsk Heritage Park, project development in Portumna, and Rinville walkway extensions.

CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

ARTS OFFICE

UNESCO GALWAY CITY OF FILM – SHORT DOCUMENTARY BURSARY 2026

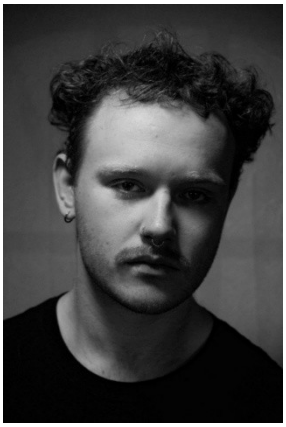
The Galway County recipient of the Short Documentary Bursary 2026 is Turloughmore based filmmaker Jamie Costello.

Across his work, Jamie plays with the documentary form blending it with unconventional fiction-based worlds to create films that are captivating, immersive and honest.

Through this bursary Jamie will create 'Getting Lost in the Garden'. The sudden death of a family dog forces a mother and father to confront time, loss and the quiet approach of their own mortality. Getting Lost in the Garden is a poetic documentary centered around the unexpected death of a family dog and the quiet unfulfilled void it leaves behind. Led by the personal recollections of a mother and father, the film sits in the liminal moments of passing.

"I am delighted to have received this bursary as it gives me purpose as a filmmaker and a sense of belonging. Even though this is only the beginning. The Ardán Short Documentary Bursary marks my starting point as a professional director and feeds the motivation to push myself to reach the next step in my career." - Jamie Costello

This bursary is made possible by support from Galway County Council Arts Office, Fís Éireann/ Screen Ireland and the Department of Culture, Communications and Sport.

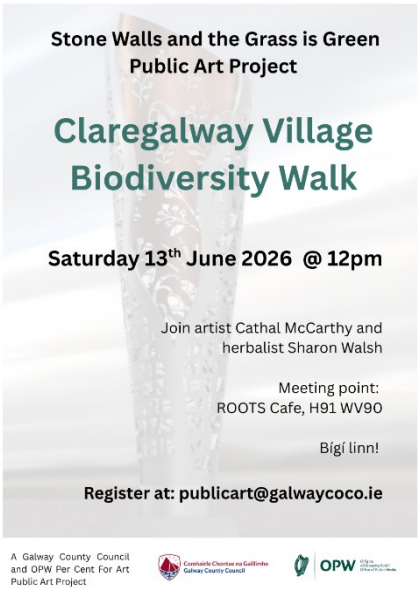


FILMMAKER JAMIE COSTELLO, RECIPIENT OF SHORT DOCUMENTARY BURSARY 2026

PUBLIC ART

Baile Chláir Guided Biodiversity Walk to Celebrate Exciting New Public Art Sculpture!

- Biodiversity Walk with artist Cathal McCarthy
- Saturday 13 June, 12 noon - 1.30pm
- Starting at the Roots Café, Baile Chláir Village
- Free and open to all.



Herbalist Sharon Walsh and Artist Cathal McCarthy embarked on a special guided biodiversity walk on Saturday 13 June at 12 noon, in Baile Chláir.

The walk will explore the flora, fauna and native plant life that are inspiring the sculpture Unfurl a new sculpture that has been commissioned for Baile Chláir. The artwork will feature stainless steel ribbons of text which will reflect the rich heritage of Baile Chláir and also inspiration from the local community, history and archaeology. It will include some new lyrics created by students from Coláiste Bhaile Chláir via song writing workshops with The Saw Doctors' Leo Moran and songwriter Padraig Stevens.

The walk will trace the route of the Clare river, roadside verges, fields and surroundings of the village. Your guide Sharon Walsh will highlight the grasses, wildflowers and hedgerow species that are native to the locale.

Participants will learn how to use herbs for tea making and how biodiversity is being celebrated in the creation of this new permanent cultural landmark. Following the walk, the group will return to the SMA centre for herbal tea and a short presentation on the development of the sculpture by visual artist Cathal McCarthy

The Unfurl sculpture aims to address unique heritage of Baile Chláir, the castle and friary ruins, the Nine Arch Bridge, place-names, and the musical spirit of the song The N17 itself. "The sculpture aims to be like a new song for Baile Chláir, created with input from local groups via arts participation and engagement " McCarthy said. "The Biodiversity walk is a



chance to see the vibrant and indigenous plants and places that will live on in the work for the future".

The new sculpture by Artist Cathal McCarthy is a Galway County Arts Office and OPW Commission funded by the Per Cent for Art programme with contributions from students of Coláiste Bhaile Chláir and local community groups and managed by Rina Whyte, Public Art Curator.

CREATIVE PLACES TUAM BEGINS NEW CHAPTER UNDER LOCAL LEADERSHIP WITH ARTS COUNCIL AWARD

Creative Places Tuam has secured Arts Council funding for 2026 and 2027, paving the way for a new phase of the community-led arts programme under local leadership.

The initiative, which supports artists, funds community projects and promotes cultural activity in Tuam and surrounding areas, will become fully locally based from 2027. Governance will transfer from Create, the national agency for collaborative arts, to Galway County Council's Arts Office.
Residents, artists, community groups and organisations are invited to take part in the next phase of the programme. The programme for 2026 and 2027 has been shaped by consultation with Tuam's creative community and feedback gathered through an artist survey in 2025.

New initiatives will include monthly one-to-one mentoring sessions known as Soundboard 121, the Graft Series for networking and knowledge exchange, and Loop Sessions, informal creative meet-ups. The programme will also include screenings, an Open Call, Art cArt outings, Sounding Tuam, three artist residencies and the Cultural Growth Fund, which organisers say has seen a 40% increase in applications since its launch. See the full Press Release : [Creative Places Tuam News]



IMAGE: MARGARET MOGGAN AND HELEN GILLARD OF TUAM TIDY TOWN AND TUAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY. PHOTO CREDIT JENNIFER CUNNINGHAM

CREATIVE PLACES TUAM AT GALWAY COUNTY AFRICA DAY 2026

Galway County Africa Day 2026 celebrations took place in Tuam Palace Grounds on Saturday 9th May. Creative Places Tuam was delighted to support this vibrant event through drop-in creative sessions, inviting everyone to explore the fun and possibilities of printmaking. Over

60 people made their mark in this family-friendly activity, designing and printing their own block stamp, contributing to the overall festive feel.

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

TUAM ARTIST SOUNDBOARD 121

Looking for a sounding board for your ideas? Whether you need personalised feedback, career or professional development advice, guidance on a funding application, problem-solving specific creative challenges or just space to figure out your next step, Soundboard 121 offers supportive one-to-one sessions tailored for artists and creatives.

Offering 30-minute sessions between 10 AM - 1 PM every third Wednesday of the month.

OUGHTERARD COURTHOUSE ARTS PROGRAMME SUMMER LAUNCH

President Catherine Connolly opened uachtarARTS' Group Exhibition ÁR DTEANGA-ÁR NDÚCHAS as well as launching OCAP's 2026 SUMMER ARTS PROGRAMME on Friday June 12th.



The exhibition will run until the 28th of June and features the work of 45 artists

The annual group show is inspired by the President's passion for the Irish language and how she has embraced it in the Áras. The topic of how our language and mother tongue connects us to family, landscape and history. A show not to be missed and supported by Galway County Council Arts Office.

Sharon O'Grady, Arts Officer, Galway County Council, pictured with members of the Oughterard Courthouse Arts Programme (OCAP) committee and participating artists at the official opening of *Ár dTeanga – Ár nDúchas*



SHARON O'GRADY, ARTS OFFICER, GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL, PICTURED WITH MEMBERS OF THE OUGHTERARD COURTHOUSE ARTS PROGRAMME (OCAP) COMMITTEE AND PARTICIPATING ARTISTS AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF *ÁR DTEANGA – ÁR NDÚCHAS*



L-R: MICHAEL OWENS, DIRECTOR OF SERVICES, GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL, CLLR. MARY HOADE, LEAS CHATHAOIRLEACH OF GALWAY COUNTY, PRESIDENT CATHERINE CONNOLLY, SHARON O'GRADY, ARTS OFFICER, GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL, CLLR. TOM WELBY, BRIAN MCENERY

ÁRAS ÉANNA OPEN CALL 2027

Áras Éanna are inviting applicants to apply for residencies on Inis Oírr for 2027. The successful recipients will be offered residencies that will be allocated on dates determined by the selection board. We welcome artists at all stages of their professional life from emerging to well-established.

The residencies can be from two weeks to one month and Áras Éanna will provide return ferry to Inis Oírr, accommodation, studio space and a stipend which will be determined at a later date.

The Arts Centre tries to accommodate all artforms but there are certain restrictions i.e. they don't have large studios for large scale sculpture or kilns for firing ceramics.

CREATIVE IRELAND

CRUINNIÚ NA NÓG 2026



This year's celebrations for the National Day of Creativity for Children took place on Saturday the 6th of June. The final tally of events came to a total of 69 across the county, making this the biggest and best Cruinniú na nÓg yet. The funding for Cruinniú na nÓg is a small amount for the value that we get from it. The core funding is only €30,000 to cover all programming, promo, photography, and staff travel for the day so it's particularly exciting to see such a vast and varied programme come from such a comparatively small spend.



We had every creative endeavour imaginable from Drama to Drumming, Painting to Puppetry, Circus to Coding, and everything in between.

KIDS WARMING UP FOR A SILENT DISCO ON INIS MÓR AS PART OF CRUINNIÚ NA NÓG 2026

PROGRAMMING & INCLUSION



A dual approach of Open Call and Direct Programming was taken this year. We had a great response to our Open Call back in February which brought 20 facilitators on board. It was a good balance of newcomers and returning favourites. We then set about programming events in specific for specific groups to ensure that no child was left out of the celebrations. This included sending Drumadore to 3 different IPAS centres

around the county to engage the young residents in a form of creativity that reached across any language barrier, drumming!

In 2025 we sent Branar to Brú Bhríde to carry out a Youth Consultation with Traveller Youth at Brú Bhríde in Tuam. As a thank you for their time and contributions we programmed their top three choices for Cruinniú na nÓg, Cyanotype Printing, Lego Coding, and Circus Skills.



This is directly in line with the Lundy Model of incorporating the voice of the child, a core value of Creative Ireland's Creative Youth programme.

Kinvara Community Centre hosted sensory art sessions for neurodiverse children and Music Generation ran a series of workshops for children and young people with varied disabilities.

SENSORY ART FOR NEURODIVERSE CHILDREN WITH ART ROOM 109 AT KINVARA COMMUNITY CENTRE

CRUINNIÚ AR NA HOILEÁIN

For the third year in a row, we were successful in securing additional funding to run a full programme as Gaeilge across all three Aran Islands. This amount came to €10,000. The additional costs and challenges with programming for the islands meant that every last penny of this was needed. As well as bringing facilitators from the mainland, we were also able to fund at least one artist from each island to carry out creative workshops, thereby contributing to the economic development of the islands. Our staff were out on the islands on the day and saw firsthand how much of an impact the programme has. There was puppetry, drama, music, spraypainting, circus skills, and even a silent disco!



The kids begged us to please come back next year, and one child said as he was taking his new puppet home, "I never knew that I could make something like this". That sums up what Cruinniú na nÓg is all about.

YOUNG CREATIVES ON INIS MÓR SHOWING OFF THEIR NEW PUPPET IN HALLA RONÁÍN AS PART OF CRUINNIÚ NA NÓG 2026

IRISH LANGUAGE PROGRAMMING

Year on year we have made a concerted effort to increase the amount of Irish language events available for Cruinniú na nÓg. We encourage applicants to the Open Call to incorporate the language in some way. This year we had a total of 55% of events either fully

as Gaeilge or incorporating the Irish language. This beat last year's rate of 52% and 2024's rate of 49%. We intend to maintain at least a 50% ration of Irish language engagement.



The Irish language programme on the mainland included Drama Workshops, Lego Coding, Cyanotype Printing, and even an Irish Language Stop Motion Animation Film from the Muintearas kids who worked with Stiuideó Fia in Leitir Mór.

YOUNG PEOPLE FROM MUINTEARAS HARD AT WORK CREATING THEIR ORIGINAL STOP MOTION ANIMATED FILM AT STIÚIDEÓ FIA, LEITIR MÓR AS PART OF CRUINNIÚ NA NÓG 2026

CRUINNIÚ AT THE LIBRARIES

The Library Services ran a huge Cruinniú na nÓg programme this year with 12 branches hosting almost 20 events and workshops. This included all corners of the county, even reaching Inishbofin for the first time. A total contribution of €4,690 was made by Creative Ireland to fund this incredibly vast and varied programme. Children all over the county got to explore their creativity with Music, Book Art, Fairy Workshops, Illustration, Creative Writing, and Comic Book Making.



YOUNG CREATIVES AT LOUGHREA LIBRARY TAKING PART IN AN 'ELVES & FAIRIES' WORSHOP AS PART OF CRUINNIÚ NA NÓG 2026

PRESS COVERAGE



Galway expands Cruinniú na nÓg programme to reach every child

Avril Horan

THE aim of this year's Cruinniú na nÓg celebrations is to ensure that no child will be left behind, with more than 60 free events taking place across County Galway, including dedicated programming in IPAS accommodation and Family Resource Centres.

Galway County Council is bringing Cruinniú na nÓg directly into communities across the county on Saturday, June 6, with a major focus on ensuring that every child has the opportunity to take part in Ireland's National Day of Creativity.

More than 60 free events are planned across County Galway to ensure that children who may face barriers to participation are included.

Cruinniú na nÓg celebrations are also taking place on the Aran Islands. Each of the three islands will host a full day of events at community hubs, with activities taking place at Halla Rondán on Inis Mór, Halla Naomh Eoin on Inis Meáin and Áras Éanna on Inis Oírr.

This year's programme is the largest to date and stretches from Inishbofin to Ballinasloe, offering opportunities for young people across the county to discover new creative skills and experiences.

Funded by Creative Ireland and programmed by Galway County Council, Cruinniú na nÓg gives children and young people the chance to explore creativity through a wide range of free activities, workshops and performances.

Galway is also leading the way nationally in Irish-language programming, with more than half of all events either incorporating Irish or delivered entirely through Gaeilge.

Galway County Library Services are playing a significant role in this year's celebrations, hosting almost 20 events across library branches throughout the county.

Creative Communities Engagement Officer with Galway County Council, Valerie Kelly, said she is "incredibly proud" of this year's Cruinniú na nÓg.

"We have a huge programme covering the entire county from Inishbofin to Ballinasloe and everywhere in between.

"The event brings so much joy to the children and young people of Galway and shows them that creativity really is for everyone, no matter what. It is absolutely the highlight of the year for the Creative Ireland programme in Galway County Council."

Launching this year's programme, the Mayor of the City of Galway, Cllr Mike Cubbard said that bringing Cruinniú na nÓg back to Ft. Burke Park would help to "recreate the brilliant experience that families had there last year."

"It showcases the great arts, culture and creativity that is found in Galway City all year round to families young people's hopefully inspiring Galway's next generation of festival goers and festival makers," he said.

Cruinniú na nÓg Local Ambassador Amelia Gomka, promised that Cruinniú na nÓg would provide "a super occasion for young people to enjoy creativity something which is very important in their lives but something which is not promoted enough."

All of the events are free but some require booking in advance. Check out cruinniu.ie/ie for all details.

Creative Communities Engagement Officer, Valerie Kelly, and two "Young Creatives" launching Cruinniú na nÓg.

We had great press coverage this year with appearances from Creative Communities Engagement Officer, Valerie Kelly, on Galway Bay FM and Connemara Community Radio. Galway County Council's Cruinniú na nÓg programme was also featured in the Thursday June 4th edition of the Connacht Tribune.

CONNACHT TRIBUNE CRUINNIÚ NA NÓG FEATURE 04.06.206

THE WATERSPORTS INCLUSION GAMES 2026



Galway Sports Partnership are delighted to support The Watersports Inclusion Games 2026 which were officially launched at Galway Hooker Sailing Club on 8th June 2026, with the event scheduled for 11–12 July in the Port of Galway. This free national event promotes inclusive participation in watersports for people of all abilities, ages, and backgrounds. First established in 2017, the Games will feature activities such as sailing, kayaking, canoeing, water skiing, and sensory experiences, with an anticipated 400 participants and 300 volunteers taking part across the weekend.

Led by Irish Sailing Association, in partnership with National Governing Bodies of Sport such as Dive Ireland, Canoeing Ireland and several local clubs and organisations, the Games aim to increase accessibility and inclusion in watersports nationwide. Supported by Sport Ireland funding and a wide network of partners, the event also highlights ongoing efforts to align with national inclusion policies. With strong community involvement and leadership, including Ambassador Mark Henderson, the Games continue to serve as a key fixture in the summer watersports calendar, promoting active participation and inclusive opportunities for all.

The Games are due to take place on the weekend of the 11 – 12 July. For further details and to register for the games click HERE

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICER CONFERENCE

Due to capacity constraints, Sport Ireland did not host a National Development Officers Conference in 2026 and instead invited expressions of interest to host Regional Development Officer Conferences.

Galway Sports Partnership, in partnership with Connacht Rugby, was selected to host one of these events. The conference took place on 26th May 2026 at Dexcom Stadium and brought together 58 Development Officers from National Governing Bodies of Sport and Local Sports Partnerships.

The event was centred on the theme of collaboration, providing a valuable platform for shared learning and networking. Feedback from attendees has been extremely positive, highlighting the success of the event and its relevance to ongoing sector development.





GARY FLANNERY -GALWAY SPORTS PARTNERSHIP, BARRY DILLON – VENTURE OUT, MAEVE KEANE – GALWAY COMMUNITY CIRCUS, MAGS DILLON WESTERN REGIONAL DRUGS AND ALCOHOL TASK FORCE

BALLINASLOE MID-SUMMER FESTIVAL

The Ballinasloe Midsummer Festival will take place on 20th June from 1:00pm to 5:00pm on the Fairgreen in Ballinasloe. This community-focused event will showcase a wide range of sport and physical activity opportunities, providing something for all ages and abilities. The festival aims to promote active lifestyles, encourage participation, and highlight local clubs and programmes through fun, inclusive, and engaging activities. It will offer a welcoming environment for individuals, families, and community groups to come together, try new activities, and celebrate the benefits of being active.



TUG OF WAR AT MIDSUMMER FESTIVAL

CLÁR IOMRAMH INIS MEÁIN – ACTIVE ISLANDS PROGRAMME

In June, the rowing programme on Inis Meáin will commence, delivered by Currachai Inis Meáin, the island's local rowing club. This initiative builds on the success of last year's programme, which achieved strong participation and positive community engagement.

The continuation of the programme reflects sustained local interest and capacity, while also contributing to the ongoing development of traditional water-based activities on the island.



It plays an important role in supporting active participation and strengthening community-led sport and recreation opportunities within the Active Islands framework.

CLUB MARA CHONAMARA LÁIR COLLABORATION– ACTIVE ISLANDS PROGRAMME



As part of the Active Islands consultation process, outdoor recreation was identified as a priority area, with a focus on sustaining existing opportunities while also expanding activity provision. In response, Galway Sports Partnership is collaborating with Club Mara Chonamara Láir, an Irish Sailing Association Community Sports Hub based in Carna, to deliver a kayaking camp on Inis Meáin.

This initiative aims to build local capacity, with a long-term objective of developing qualified instructors on the island and establishing a sustainable kayaking club.

To support this development, equipment has been procured to facilitate the delivery of the initial camp and to contribute to the future establishment of the club, subject to the availability of local resources and personnel.



INCLUSIVE SUMMER CAMP GRANT

Galway Sports Partnership launched the Inclusive Summer Camp Grant scheme, which is open from 5th June to 28th June.

This initiative is designed to support sports clubs and community groups in delivering inclusive summer camps for children, teenagers, and adults with additional needs. The scheme aims to enhance accessibility and participation in sport and physical activity across all ability levels.



Eligible organisations can apply for funding of up to €400 to assist with the planning and delivery of their programmes, helping to ensure inclusive and quality activity provision within local communities.

For more information and to apply visit www.galwayactive.ie

NATIONAL PLAY DAY 2026

Lá Náisiúnta Súgartha
National Play Day

National Play Day will take place at Corribdale Park on 11th July, aligning with the 2026 theme 'Play for All'. This year's focus highlights the power of play to support individual development while strengthening community cohesion. The event will provide an inclusive and welcoming environment where people of all ages and abilities can come together to engage in fun, meaningful activities. Through shared play experiences, the day aims to bridge social gaps, promote understanding, and create a vibrant, connected community space that reflects the importance of play in everyday life.

MEN'S HEALTH WEEK

Men's Health Week is an annual international awareness campaign which takes place from Monday June 15th to Sunday June 21st, that focuses on improving the health and wellbeing of men and boys. It highlights key health issues such as physical health, mental wellbeing, and lifestyle factors, while encouraging men to become more proactive in seeking medical advice, adopting healthier habits, and talking openly about their health. The initiative also aims to reduce stigma and promote early intervention and prevention through community activities, education, and health promotion events.



As part of this Galway Sports partnership ran several taster sessions in walking football, pitch and putt and supported groups and organisations to run their own activities as part of Mens Health Week.

ACTIVE SCHOOLS

This June there are thousands of children from schools across Galway taking part in Active Schools activities. Many of these are supported by Galway Sports Partnership through equipment loans such as our Skipping Rope Challenge, Balance Bike Programme and Sports Hall Athletics. We also provide training for teachers and partner with National Governing Bodies of Sport to deliver sessions in schools.

Active Schools Week is a nationwide initiative in Ireland designed to get every school community—students, teachers, and families—more active, more often. It takes place annually and encourages schools to replace parts of the normal timetable with fun, inclusive physical activities.

Active Schools Week (often called #ASW) is the biggest event of the Active School Flag calendar. All primary, post-primary, and special schools are invited to take part. Its core purpose is to:

- Energise the school day by increasing movement opportunities
- Promote physical activity as part of everyday school life
- Encourage participation and inclusion for all students
- Empower student leadership in planning and running activities
- Make physical activity fun through creative, whole-school events



KINVARA NS TAKING PART IN SPORTS HALL ATHLETICS

OPEN WATER SWIMMING PROGRAMMES

Swim Ireland Open Water Swimming Programmes commenced in early June in Salthill (Crabpool Beach, 9 June) and Loughrea Lake (8 June), offering structured 6-week programmes in a safe and supportive environment. Delivered by qualified Swim Ireland coaches and lifeguards, the programmes cater for a range of abilities (Levels 1–4), supporting participants from beginner level through to more confident swimmers. The sessions focus on building confidence, improving technique, and encouraging participation in outdoor swimming, with Galway Sports Partnership supporting programme promotion and participant engagement locally.



WOMEN IN SPORT & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY – JUNE PROGRAMMES

A range of targeted programmes were delivered throughout June to support women at different life stages in becoming more physically active across Galway.



Two **Buggy Buddies programmes** commenced in Ballinasloe (9 June) and Athenry (16 June), engaging postpartum participants in accessible outdoor activity. Delivered at Dunlo Running Track and Athenry Football Club respectively, these programmes provided a supportive environment for returning to exercise, with a combined capacity of 40 participants.

BALLINASLOE BUGGY BUDDIES





A Beginner Swim Programme for Women (Midlife) launched on 11 June at the Kingfisher, University of Galway, in partnership with Swim Ireland and Galway City Partnership. Women from Ballinfoile and Westside areas of Galway City will be taking part in the 6-week course, which is designed to support confidence-building and fundamental swimming skills, with 12 participants enrolled.

A second 6-week programme of Try Tennis for Women will begin on 17 June at Westside Community Courts, targeting women of all ages, including those who are currently inactive and participants from IPAS. The initiative promotes inclusion and provides an opportunity to try a new sport in a welcoming setting, with capacity for 16 participants. This programme is delivered in partnership with Parks Tennis Ireland and delivered by a qualified Tennis Ireland coach. It has been hugely popular with a lengthy waitlist compiled over the past 12 weeks, demonstrating a need to increase capacity.





WESTSIDE WOMENS TRY TENNIS

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

INTERREG EUROPE SLOWDOWN PROJECT – ROMANIA

Galway County Council and BIA Innovator Campus participated in the 5th Interregional Thematic Workshop of the Interreg Europe SLOWDOWN project, held in Sibiu County, Romania, from 18–21 May 2026.

The visit included partner workshops, policy improvement peer review sessions, stakeholder engagement discussions, and study visits showcasing Sibiu's slow tourism assets, including the ASTRA Museum, local gastronomy experiences, traditional architecture in Râu Sadului, the Wool Museum, and woodcraft or nature-based activities.

Galway representatives engaged with the Sibiu County Council team, the Sibiu Tourism Association, local tourism and cultural stakeholders, and SLOWDOWN partner regions from Romania, Spain, France, Italy, Latvia, and Hungary. The Galway region presented its proposed policy improvement, focused on developing a practical slow tourism and gastronomy delivery project that connects food, place, people, and local stories, inspired by Sibiu's Local Gastronomy Points model. Galway's next steps include progressing stakeholder consultation and project concept development, with the aim of supporting delivery under the Galway Tourism Strategy 2023–2031.



PROJECT PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS GATHERED IN ROMANIA AS PART OF THE INTERREG EUROPEAN SLOWDOWN PROJECT, STRENGTHENING INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCE.



WORKSHOP SESSIONS HELD DURING THE INTERREG EUROPEAN SLOWDOWN PROJECT STUDY VISIT TO ROMANIA.

INTERCOUNTY TOURISM EVENT- EXPLORING, CONNECTING, GROWING

Another successful intercounty tourism event led by the Just Transition Fund Activators for East Galway, Roscommon, Westmeath and Longford. This event welcomed over 50 tourism stakeholders, community leaders and local businesses for an energetic day of exploration, collaboration and connection.

The event spotlighted the tourism potential of Lough Ree and surrounding areas while strengthening partnerships across the counties and communities.



JUST TRANSITION FUND ACTIVATORS FROM WESTMEATH, ROSCOMMON, EAST GALWAY AND LONGFORD WITH CATHY SULLIVAN FROM FÁILTE IRELAND IN THE CENTRE.



BUSINESSES FROM EAST GALWAY, ROSCOMMON, LONGFORD AND WESTMEATH PICTURED OUT THE CORLEA TRACKWAY VISITOR CENTRE, CO. LONGFORD.

FÁILTE IRELANDS REGENERATIVE TOURISM AND PLACEMAKING LEARNING PROGRAMME.

The Just Transition Tourism Activator attended the graduation ceremony of Fáilte Ireland's Regenerative Tourism and Placemaking Scheme Learning Programme at Burtown House & Gardens, Kildare. The event marked the successful completion of a two-year programme by the Just Transition Tourism Activator, alongside tourism businesses and community organisations from across the region. The programme focused on embedding regenerative tourism principles, placemaking, sustainability and community-led destination development.

The programme has provided valuable support, knowledge and practical tools to participating businesses, including East Galway businesses, these businesses who have engaged positively throughout the programme. The learning experience has strengthened their capacity to contribute to a more sustainable and resilient tourism offering in East Galway while supporting local economic, environmental and community outcomes.



The graduation event highlighted the significant benefits of collaborative learning and demonstrated the positive impact that the EU Just Transition Fund continues to have in supporting tourism enterprises and communities across the region. The programme was widely regarded as a successful initiative by participants and stakeholders alike.

These learnings will continue to inform and support tourism development initiatives across East Galway.

L-R: LYN DONNELLY, BALLINASLOE AREA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (BACD) , LORETTA RAFTERY, JUST TRANSITION FUND ACTIVATOR, GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL



L-R: LYN DONNELLY, BALLINASLOE AREA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (BACD) , LORETTA RAFTERY, JUST TRANSITION FUND ACTIVATOR, GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL, AND GAYLE TARMEY, WHO SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED THE TWO-YEAR TOURISM PROGRAMME. BOTH ARE ALSO SUCCESSFUL JTF GRANTEES, HAVING SECURED FUNDING FOR THEIR RESPECTIVE TOURISM PROJECTS.

MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES FOR TOURISM BUSINESSES

Check out practical guide for organising outdoor events developed by Fáilte Ireland

This course is designed to support organisers of outdoor events to create experiences that are enjoyable for participants, respectful of place, and welcomed by local communities. It focuses on practical, real-world guidance for running outdoor events well, helping organisers build confidence in planning events that work harmoniously with the environment, landowners, and communities, while delivering a safe, inclusive, and positive experience for everyone involved.

Also Beauty on our doorstep! - Wild Conamara ar RTE Player Check out Wild Conamara on RTE Player.

Tourism Ireland - Register for Updates for promotions and opportunities

Tourism Ireland Market Profiles

Marketing Resources

Shoulder Season Toolkit

Content Pool

INTEGRATION



Our Galway County Africa Day event was a great success. Over 300 people attended to watch a displays of music, singing and dancing.



We ran bike maintenance workshops in conjunctions with An Mheitheal Rothar , the local gardaí and the Local Community Safety Partnership in Tuam and at the modular homes in Ballinasloe

Our information clinics continued across the County, including in accommodation centres for international protection applicants and beneficiaries of temporary protection. Upcoming changes to the accommodation provision for Ukrainians has led to uncertainty, and the Integration Team are busy supporting this cohort on their options in light of these changes.

LOCAL COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

The Local Community Safety Partnership (LCSP) continued to progress key actions throughout May, with a focus on community engagement and gathering survey responses. Activity centred on public consultations, promotion of safety surveys, progressing the implementation of the Tuam MD Drinking Bye-laws, and ongoing subgroup work.



PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

During May, LCSP actively delivered a number of public consultations aimed at gathering community feedback to inform local safety priorities.

- Public consultations were held in An Cheathrú Rua, Oughterard and Oranmore Libraries providing opportunities for residents to voice concerns relating to public safety.
- We carried out a number of targeted consultations: Africa Day Tuam, Bike Week Ballinasloe focusing on Ukrainian residents of modular homes in Poolboy and Bike Week Tuam Family Resource Centre with Youthwork Ireland.
- We have more Public Consultations planned for Clifden on 12th June and the islands date TBC. We will also continue with focus groups in the coming months.
- Data gathered will contribute to the ongoing development and refinement of LCSP action plans.
- The working group is also carrying out research in the form of reviewing existing data, reports, policies, and plans.

TUAM MD DRINKING BYE-LAWS

Progress was made in relation to the implementation and awareness of Tuam MD Drinking Bye-laws.

- Drinking Bye-laws for Tuam MD have been approved and signed by the Cathaoirleach at the Tuam MD meeting on 8th June
- Increased visibility of signage and public information campaigns to raise awareness of the bye-laws
- Ongoing collaboration between An Garda Síochána and Community Wardens to implement the Tuam MD Drinking Bye-laws

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS THIS MONTH

- Strong community participation in public consultations and surveys
- Continued multi-agency collaboration on public drinking enforcement

- Progression of subgroup work aligned with LCSP strategic priorities
- Increased visibility of LCSP activities within the community

ONGOING WORK

- Continue analysis of consultation and survey data
- Continue with quality research that will contribute to the community safety plan
- Strengthen communication strategies to reach broader community audiences
- Support ongoing enforcement and awareness of Tuam MD Drinking bye-laws
- Maintain momentum across subgroup activities with clear action tracking

HUMAN RESOURCES, CITY & COUNTY LIBRARIES & ENVIRONMENT

LIBRARY SERVICES

LAUNCH OF THE ACORN AGE FRIENDLY TABLETS

An Acorn Age-Friendly Tablet Lending Service was launched recently 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 Galway County, 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 tablets and throughout the loan period. Special thanks to Margaret Garvey (Tuam Library) for her informative demonstration of the functionality of Acorn tablets.



MARGARET GARVEY, JO VAHEY, MELIOSA MCINTYRE AND ANNE MONAGHAN TETLOW

JONATHAN HOWARD SKELLHORN, ADELE RANKIN, HEALTHY COUNTY GALWAY, JO VAHEY (GALWAY LIBRARIES) JIPE KELLY (AGE ACTION) MELIOSA MCINTYRE (GALWAY LIBRARIES) HANNAH DELANEY (AGE ACTION) PATRICK FOX(GRETB)AND LIBRARY PATRONS





JONATHAN HOWARD SKELLHORN AND JO VAHEY (SENIOR EXECUTIVE LIBRARIAN)

BALLYBANE LIBRARY

The highlight of May at Ballybane Library was our involvement in the 3rd Eastside Arts Festival.

Ballybane Library plays a key role in the festival. Much of the planning happens right here, with our Maker Space serving as a busy hub for committee meetings. This year's festival took place over the weekend of May 8th, and it brought the community together in a vibrant way.

The Ballybane and Doughiska community gardens were full of life. Visitors enjoyed gardening talks, displays of Galway Traveller crafts and traditions, performances by local singing groups, and lively entertainment from the Galway Community Circus. There was face painting, pottery, and plenty for families to explore.



MERVUE CHOIR IN FULL VOICE AT BALLYBANE ORGANIC GARDEN

One of the standout moments was the local talent show. Children and teenagers from the Eastside took to the stage with confidence and creativity. From dance to keyboard to singing, their performances were energetic and inspiring.

The library also hosted four engaging exhibitions. A photographic collection from Tribune photographer Joe Shaughnessy offered a glimpse into Ballybane's past. It included striking images of Olympic boxer Francey Barrett training in Hillside before his big international bouts.

Another exhibition featured artwork by patrons of the John Paul Centre. Some of these pieces were four years in the making, showing real dedication and talent. A third exhibition came from a women's group in Doughiska. Their project, *Strong Women of Galway*, celebrated the vital role of women in Galway's history and in modern life.



ARD WOMEN'S CIRCLE EXHIBITION FEATURING 'STRONG WOMEN OF GALWAY'



'STRONG WOMEN OF GALWAY EXHIBITION'

We also hosted a lively Sing and Sign lunchtime concert by the patrons of Corlann. It drew an audience of 60 people and created a warm, inclusive atmosphere.

Overall, the festival was a fantastic success. It showcased creativity, community spirit, and the many talents of the Eastside.

BEALTAINE FESTIVAL/FÉILE BEALTAINE

We celebrated the Bealtaine Festival with a morning of song, music and dance as we reminisced over our memories of Irish Poetry, Prose and Songs learned in our school days. A group of 26 gathered in the library organized by our own team member Colette Dempsey, music provided by the beautiful violin playing of another team member Eilish Devine. Some of our Ciorcal Comhrá read from the works of Paraic Ó Conaire and Seamus Ó Neill.


Scéalta, Dánta
agus Ceol ár n-Oige
le Ciorcal Comhrá Leabharlann an Bhaile Bháin
An Clár
Mise Eire
dán le Pádraic Mac Piarais agus ceol le Seán Ó Riada
Cul an Tí
dán le Seán Ó Riordáin
Óro se do Bheatha Bhaile
amhrán traidisiúnta
Sliocht as Nora Mharcus Bhig
scéal le Padraic Ó Conaire
Baidin Fheilimí
amhrán traidisiúnta
Mise Rafteri
dán le Antoine Ó Raifteiri
Gairdíní na Saili
ceol traidisiúnta
Subh Milis
le Séamus Ó Néill
Bean Phádín
amhrán traidisiúnta
An Damhán Alla agus an Mhioltog
dán le Dubhghlas de Hide
Peigín Leitir Móir
amhrán traidisiúnta
Anseo i Lár an Ghleanna
dán le Séan Mac Fhearais
Mise Eire
ceol le Seán Ó Riada

SCÉALTA, DÁNTA AGUS CEOL TO CELEBRATE FÉILE BEALTAINE



CIORCAL COMHRÁ AG CEILIÚRADH FÉILE NA BEALTAINE

BALLINASLOE LIBRARY

AUTISM AWARENESS EVENT – MAY 1ST

The Autism Awareness event held in Ballinasloe Library, organised by Galway Traveller Movement and Galway Rural Development, was a positive and engaging occasion that highlighted the importance of promoting understanding, acceptance, and inclusion for individuals with autism. The event helped foster greater awareness within the community and encouraged more inclusive attitudes. A special acknowledgement is extended to Debra from GRD's Parentchild+ programme, who provided a range of sensory toys that were greatly enjoyed by the children, contributing to the welcoming and interactive atmosphere of the day.



ATTENDEES AT AUTISM AWARENESS EVENT INCLUDING REPRESENTATIVES FROM GALWAY TRAVELLER MOVEMENT AND GALWAY RURAL DEVELOPMENT

THE GATHERING ART GROUP EXHIBITION – MAY 9TH



The launch of The Gathering Art Group exhibition at Ballinasloe Library marked a vibrant addition to the cultural programme. The exhibition showcases an engaging mix of artistic styles and techniques, including collage, gelli printing, portraiture, and acrylic painting, reflecting both the creativity and diversity of the group. The event provided an opportunity to celebrate local artistic talent and offered visitors an enriching and visually dynamic experience.

DIGITAL LITERACY: COMPUTER CLASSES FOR ADULTS – 6 WEEK COURSE

Digital Literacy: Computer Classes for Adults programme, delivered in partnership with Login IT Training, has been running successfully at Ballinasloe Library over a six-week period, with sessions held every Friday. The classes have supported adult participants in developing essential IT skills while also building confidence in navigating the internet safely. Feedback to date indicates that participants are gaining valuable practical knowledge, contributing to improved digital inclusion within the community.



PATRICIA FLYNN OF LOGIN IT TRAINING WITH JOE JENNINGS, EXECUTIVE LIBRARIAN, BALLINASLOE LIBRARY

BALLINASLOE LIBRARY 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY – MAY 16TH

Ballinasloe Library marked a significant milestone with the celebration of its 10th anniversary in the current building. The occasion provided a valuable opportunity to reflect on a decade of service to the community while engaging families in a festive atmosphere. The event featured free face-painting for children, creating a lively and colourful celebration that was well received by attendees and reinforced the library's role as a welcoming and inclusive community space.



BALLINASLOE LIBRARY TEAM CELEBRATING THEIR 10TH ANNIVERSARY IN THE CURRENT BUILDING



FACEPAINTING TO CELEBRATE THE LIBRARY'S 10TH ANNIVERSARY

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS – MAY 16TH – 6-WEEK COURSE

The introduction of a Dungeons & Dragons programme at Ballinasloe Library has provided an exciting new opportunity for young people to engage in creative and imaginative play. The first session saw participants enthusiastically design and paint their own characters, sparking creativity and collaboration in a fun, supportive environment. The programme has been very positively received, with strong engagement and enjoyment evident, and it is anticipated that the sessions will continue to foster imagination, storytelling skills, and social interaction over the coming weeks.



DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS WORKSHOP

"THIS MATTERS TO ME" - ART EXHIBITION LAUNCH – MAY 20TH

The "This Matters to Me" exhibition at Ballinasloe Library showcases a thoughtful and inspiring collection of artwork created by children from local early years providers in Ballinasloe area. The pieces reflect themes of hope and nature, offering a meaningful and uplifting experience for visitors of all ages. The exhibition highlights the creativity and perspectives of young people in the community and will remain on display until 11th July, providing an ongoing opportunity for engagement and inspiration. The exhibition was created in partnership with Galway Childcare Committee and GRETB.



JOSEPHINE VAHEY, SENIOR EXECUTIVE LIBRARIAN, LIZ KEANE, COUNTY AND CITY LIBRARIAN, DAVID LEAHY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF GRETB AND JEN HENSEN, LOCAL CREATIVE YOUTH PARTNERSHIP COORDINATOR AT THE LAUNCH OF "THIS MATTERS TO ME" EXHIBITION

RELAX AND RECHARGE ZONE

Ballinasloe Library has set up a zone for relaxing and recharging for Leaving Cert students. It has tea & coffee, healthy snacks and chill vibes. It has proved very popular and students thanked library staff for their kindness.



STUDENTS TAKING TIME OUT FROM THEIR BUSY STUDY SCHEDULES

HEALTHY IRELAND AT YOUR LIBRARY

RETIREMENT PLANNING SEMINAR – BALLINASLOE LIBRARY – 27 MAY 2026

Ballinasloe Library was delighted to host a highly successful *Retirement Planning Seminar* on Wednesday, 27 May 2026, delivered in partnership with **Healthy Ireland at Your Library** and **Healthy Galway County**. The event, which ran from 10.00am to 2.00pm, attracted a large and engaged audience from across the region, reflecting a strong community interest in planning for a healthy, secure, and fulfilling retirement.

Attendees began arriving from 9.30am, where they were welcomed with tea and coffee, creating a relaxed and sociable atmosphere. This informal start encouraged conversation and networking among participants, many of whom were at different stages of retirement planning.

The seminar programme offered a comprehensive and well-balanced schedule of expert-led talks covering financial, physical, social, and emotional aspects of retirement. The opening session, delivered by **Dónal Carey of Carey Corbett Financial Solutions**, provided clear and practical guidance on pensions and retirement planning. This was followed by **Ellie Loftus from Galway Sports Partnership**, who highlighted the importance of maintaining physical activity in later life, sharing accessible and inclusive approaches to staying active.

After a short break for refreshments and networking, attendees heard from **Aisling Snedker, Clinical Dietician**, who spoke on nutrition and diet, offering valuable advice on maintaining health and wellbeing through food choices. **Sarah Fahy from Mental Health Ireland** then introduced the *Five Ways to Wellbeing*, encouraging participants to consider mental health as a key pillar of retirement planning.

Further practical supports were outlined by **Yvonne Kenny from the Department of Social Protection**, who provided an overview of social welfare entitlements and supports available to older adults. Following a lunch break, which allowed for further engagement and discussion, the afternoon session focused on community supports and resources. **Caroline Rowan, Executive Librarian**, showcased the wide range of services, programmes, and

facilities available through the public library service, highlighting its role as a hub for lifelong learning and community connection.



The seminar was marked by exceptionally strong attendance, with the venue filled to capacity. Feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive, with many praising the breadth and relevance of the topics, the quality of the speakers, and the opportunity to access reliable information in a welcoming environment. Attendees particularly valued the holistic approach taken, addressing not only financial planning but also health, wellbeing, and social engagement in retirement.

The collaborative effort between Healthy Ireland at Your Library and Healthy Galway County was instrumental in the success of the event. The seminar demonstrated the impact of partnership working in delivering meaningful, community-focused initiatives that respond to local needs.

Overall, the Retirement Planning Seminar was a resounding success, reinforcing Ballinasloe Library's role as an inclusive and accessible community hub. It also highlighted the continued importance of providing informative and supportive programmes that empower individuals to plan confidently for their future.

MEMORY CAFÉS

The Healthy Ireland at Your Library Coordinator attended a Memory Café held in the Community Hall in Roundstone. The Café is an initiative of Forum Connemara, Healthy Galway County and the Alzheimer's Society of Ireland. Monthly meetings are held to provide support for families and individuals impacted by memory loss and Dementia. The meeting provided an opportunity for the Healthy Ireland at Your Library coordinator to discuss the resources and supports available throughout the library service, including an excellent selection of reading materials from the Healthy Ireland bookstock collection.

AN CEART CHUN LÉITHEOIREACHT

AM SCÉALAÍOCHTA AGUS EALAÍNE



Bhí ríméad orainn Am Scéalaíochta a bheith again ryder leabharlann arís, ar an 16 Bealtaine.

Léigh Tara dhá scéal agus ansin chuaigh sí i gceannas ar shéisiún ealaíne, ina rinne na gasúir a gcuid mbeachain féin. Thaitin an séisiún ealaíne ach go háirithe leo. Bhí 12 rannpháirtithe againn.

CEANN DE NA GASÚIR AGUS A SAOTHAR EALAÍNE ÁLAINN

ONE OF THE CHILDREN AND HER LOVELY ARTWORK

Bhí go leor gasúir sa leabharlann freisin chun na málaí 'Mo Leabharlann Bheag' a bhailiú. Thug muid amach 17 málaí Gaeilge agus 2 mhála Béarla amach go dtí seo.

AG BAILIÚ MÁLAÍ 'MO LEABHARLANN BHEAG'



CUAIRTEANNA 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.

ÉIRE SHLÁINTIÚIL/SCILEANNA DON SAOL

ÍOGA DO CARERS

Thosaigh Sinéad McKiernan ó Move & Breathe ag reáchtáil séisiúin Íoga, maoinithe ag an Galway Autism Partnership, do chúramóirí, tuismitheoirí agus daoine atá ag obair mar SNA ar an 26 Bealtaine. Beidh siad ar siúl sa leabharlann gach Máirt ag 10:30am ar feadh sé seachtaine.

SCÉALTA EILE

Tháinig foireann ón Chomhpháirtíocht Sábháilteachta Pobail Áitiúil Chontae na Gaillimhe chuig na leabharlainne ar an 15 Bealtaine chun suirbhé a chur ar an bpobal. Labhair siad le muintir na Ceathrún Rua idir 11am agus 1pm.



FOIREANN AN COMHPHÁIRTÍOCHT SÁBHÁILTEACHTA POBAIL ÁITIÚIL CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

THE GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL LOCAL SAFETY PARTNERSHIP TEAM

Thosaigh muid ag reáchtáil Maidin Duplo do pháistí óga agus a dtuismitheoirí an mhí seo chomh maith. Bhí neart spraoi ag an tógáilaithe óga.



MAIDIN DUPLO

Lean muid le forbairt na leabharlainne an mhí seo. Tá rannóg ficsin na ndaoine fásta críochn aíthe anois againn, le tralaí Roghanna
Gasta ann, agus muid ag fáil aiseolas iontach ón phobal. Tá muid dírithe ar an rannóg neamh fhicsin anois.

.....

RIGHT TO READ

AM SCÉALAÍOCHTA AGUS EALAÍNE

We were very happy to have Storytime again in the library, on May 16th. Tara read two stories and then led an art session where the children made their own bees. The art in particular was a hit! We had 12 participants.

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 also had many children come in to collect their Little Library bags! So far, we have handed out 17 Irish bags and 2 in English.

HEALTHY IRELAND/SKILLS FOR LIFE

YOGA FOR CARERS

Sinéad McKiernan of Move & Breathe began hosting Yoga sessions, funded by the Galway Autism Partnership, for carers, parents and SNAs on May 26th. The sessions will run in the library every Tuesday for six weeks.

OTHER NEWS

A team from the Galway County Local Community Safety Partnership came to the library on May 15th to survey the public. They spoke to the people of An Cheathrú Rua between 11am and 1pm.

We started hosting a Duplo morning for young children and their parents this month as well. The young builders had lots of fun!

We continued with the development of the library this month. We have finished with the adult fiction section, complete with a Quick Picks trolley, and have been receiving excellent feedback from the public. We have now turned our attention to the non-fiction section.

CLIFDEN LIBRARY

May got off to a wonderful start with a lively bilingual music and storytelling workshop led by Julie-Anne De Brún, kindly supported by Forum CLG under the Irish Plan. We were delighted to welcome Clifden Playschool for a special morning session, followed by a second workshop open to the public. Julie-Anne was fantastic throughout, captivating audiences of all ages with her energy and storytelling.

We were also very pleased to receive a generous donation of the *Iorras Aithneach Yearbook* catalogue from the Emigrants Commemorative Centre Carna Committee. Our sincere thanks go to Máirtín Ó Catháin and Eileen Davis for organising this, and to Jo Vahey for accepting the donation on behalf of Galway Public Libraries. These valuable publications are now available for in-library reference in Clifden, and we look forward to welcoming members of the community to explore them.

Bhí áthas an domhain orainn an bronntanas luachmhar seo a fháil ó Choiste an Ionad Cuimhneacháin na nImirceach, Carna. Gabhaimid buíochas ó chroí le Máirtín Ó Catháin agus Eileen Davis as ucht a gcuid oibre, agus le Jo Vahey a ghlac an bronntanas ar son Leabharlanna Poiblí na Gaillimhe. Tá fáil ar na hIrisleabhair anois i Leabharlann an Chlocháin, áit a mbeidh fáilte mhór roimh an bpobal áitiúil.

During National Biodiversity Week, we marked the occasion with an engaging display showcasing our excellent range of nature titles, encouraging readers to explore and learn more about the natural world.

We were also delighted to host an interactive talk on dementia awareness, organised by Forum Connemara and partners and facilitated by DSID St. James's Hospital. The session provided valuable information and, importantly, created a welcoming space for carers to connect and support one another.

Our 'My Open Library' service saw particularly high demand throughout the month, with Leaving Certificate students making full use of the space in the run-up to their exams—every seat was taken on many evenings.

Finally, it was a joy to welcome some of our youngest members as they collected their "Little Library Bag". The smiles said it all, and we look forward to greeting many more new faces over the summer as they prepare to start primary school in September.



GALWAY PUBLIC LIBRARIES' STAFF VANESSA THACKER, JO VAHEY, AMELIA WHELAN, PAUL KEOGH, BERNIE JEFFRIES AND MARION NIKOLAKOS AT THE PRESENTATION OF A GENEROUS DONATION OF THE IORRAS AITHNEACH YEARBOOK CATALOGUE FROM THE EMIGRANTS COMMEMORATIVE CENTRE COMMITTEE, CARNA

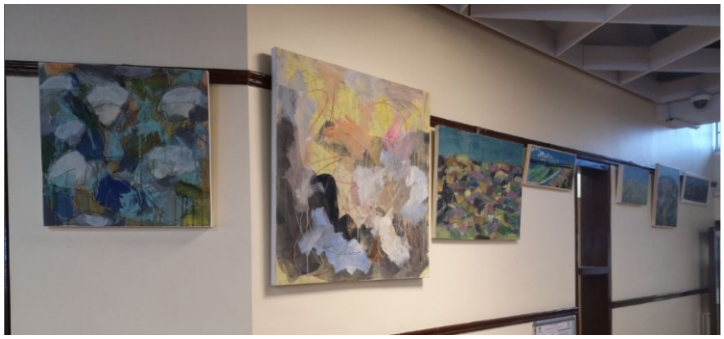
GALWAY CITY LIBRARY



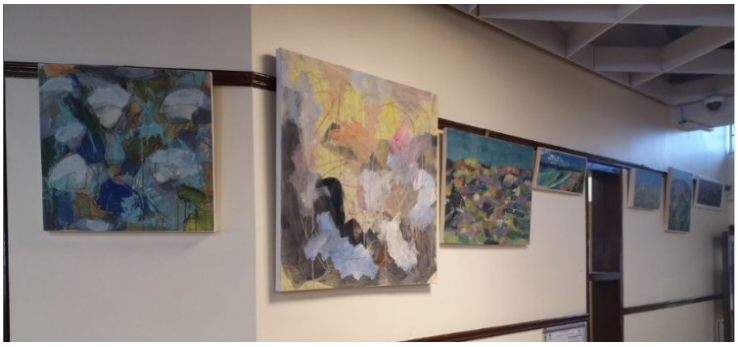
An invitation-only stakeholder event by the Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment took place at Galway City Library. The purpose of the event was to seek local stakeholder input into the National Designated Maritime Area Plan for Offshore Renewable Energy (NDMAP for ORE).

There was a new art exhibition from Terri Smith whose work featured flora, birds, and insects drawn from folklore and forensic observation. The exhibition reflected on the fragility of ecosystems.





Artist Yvonne Devine also exhibited. Her work was a collection of abstract pieces, which explored the Connemara landscape, from the deep peat of the blanket bogs to the rugged Atlantic coastline focusing on the sensory feeling of being in these spaces rather than a literal representation.



The monthly Foróige table-top gaming session took place with 12 young people attending.



Music Unveiled took place on 19 May. This collaborative event featured a lecturer from the University of Galway, composer Ronan Guilfoyle and the Con Tempo quartet. This is part of an ongoing collaboration to bring music to the public.

The winner of the library's BikesAndBooks competition was Wesley Fields, who collected his prizes, including a bike repair kit and rechargeable bike lights, as well as several other useful bike goodies, kindly provided by Galway Sports Partnership as part of the national Bike Week celebrations.

LOCAL STUDIES

EMAIL QUERIES

A total of 35 email queries were managed, covering a broad range of research topics, with a strong focus on locating burial records. Enquiries included historical burials in Forthill (1861), Connemara (1987), and Ballinasloe (1940s), supported through Library holdings, County Council resources, and external referrals.

Requests for historical newspaper content were also prominent, including sensitive personal research and genealogical enquiries. Additional queries related to Tim Robinson's Connemara maps, the Lynch family history, and the 1798 Rising.

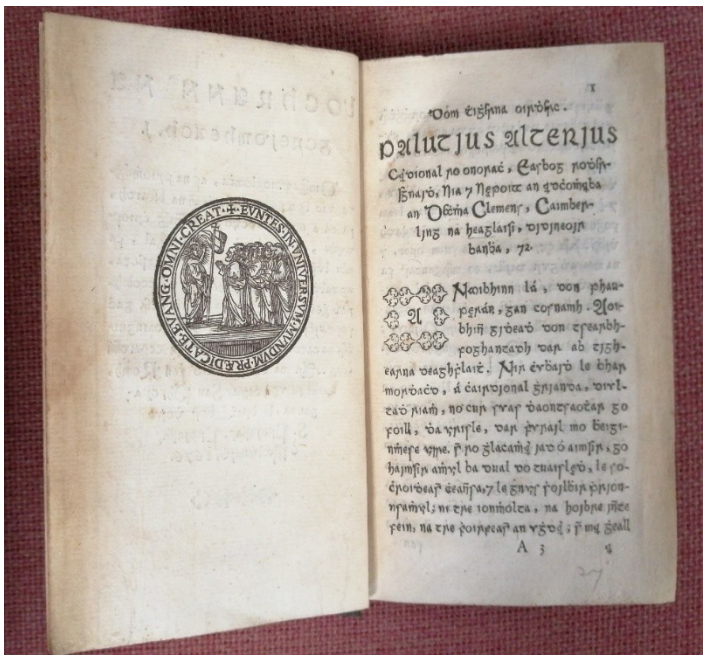
VISITS AND APPOINTMENTS

Visitor activity included both walk-in and scheduled research engagements, primarily focused on access to microfilm, online archives, and specialised collections. Key areas of interest included the *Connacht Sentinel* (1980), map collections, and O'Donovan's Field Name Books.

Genealogical guidance was provided to international visitors, alongside facilitated access to online newspaper archives.

PHONE CALLS

Telephone enquiries addressed access to local history resources, including cancelled rate books for Clifden, Galway Gaol records, and the photographic collections. Queries also included support for genealogy platforms such as Findmypast.



A rare and fascinating item in the Local Studies collection is an original Irish-language catechism, *"Lucerna Fidelium"* ("Lamp of the Faithful"). It was published in Rome in 1676 by Brother Pronsias O' Molloy. The book was intended for distribution in Ireland among Irish-speaking Catholics at a time when both their faith and language were under increasing pressure in the post-Cromwellian era. This period would soon give way to the introduction of the Penal Laws some twenty years later.

The text is written entirely in Irish, apart from its title, and is printed in a beautiful Cló Gaelach script. It stands as an important early example of Irish-language print.

The volume is currently undergoing conservation work.

LOUGHREA LIBRARY

Loughrea Library enjoyed a vibrant and engaging period, filled with activity, creativity and strong community involvement. The Right to Read programme brought a steady stream of young visitors through the doors, as school groups and preschools explored the library as

part of their wider community experiences. These visits were rich with storytelling, imaginative play, colouring and hands-on activities such as planting sunflowers, giving children an opportunity to connect with books and learning in a fun, welcoming environment.

The library also continued to nurture its regular readers, with the monthly book club providing a relaxed space for discussion and sharing a love of literature.

Family-focused events added further energy to the library space. Toddler storytimes, filled with stories and LEGO Duplo play, created opportunities for early learning and social interaction. Board game afternoons offered a casual and friendly setting for visitors to drop in and enjoy some leisure time together, while a lively biodiversity-themed day invited children to engage in LEGO free play and contribute creatively to a colourful butterfly wall display.

A strong emphasis on inclusivity and lifelong learning was evident through the Age Friendly initiatives. The Active Retirement Group took part in a series of art workshops led by an experienced artist, culminating in the creation of beautiful and meaningful memory books. These works were later celebrated in a public exhibition, launched by the Creative Communities Engagement Officer, highlighting the creativity and storytelling of local participants. The library also hosted a meeting of the Active Retirement Committee, supporting ongoing community engagement.



LAUNCH OF MEMORY BOOKS SUPPORTED BY CREATIVE IRELAND CREATIVE COMMUNITIES

LOUGHREA ACTIVE RETIREMENT GROUP ART WORKSHOP

Beyond regular programming, the library served as an important civic and creative hub. It facilitated a public consultation on the Community Safety Plan for County Galway, providing a space for local voices to be heard. The library also hosted a photoshoot in support of Crinniú na nÓg, contributing to wider cultural initiatives.



Weekly adult craft sessions continued to offer a welcoming space for creativity and connection, while a community social morning invited people to relax, chat, enjoy refreshments, and spend time reading or playing games.

Overall, the period reflected a lively, inclusive and community-focused library service, with strong participation across all age groups and interests.

ORANMORE LIBRARY

The month of May at Oranmore Library has been a celebration of young and not-so-young with two events to mark the Bealtaine Festival and a range of activities and events for Spring into Storytime.

We have had class visits from Scoil Íosa and Clarinbridge N.S and preschoolers from Bláth Beag in Oranmore. Secondary school students have filled the library every day preparing for their exams, with every available seat taken.

BEALTAINE EVENTS AT ORANMORE LIBRARY

Oranmore Library hosted a creative writing workshop with author Maeve McKenna entitled: "A Letter to My Younger Self". There were 12 participants and they all enjoyed it thoroughly and found it very beneficial. One participant sent an email to express their appreciation:



"Just a quick email to say thank you for the workshop with Maeve last Thursday evening. Maeve is excellent at teaching techniques for getting started and keeping going with creative writing ideas and the workshop was really useful, enjoyable and valuable."

CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOP WITH MAEVE MCKENNA

Oranmore Community Choir marked the end of their season with a Lunchtime Concert at Oranmore Library which was enjoyed by an audience of over 100 people. A wonderful sing-along ensued with song sheets for the audience



ORANMORE COMMUNITY CHOIR PERFORMING IN ORANMORE LIBRARY.



SPRING INTO STORYTIME EVENTS AT ORANMORE LIBRARY

Our regular events are as popular as ever at Oranmore Library;

Storytimes, DUPLO, and LEGO are all hosted by our wonderful staff. We also hosted a Biodiversity Arts & Crafts session to mark Biodiversity Week.



SOME OF THE IMAGINATIVE CREATIONS CREATED BY CHILDREN AT ORANMORE LIBRARY DURING LEGO AND DUPLO WORKSHOPS





BOOK DISPLAYS FOR NATIONAL DRAWING DAY, DAVID ATTENBOROUGH'S 100TH BIRTHDAY AND NEW BOOKS RECEIVED.



GALWAY COUNTY LOCAL COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP SURVEY

Oranmore Galway County Local Community Safety Partnership (LCSP) held a public consultation in Oranmore Library to hear from residents about community safety. It was open to all County Galway residents aged 12 and over. Participants were encouraged to share their views on community safety and suggest where improvements could be made. All feedback was anonymous and used solely to inform the plan. Everyone was welcome – your voice matters in creating safer, more inclusive communities. If you were unable to attend, you could scan the QR code and complete the LCSP survey made available through the Galway County Council and Galway Public Libraries social media pages.

This public consultation was very beneficial with many local residents engaging with the County Council Staff about the survey and the improvements they would like to see in Oranmore village and surrounding areas.



GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL STAFF HOSTING AN INFORMATION STAND ON GALWAY COUNTY LOCAL COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

MOBILE LIBRARY



The Galway Mobile Library Outreach Team celebrated **Bealtaine Festival 2026** with a vibrant and engaging programme under the theme ***Alive in our Stories / Beo in ár Scéalta*.** Storytelling sessions took place in Athenry Library and across a number of care settings including Castlegar, Clarenbridge, Brooklodge and Blake Manor Nursing Homes.

Storyteller Niall de Búrca delivered lively and dynamic performances, bringing Irish myths, legends and traditional tales to life in a warm and personable style. His sessions blended humour, energy and a natural ease with audiences, creating an atmosphere that was both entertaining and inclusive. A gentle sprinkling of Irish language added richness to the experience, while stories from around the world complemented the strong tradition of Irish storytelling.



STORYTELLER NEIL DE BÚRCA ENTERTAINING RESIDENTS OF CASTLEGAR NURSING HOME AND PUPILS FROM THE LOCAL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Audience participation was central, encouraging connection, reminiscence and shared enjoyment. The visit to Castlegar Nursing Home, joined by 6th class pupils from the local national school, created a particularly memorable intergenerational experience.

Additional storytelling and musical sessions by Moth & Butterfly Tellers offered a softer, engaging and welcoming atmosphere, highly appreciated by residents. Their combination of gentle storytelling and music added variety to the programme and ensured there was something to suit all audiences.



MOTH & BUTTERFLY ENTERTAINING RESIDENTS

Across all venues, the social aspect of gathering together for cultural events was evident, fostering a strong sense of community.

Overall, the programme brought uplifting, culturally rich experiences directly to older people, promoting wellbeing, inclusion and connection, and celebrating the lasting importance of stories in our lives.



MOTH & BUTTERFLY STORYTELLERS AND MUSICIANS

GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL SIGNS CONTRACTS FOR TWO NEW MOBILE LIBRARY VEHICLES

Galway Public Libraries is set to deliver a first for Ireland with the introduction of the country's first modern mobile library vehicles based on bus infrastructure, following the signing of contracts by Galway County Council for the design and construction of two new state-of-the-art units.

The contracts have been awarded to Spanish specialist manufacturer Alegria-Activity, marking the company's first project in Ireland. Funding for the initiative is being provided by Galway County Council, with support from the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht under the Library Capital Programme.

The vehicles will significantly modernise and expand the Galway Mobile Library Service, enabling books, learning resources and wider community supports to be delivered to towns, villages, schools and rural communities across the county. The new generation units will function as fully equipped mobile service points, with shelving, staff workspace, enhanced IT capacity and provision for public printing, supported by onboard power and connectivity systems.

Cathaoirleach of the County of Galway Cllr David Collins welcomed the investment, saying it represents "a strong statement of the Council's commitment to vibrant communities and equal access to library services, regardless of location."

Chief Executive of Galway County Council, Liam Conneally, said the investment "reflects our commitment to inclusion, accessibility and sustainable community development. These new vehicles will strengthen and future-proof the Mobile Library Service, ensuring communities across Galway continue to have access to high-quality library services."

Liz Keane, Galway City & County Librarian, said the project represents "a significant investment in the future of our Mobile Library Service," adding that the partnership

combines local experience with international expertise to deliver “modern, flexible vehicles that will serve communities across Galway for many years to come.”

“The investment underlines its ongoing commitment to innovation, accessibility and delivering high-quality library services to communities throughout the county,” she added.

Operating since 1960, the Mobile Library Service has long played a key role in connecting communities with reading, learning and cultural opportunities.

Designed in collaboration with Alegria-Activity, the new vehicles will feature modern technology, improved accessibility and flexible layouts to meet the evolving needs of library users across the county.



FRONT ROW L-R:CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL LIAM CONNEALLY, CATHAOIRLEACH OF GALWAY COUNTY, CLLR. DAVID COLLINS, INIGO ALEGRIA VIDAL-ABARCA, DIRECTOR OF ALEGRIA ACTIVITY, DIRECTOR OF SERVICES, EILEEN RUANE (ALL ON FRONT ROW). BACK ROW L-R: COUNTY AND CITY LIBRARIAN, LIZ KEANE, SENIOR EXECUTIVE LIBRARIAN, JO VAHEY, EXECUTIVE LIBRARIAN, JOHN FITZGIBBON, EXECUTIVE LIBRARIAN, SHARLEEN MCANDREW, INTERNATIONAL PROJECT COORDINATOR AGNIESZKA KUSNIERCZYK AND SENIOR EXECUTIVE LIBRARIAN, SIOBHÁN ARKINS, AT THE SIGNING OF CONTRACTS FOR THE PUCHASE OF TWO NEW MOBILE LIBRARIES. PHOTO CREDIT JACINTA FAHY

PORTUMNA LIBRARY

Portumna Library continues to thrive as a welcoming and dynamic hub, particularly during the busy tourist season. We’ve been delighted to see visitors from across the country dropping in—many discovering (often with pleasant surprise!) that they can borrow books

here and return them at their home library, making Portumna part of a truly national reading journey.

Our younger visitors brought fantastic energy to the library this month. We were thrilled to host the Junior Room from Lorrah N.S., who travelled across the Shannon to enjoy a fun-filled visit of Storytime, Lego, colouring and games. Likewise, Tiernascragh N.S. marked their end-of-year celebrations with a lively class visit, full of stories, creativity and smiles.

Community connection remains at the heart of what we do. Our popular Ciorcal Comhrá continues to flourish every second Tuesday, offering over an hour of relaxed conversation—*craic, chat agus tae*—in an inclusive, age-friendly setting where all levels of Irish are warmly welcomed.

Innovation has also taken centre stage this month. From 14th May, we launched a four-week Creative Technology Coding Club as part of the Creative Ireland Programme, bringing new skills and digital creativity into the library space.

A highlight on the community calendar was hosting the Local Community Games Prizegiving, where over 60 attendees gathered to celebrate achievements in Art and Handwriting. It was especially rewarding to see many families visiting the library—some for the very first time—creating new connections with our services.

Regular programmes continue to engage a wide range of interests:

- Our adult Book Club explored *The Summer Queen* by Margaret Pemberton, sparking lively discussion.
- 'Scrabble for Adults' remains a firm favourite on Thursday afternoons.
- Our ever-popular community jigsaw puzzle table has become such a hit that booking slots may soon be needed!

Fridays bring a relaxed, family-friendly buzz, with free-play LEGO and DUPLO sessions alongside Storytime. Meanwhile, puzzles, word searches, colouring activities and our well-used Games Shelf ensure there's always something available for visitors of all ages, every day.

We greatly value our ongoing connection with the Portumna Hub branch of Ability West, whose weekly visits bring a wonderful sense of routine, inclusion and enjoyment to the library.

Demand for our print services remains strong, continuing to draw in new users and broadening the reach of the library within the community.

Above all, Portumna Library continues to stand as a vibrant, free, and open space for everyone—a place to gather, participate, connect, or simply take a moment. No appointment needed—just drop in and make it your own.

TUAM LIBRARY

Tuam Library continued to be a vibrant, welcoming hub of activity throughout the month, with a rich and varied programme catering to all ages and interests. The library's regular events formed the backbone of this activity, creating a reassuring sense of continuity and community. Each week, the space was filled with the sounds of laughter and music during baby and toddler rhyme times, where parents and carers gathered with their little ones to enjoy songs, rhythm, and early language development in a warm, sociable setting. Storytime sessions also proved as popular as ever, drawing in young listeners eager to be transported into the world of books.

For adult users, the library offered equally engaging opportunities to connect and create. Craft sessions provided a relaxed and creative outlet, encouraging participants to explore new skills while enjoying conversation and camaraderie. Saturdays brought an added sense of energy, with Lego free play sessions giving children a chance to build, imagine, and collaborate in a fun and informal environment.

Reading remained at the heart of the library's work, with two adult book clubs and a young adult group meeting regularly. These gatherings fostered lively discussion, shared insights, and a strong sense of belonging among members. Meanwhile, the library continued to support wider community wellbeing through initiatives such as the monthly breastfeeding support group, facilitated by the Tuam public health nurse. This important service offered guidance, reassurance, and peer support to new parents in a trusted and accessible setting.

Engagement with the education sector also remained strong, as local primary and secondary schools continued to visit the library. These visits played a key role in promoting literacy, encouraging a love of reading, and familiarising students with the resources available to them. Beyond the library walls, outreach efforts were sustained through the dedicated work of Margaret Garvey, who ensured that housebound patrons remained connected to library services by delivering books directly to their homes—an initiative that continues to be deeply valued by those who benefit from it.

In addition to these regular activities, the library's popular Soundbites event returned once again. This monthly gathering continues to offer an engaging cultural experience, bringing people together to enjoy and share in music, talks, or discussion in an informal and welcoming atmosphere.

A highlight of the month was the launch of the Acorn Tablets—innovative, age-friendly smart devices now available for borrowing by library members. The event marked an exciting step forward in the library's efforts to enhance digital inclusion. Representatives from GRETB and Galway County Council were present, underscoring the collaborative nature of the initiative and its importance in supporting older users to build confidence with technology. The launch not only introduced a valuable new resource but also showcased the library's ongoing commitment to evolving services in response to community needs.

WESTSIDE LIBRARY

May was another busy and highly productive month at Westside Library, marked by a diverse range of events, strong community engagement, and continued development of partnerships. Programming throughout the month reflected the library's commitment to inclusivity, creativity, and social awareness.



We currently host 14 established weekly and monthly events and community groups. Amongst these is the weekly Empathy Café and our monthly Irish language parent and child group, Grúpa Tuismitheoirí agus Leanaí, led by Julie Anne De Brún. These initiatives continue to strengthen the library's role as a vital community hub.

Our online literacy resources are thriving, with 300 Nessy licenses actively used by both in-school and home-educated students.

GRÚPA TUISMITHEOIRÍ AGUS LEANAÍ LE JULIE ANNE DE BRÚN

In the lead up to Cruinniú na nÓg our programming was designed to actively engage young people in creative expression, with two complementary initiatives that reinforced one another.

The **"Theatre of Emotions" workshops**, delivered by Anna Rozanska-Batra, gave participants a space to explore feelings and ideas through art and drama, building confidence and encouraging self-expression.





THEATRE OF EMOTIONS WORKSHOP WITH ANNA ROZANSKA-BATRA

This focus on voice and storytelling was extended through Westside Library's **"Letters of Imagination" Campaign, Creative Letters Initiative for Young Voices (CLIYV)**

Westside Library facilitated the Letters of Imagination Campaign encouraging children and young people to express ideas through letter-writing—exploring future selves, global issues, and imaginative storytelling, with decorated submissions collected and dropped into our library as part of this national initiative, supported by Creative Ireland and Galway City Council.



LETTERS OF IMAGINATION POSTBOX FOR CRINNIÚ NA NÓG

We welcomed 1st Class, Scoil Bhríde, Shantalla, who participated in an engaging and playful storytime session.



STAFF MEMBER JOAN EARLEY WITH AN ENGAGED GROUP OF FIRST-CLASS PUPILS



We also hosted a bake sale by a member of our community in support of Jigsaw – National Centre for Youth Mental Health. The successful bake sale event encouraged community participation while raising funds for an important cause.



Featured book displays marked important dates in the Science-Fiction and Fantasy book community. May 4th also known as Star Wars Day, and the Glorious 25th of May celebrating Terry Patchett and his novel 'Night Watch'.

BOOK DISPLAY CELEBRATING STAR WARS DAY



EXHIBITION TO CELEBRATE TERRY PRATCHETT AND THE GLORIOUS 25TH OF MAY

ENVIRONMENT

BURIAL GROUNDS

BURIAL GROUND CAPITAL DEVELOPMENTS

Part 8 Planning applications were submitted in May for an extension to the burial grounds in Tynagh and for the development of a dedicated area for Muslim burials adjacent to the burial grounds in Tuam.





PART 8 PLANNING NOTICES IN PLACE AT TYNAGH AND TUAM

Site Investigation works were completed by Causeway Geotech Ltd in Rinville, Oranmore, to assess ground conditions for the development of an access road to the proposed extension to the burial ground. A series of rotary cores, trial pits, plate bearing tests and material samples for analysis were undertaken. Roadplan Consulting have been appointed as the road designers for the project.



SITE INVESTIGATION WORKS, RINVILLE BURIAL GROUND, ORANMORE

DOG CONTROL

PROMOTION OF RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERSHIP

665 dog licences were purchased during the month of May, 456 of which were purchased in the local post office. 3,802 licences have been purchased year to date, a 2% increase on licences purchased at the same stage last year. Our dog warden service carried out responsible dog ownership campaigns in estates in Tuam and Portumna towns during the month of May.

DOG CONTROL & ENFORCEMENT

5 fixed penalty notices were issued by the Council's dog warden service during the month of May. 25 fixed penalty notices have been issued year to date by the dog wardens, with 3 paid in full, 6 partially paid through agreed payment plans with files sent to the law agents to initiate legal proceedings in respect of 4 unpaid fixed penalty notices. The remainder of the notices issued are being processed through the system.

Galway County Council dog warden service attended Tuam District Court on 12th May 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 adjourned for finalisation on the 9th June next.

DOG SHELTER

Six dogs came through the Council's dog warden shelter during the month of May.

ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING & ENFORCEMENT

AIR / NOISE POLLUTION MONITORING & ENFORCEMENT

One air complaint was investigated in May, this related to reports of nuisance smoke however following a site inspection it was found that there were no breaches of any

legislation. One noise complaint was investigated relating to a nuisance crow banger. In this case, the farmer was contacted and the device was turned off.

LITTER ENFORCEMENT

Twelve fines were issued by the Council's Community Warden service for offences under the Litter Pollution Act during the month of May. Sixty fines under the Act have been issued year to date with 25 paid in full, 10 referred to the law agent to initiate legal proceedings and a further 20 still being processed through the system.

WASTE ENFORCEMENT

Inspections and auditing continued throughout May in accordance with the waste monitoring program. Staff attended online EPA training relating to the development of guidance on how to deal with brownfield soil and stone by product material.

ANTI-DUMPING INITIATIVE 2026

Funding has been approved for 6 projects this year totalling €108,000. The type of projects that were eligible was limited specifically to anti-dumping and clean-up projects whereas in the past, we also ran several projects related to reuse and the circular economy.

Project No.	Project Title	Total Amount Requested	Total Amount Approved
1	Bully goods collections	€25,000.00	€25,000.00
2	Bulky goods collection Inishbofin	€5,000.00	€5,000.00
3	MyGug community biodigester	€25,000.00	€25,000.00
4	CCTV project	€40,000.00	€40,000.00
5	Awareness re Unauthorised collectors	€10,000.00	€10,000.00
6	Removal of boat	€3,000.00	€3,000.00
Totals		**€108,000.00**	**€108,000.00**

BATHING WATERS & WATER SAFETY

MONITORING OF BATHING WATERS

Galway County Council was delighted to retain its 8 Blue Flag Awards and 8 Green Coast Awards for 2026, which were announced at an Awards Ceremony in Cork on 15th May 2026.

The Blue Flag beaches and bathing areas for 2026 are Long Point Loughrea, Portumna Bathing Area, Traught beach Kinvara, Céibh an Spidéil, An Trá Mhór, Indreabhán, Trá an Dóilín, An Cheathrú Rua, Trá Chill Mhuirbhigh, Inis Mór and An Trá Inis Oirr. The Green Coast Awards, which incorporate the work of local Clean Coast Groups, have been granted for An

Trá Inis Oirr and Trá Poll na gCaorach on Inis Oírr, East End and Dumhach on Inishbofin, Aillebrack Ballyconneely and Renvyle Beach Tully. Special congratulations to An Trá Inis Oírr which is one of only 12 beaches nationally to have dual award status, by winning both a Blue Flag and Green Coast Award.

PICTURED AT THE AWARD CEREMONY IN CORK ARE MAEVE WALSH FÁILTE IRELAND, MOIRA MURRELL CHIEF EXECUTIVE CORK COUNTY COUNCIL, ANN DOLAN GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL, CLLR. MARY LINEHAN FOLEY MAYOR OF CORK CITY, AND TRACEY LYDON AN TAISCE.



BEACH LIFEGUARDING

The 2026 bathing season for Galway County and Galway City will officially commence on 1 June, operating through to the second weekend in September. Lifeguard services will be in place across 16 designated bathing areas, comprising 10 locations within County Galway and 6 within Galway City. All Beach Lifeguards have now completed induction training and been issued with full uniforms and equipment in readiness for the opening day of the bathing season. Lifeguarded hours of 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. will apply to all bathing areas on a weekend basis throughout June, with daily service to be introduced at the busiest bathing areas for the latter 2 weeks of June.

WATER SAFETY

In advance of the June Bank Holiday Weekend and the commencement of the bathing season, Galway County Council issued an advisory on water safety in partnership with Water Safety Ireland, the Irish Coast Guard, and the RNLI. This public information campaign has been rolled out countrywide reminding people that while air temperatures may feel warm, water temperatures remain dangerously cold and to exercise caution and follow basic water safety advice by entering the water slowly and allowing their bodies time to adjust to the

cold temperature. People were also reminded that if they see anyone in difficulty on the water or along the coast, they should use marine VHF Channel 16 or dial 112 and ask for the Coast Guard.

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS & EDUCATION

ANTI-LITTER POSTER COMPETITION 2026

Students from across County Galway took part in this year's Galway County Council Anti-Litter Poster Competition, which is an annual environmental initiative to raise awareness and enable children to have an active role in the fight against litter pollution.

A total of 1,524 entries were submitted by primary and secondary school students and following an exhaustive judging process, 55 winners were presented with their Awards by the Cathaoirleach of Galway County Council, Cllr. David Collins, at a special awards ceremony.

Students were asked to design an anti-litter poster to address one of the main littering problems experienced in County Galway, and the winners of each of these individual categories were:

Stop Littering our Towns and Villages:	Molly Finn of Kiltartan N.S.
Stop Littering our Roadsides:	Patrick Canavan of Claddaghduff N.S.
Stop Littering our Beaches:	Kateryna Rudenko of Scoil Chuimín agus Caitríona Uachtar Ard
Cigarette-Related Litter:	Wiktoria Ozga of Coláiste Mhuire Ballygar
Dog Fouling:	Maeve Walsh of High Cross College Tuam
Bin Your Gum when You're Done:	Rosaleen Dinneen of Coláiste Ghobnait Inis Oírr

Cllr. David Collins, Cathaoirleach of the County, praised the standard of entries and the huge level of creativity in delivering these strong environmental messages. The Cathaoirleach and staff from the Environment Department welcomed these important messages delivered by our young people to protect our environment and take pride in our towns, villages, and countrywide. The Environment Department hope to utilise the winning posters to deliver targeted messaging throughout the year through social media, newspapers, and local Tidy Towns Groups.

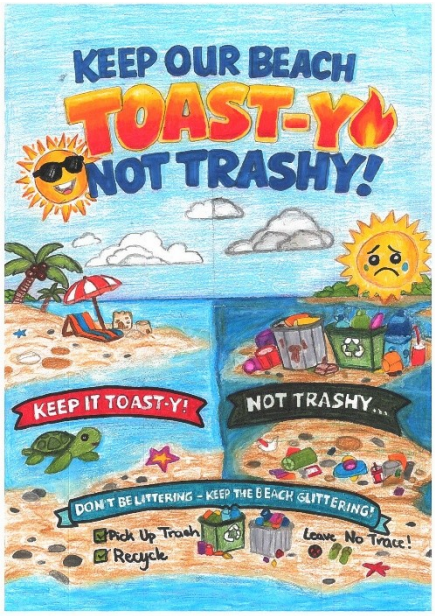
The **Overall Winner for Primary Schools** was Zosia Wojdała from 5th Class in Scoil Chuimín agus Caitríona Uachtar Ard, for her catchy and educational poster highlighting that almost 40% of littering is caused by passing motorists.



OVERALL PRIMARY SCHOOL WINNER: ZOSIA WOJDALA, 5TH CLASS, SCOIL CHUIMÍN AGUS CAITRÍONA UACHTAR ARD

PRIZE WINNERS ACROSS ALL THE AGE CATEGORIES AND THEMATIC CATEGORY RECEIVING THEIR AWARDS FROM CLLR. DAVID COLLINS, CATHAOIRLEACH.





The Overall Winner for Secondary Schools went to Liliana Staniak from 2nd year in Coláiste Mhuire Ballygar whose poster targeted beaches with the catchy slogan of “Keep our Beach Toasty, Not Trashy”.

OVERALL SECONDARY SCHOOL WINNER: LILIANA STANIAK FROM 2ND YEAR IN COLÁISTE MHUIRE BALLYGAR

ECO-UNESCO ENVIORNMETALIST AWARDS 2026

Colaiste Cholmcille Indreabhán, Clarin College Athenry and Colaiste Bhaile Chláir showcased their environmental projects at the Eco-Unesco



Environmentalist awards 2026 in the RDS Dublin on the 12th May.

KINVARA TIDY TOWNS MEITHEAL DAY



Galway County Council Environmental Awareness Officer attended the Kinvara Tidy Towns Meitheal day which consisted of a cleanup, planting, painting, information stands and a social outing in the community. Kinvara Tidy Towns group reiterate their support for the Anti-Litter Ambassador programme.

WASTE MANAGEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE

GORT CIVIC AMENITY SITE

Works commenced in April on the Council's new Civic Amenity Site on the Kinincha Road, Gort. Kenny Civils & Plant Limited have been appointed as the main Contractor and Fehily Timoney as the Employers Representative for the project. Construction is expected to be completed in Q3 this year with the facility forecasted to be operationally ready by end of this year.

WORKS IN PROGRESS
GORT CIVIC AMENITY SITE



HOUSING

HOMELESSNESS

Unfortunately, homelessness continues to rise, with 17,548 households nationally in homeless emergency accommodation in April 2026. Galway County Council is increasing the supply of emergency and supported accommodation in the County as all accommodation is currently at capacity. The type of additional temporary accommodation being developed is based on the presenting needs of the households seeking emergency accommodation.

Accommodation Type	Housing Applicant Type	Number of households in the emergency/temporary accommodation as at end of May 2026	Comment
Hostel – staffed 24/7	Single Male	6	Facility for Galway County and City applicants
Hostel – staffed 24/7	Single Female	3	Facility for Galway County and City applicants
Private Emergency Accommodation – B & Bs	Families	18	Joint Galway County and City service sourced, monitored and clients supported by COPE Galway
Community Based Housing – visiting NGO support	Single People in shared housing	25	13 properties in County Galway
Youth Housing – visiting NGO and after-care support	Single People aged 25 or under in shared housing	7	5 properties in County Galway
Housing First – tenancies with wrap around supports provided by NGO and relevant statutory agencies	Single People	20	20 properties in County Galway

It is apparent that client needs are increasing in complexity and the accommodation available in the County is not always suitable to meet these needs.

Proposals underway –

- 2 additional properties allocated to Community Based Housing
- Galway County Council is currently developing a site in Tuam to provide for 24/7 supported shared housing for persons with higher needs to enable them to develop the skillset required to sustain a tenancy.
- Cold Weather Response facility in Tuam (additional accommodation for rough sleepers for Winter period from October to March, funded by Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage)

- Provision of temporary housing for families exiting emergency domestic violence facilities wt.
- The development of a Family Hub in Ballinasloe is also under consideration, dependent on agreement and availability of funding from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
- The Council has requested expressions of interest for local hoteliers, B&B owners to expand the capacity of private emergency accommodation in the County and will continue to explore and assess any such proposals which are forthcoming.
- Sourcing of suitable property for persons requiring long-term supported accommodation.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Galway County Council is announcing the delivery of 3 Part V affordable homes at the An Móinéar Ard development in Kinvara. There will be 2 x 3 Bed Mid Terrace and 1 x 3 Bed End Terrace houses available. Applications will be accepted through an online portal, which will open on Friday, 12th June 2026 at 10:00am. The application window will remain open until Friday, 3rd July 2026 at 5:00pm. Further information on the An Móinéar Ard scheme, including the Scheme of Priority, link to the application form, and supporting documentation required is available on www.galway.ie/affordable.



AN ARTIST'S IMPRESSION OF THE AFFORDABLE HOUSES FOR SALE IN THE AN MÓINÉAR ARD DEVELOPMENT IN KINVARA.

HOUSING ALLOCATIONS REPORT 2025

HOUSING ALLOCATIONS REPORT 2025 – STATUTORY RETURN UNDER SECTION 22(12), HOUSING (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) ACT 2009

As Chief Executive, I wish to acknowledge that Galway County Council continues to face significant housing challenges, characterised by sustained demand, ongoing pressures within homelessness services, and constraints within the housing supply system. The increase in households presenting to emergency accommodation reflects broader national trends and reinforces the need for a continued, proactive response focused on prevention, timely allocation, and accelerating exits into secure tenancies.

Notwithstanding these challenges, there are strong grounds for confidence. Galway County Council is supported by an active development pipeline and a high level of engagement across the Council, Approved Housing Bodies, and delivery partners. While infrastructure and system constraints can affect the pace of delivery, there is a shared commitment to improving coordination and bringing forward housing schemes at greater scale and speed.

This report is prepared in accordance with **Section 22(12) of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009**, which requires the Chief Executive to submit to the Elected Members an annual statement of allocations made under the Council's Allocation Scheme, specifying the categories of dwellings and households and the proportion of each category. It provides a detailed account of allocations completed during 2025 and situates this activity within the broader context of housing demand, supply constraints, and ongoing delivery across County Galway.

Housing delivery remains a central priority for the Council, with a robust programme of new build, acquisition, and partnership delivery underway across social, affordable, and cost rental housing. This approach is ensuring a steady flow of new homes, while also targeting supports towards those in greatest need, including households experiencing homelessness and those with medical or disability related requirements. The progress made to date, together with the strength of the current pipeline, provides a positive foundation for continued delivery and improved outcomes for households across County Galway.

SOCIAL HOUSING ALLOCATIONS TO LA AND AHB HOUSING PROPERTIES

Galway County Council Allocations 2025	Beds						
Basis of Need	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**Total**
Requires Rent Supplement to provide for accommodation needs	11	37	49	3			100
Homeless, Institution, Emergency Accommodation or Hostel	13	25	25	3			66
Disability requirement - mental health	9	7	8				24
Disability requirement - physical	7	11	2	2			22
Involuntary Sharing	3	9	2				14
Concluded that Mortgage is unsustainable		1	5	7	1		14
Disability requirement - intellectual	3		4		5	1	13
Unfit	2	5		4			11
Exceptional Medical or Compassionate Grounds		8	1		1		10
Overcrowded			1	2			3
Financial	1	1	1				3
Unsuitable - Particular Household Circumstances	1	1					2
Disability requirement - sensory		1	1				2
Disability - unspecified		1					1
Med or Comp		1					1
Total	**50**	**108**	**99**	**21**	**7**	**1**	**286**

A total of 286 allocations were completed across the administrative area during 2025. When analysed by bedroom requirement, the profile of allocations aligns closely with demand, with a strong concentration in 2- and 3-bedroom accommodation, while continuing to meet a consistent level of need for 1-bedroom units. It is important to note that 2-bedroom allocations (108 units) are drawn from both the 1 and 2-bedroom waiting lists and therefore form part of the Council's response to combined smaller household demand.

In overall terms, 1- and 2-bedroom allocations total 158 units (50 one bed and 108 two bed), representing the largest share of delivery and supporting single applicants, couples, and smaller households, including those exiting homelessness or supported accommodation. Three-bedroom homes accounted for 99 allocations, continuing to represent the core provision for family households. Larger family accommodation comprised a smaller but important element of delivery, including 21 four-bedroom homes, together with 8 allocations across five- and six-bedroom units, reflecting both the limited availability of such stock and the targeted allocation of larger homes.

The underlying basis of need remains consistent across all bedroom categories, with allocations predominantly driven by acute housing pressures. In particular, 100 households were previously supported through rent supplement/HAP, while 66 households were accommodated from homeless services, institutions, emergency accommodation or hostels, demonstrating the continued prioritisation of exits from homelessness across all unit sizes.

From a medical and vulnerability perspective, housing need arising from disability continues to feature strongly, including 24 allocations on mental health grounds and 22 on physical disability grounds, alongside allocations relating to intellectual, sensory, and unspecified disability. There were also 14 households accommodated due to involuntary sharing, and a further 14 cases where mortgages were deemed unsustainable, requiring social housing intervention. Additional allocations arose from unfit accommodation (11 cases), as well as overcrowding, exceptional medical or compassionate grounds, financial hardship, and unsuitable household circumstances.

At smaller household level, the combined 1- and 2-bedroom provision (158 units) demonstrates a flexible response to need, with 2-bedroom homes also supporting households qualified for 1 bedroom accommodation where appropriate. The 3-bedroom category (99 units) remains essential to meeting the needs of families with children and those experiencing overcrowding or unsuitable living conditions, while larger units continue to be allocated on a targeted basis to address specific family requirements.

APPROVED HOUSEHOLDS BY AREA OF CHOICE & PROPERTY SIZE

AREA OF CHOICE	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5 Bed	6 Bed	Total
Athenry and Environs	235	58	161	24	6	0	484
Oranmore/Claregalway	204	57	153	23	2	0	439
Tuam	129	34	154	31	5	1	354
Loughrea and Environs	122	28	83	8	5	0	246
Ballinasloe South	90	43	60	11	2	3	209
Connemara Central	94	30	71	7	0	0	202
Ballinasloe North	84	21	80	13	0	0	198
Gort and Environs	90	24	68	8	1	0	191
Portumna and Environs	58	14	43	11	1	0	127
Headford	47	12	32	9	0	0	100
Connemara South-East	52	17	16	2	0	0	87
Connemara North-West	32	8	40	4	0	0	84
Galway North	35	8	35	2	1	0	81
Connemara South-West	35	10	23	2	2	0	72
Galway North-East	27	10	26	6	1	0	70
Connemara Islands	7	1	8	0	0	0	16
Connemara	2	0	1	0	0	0	3
	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	**1344**	**375**	**1054**	**161**	**26**	**4**	**2964**

The current social housing demand profile highlights a significant and sustained level of need across the county, with a total of 2,964 approved households awaiting accommodation. When analysed in line with standard reporting practice, combined demand for 1- and 2-bedroom accommodation is notably high at 1,719 households, reflecting a substantial requirement from single person households, older persons, and smaller household types. Demand for family accommodation also remains strong, with 1,054 households requiring 3-bedroom homes, while need for larger properties is more limited in volume, comprising 191 households across 4 bedroom and larger categories.

Geographically, demand is most concentrated in key growth areas, including Athenry and Environs (484 households) and Oranmore/Baile Chláir (439 households), followed by Tuam (354 households) and Loughrea and Environs (246 households). However, there is also a consistent spread of demand across Ballinasloe, Connemara, and rural districts, demonstrating that housing need is both significant and county wide. Overall, the demand profile equates to approximately 58% for 1- and 2-bedroom need, 36% for 3-bedroom need, and 6% for 4 bedroom and larger households, reinforcing the requirement for a delivery programme that prioritises smaller units while maintaining a strong and consistent supply of family sized homes.

Galway County Council currently manages an LA housing stock of 3,121 units, of which 3,036 are occupied and 85 are vacant, resulting in an overall vacancy rate of 2.72%, marginally above the national benchmark of 2%. This variance equates to approximately 23 units and is

influenced by a combination of operational and structural factors rather than day to day void management performance.

In operational terms, performance remains strong. The Council is currently achieving the national void turnaround target of 18 weeks, with standard reletting activity (including units requiring minor works) averaging 17.27 weeks. A proportion of vacant units are at various stages of re letting, including 20 units available for allocation and 29 units undergoing minor repairs.

The primary impact on vacancy levels arises from a relatively small number of complex cases. This includes 6 units requiring major refurbishment, most of which involve exceptional circumstances such as fire damage, storm damage, or legal issues, and 30 units classified as derelict. These derelict properties are not part of the active letting stock and are progressing through longer term programmes, including sale and regeneration, but nonetheless have a disproportionate impact on headline vacancy figures. When completed, the average turnaround target will result in this council exceeding the National target.

When these structurally constrained units are excluded, the Council's effective vacancy rate reduces to 1.76%, which is below the national target. This confirms that, from an operational perspective, the Council is performing in line with national expectations, with the reported variance attributable primarily to legacy housing stock requiring redevelopment or disposal rather than delays in standard re letting activity.

Overall, the position demonstrates that housing stock is being actively managed, with strong turnaround performance and a clear programme in place to address more complex vacant units through regeneration and other structural interventions.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Galway County Council continues to operate within a challenging housing environment characterised by sustained demand, pressures within homelessness services, and constraints in supply. Notwithstanding these pressures, the data demonstrates a clear and structured response by the Council, with 286 allocations delivered in 2025, targeted towards those in greatest need, including households exiting homelessness and those with medical or social vulnerabilities.

The allocation profile reflects a balanced and needs based approach, with a strong focus on 1- and 2-bedroom provision (158 allocations) to address smaller household demand, alongside consistent allocation of 3-bedroom homes (99 allocations) to support family housing needs. This aligns closely with the current demand profile, where the majority of households require smaller units, while maintaining the capacity to respond to larger family requirements where necessary.

Demand remains significant, with 2,964 households on the waiting list, and a clear concentration of need in both smaller household accommodation and family housing across all areas of the county. At the same time, the Council's housing stock is being actively

managed, with void turnaround performance meeting national targets and an effective vacancy rate below the benchmark when structurally constrained units are excluded. This evidences strong operational performance, notwithstanding the impact of legacy derelict stock on headline figures.

Overall, the position reflects a housing system that is functioning effectively within existing constraints, supported by an active delivery pipeline and ongoing investment. The combination of targeted allocations, strong stock management, and continued expansion of supply provides a solid foundation to improve outcomes, sustain exits from homelessness, and respond to the evolving housing needs of communities across County Galway.

TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION PROGRAMME

Galway County Council launched a video focusing on Fire Safety at Halting Sites on 08th June 2026.

This educational resource was an initiative of the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee. It delivered an important reminder regarding the importance of fire safety awareness for occupants of caravans and mobile homes on our halting sites.



It was produced with the collaboration of the Housing Unit in Galway County Council, Galway Fire and Rescue Service and the Traveller representative organisations - Brú Bríde and Galway Traveller Movement and was funded by the Dormant Accounts Fund. It will be circulated through the social media channels in Galway County Council and the Traveller representative organisations.

LAUNCH OF FIRE SAFETY AT HALTING SITES VIDEO



TENANT PURCHASE SCHEME

This is a scheme that allows local authority tenants to buy their homes. If you are a local authority tenant living in a local authority house, that is available for sale under the scheme and you meet the eligibility criteria, you can apply to purchase your house.

The Tenant (Incremental) Purchase Scheme 2016 was introduced under the Housing (Sale of Local Authority Houses) Regulations 2015 as amended. The rules of the scheme were updated in 2023 by the Housing (Sale of Local Authority Houses) (Amendment) Regulations 2023.

The eligibility criteria for the Tenant (Incremental) Purchase Scheme 2016 changed on the 29th of January 2024. The minimum reckonable income amount has reduced from €12,500 to €11,000. The length of time you must be in receipt of social housing supports remains at 10 years. In the case of joint tenancies, only one tenant must be in receipt of social housing supports for 10 years.

Activity Summary for the Tenant Purchase Scheme for 2026 to date:

- 14 new applications have been received to date in 2026
- 8 offers have been issued
- 9 offers have been accepted (some offers issued in late 2025 were accepted by tenants during 2026 and are therefore included in this year's acceptance figures)
- 5 sales have been completed.

ACTIVE APPLICATIONS SUMMARY:

There is a strong pipeline of cases currently progressing through various stages:

- 13 cases are with legal for final documentation
- 8 properties have completed valuation
- 4 offers are currently being prepared
- 3 cases are under review with the technical team
- 2 cases are being prepared for submission to the law agent

OTHER RELATED ACTIVITY INCLUDES:

- 11 applications have been closed
- 2 Housing Loan (HL) forms have been issued
- 2 cases are currently at Housing Loan Officer stage
- 3 applications are awaiting Garda reports

The Tenant Purchase Scheme continues to demonstrate steady demand with strong progression across all stages. A notable number of cases are at advanced stages in the process, indicating that further completions are likely in the near term.

LOCAL AUTHORITY HOME LOANS

Housing Loans staff have successfully held an information session in Loughrea in June and have another scheduled in Tuam for July. These open days provide one-to-one guidance and clarity regarding 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 taken place in Portumna, Gort, Ballinasloe & Loughrea. All information sessions are advertised on social media, and all councillors are informed via email. There has been a marked decrease in the level of invalid applications since the information sessions began. 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 continue to increase awareness of the availability of the loan and reduce the number of invalid applications received.

HOUSING LOANS AND GRANTS INFORMATION SESSION - ÁRAS AN CHONTAE

VACANT HOMES

HOUSING PRACTITIONERS CONFERENCE

Breda Byrne, Staff Officer representing Galway County Council's Vacant Homes Unit,



attended the Housing Practitioners Conference in Wexford on 23rd April 2026 to present at a Workshop “Addressing Vacancy: Ireland’s Policy and Delivery Approach”. Breda was joined by Brenda Pierce, Assistant Principal Officer, Vacant Homes Unit Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage, David Quinn Senior Executive Planner, Waterford County Council, and the panel discussion was chaired by Paul Gallagher, Head of Property and Vacancy Services, Housing Agency. The Workshop was well attended and well received.

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 733 applications since the beginning of the scheme with 533 applications approved to a value in excess of 31 million euros, a further 40 applications are in progress with the balance having been withdrawn or rejected due to ineligibility for the scheme. 157 Vacant Property Refurbishment Grants, with a total value of €8,578,243.10 have been paid to applicants to date, representing a significant investment in local communities. Pictures below show a before and after photo of a property which has been brought back to use with the assistance of the Vacant Property Refurbishmet Grant.

HOUSING MAINTENANCE - DISABLED PERSONS GRANTS, LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSES

The housing adaptation grant for people with a disability is available to assist in the carrying out of works, to Galway County Council owned properties, which are reasonably necessary for the purposes of rendering a property more suitable for the accommodation of a person with a disability. Eligible works include access ramps & rails, stairlifts, accessible bathroom facilities, wheelchair access adaptations and extensions.

Galway County Council completed 26 housing adaptations in 2025. It is expected that 25 properties will be upgraded in 2026, depending on the funding allocated.



HOUSE IN HEADFORD - EXTENSION & BATHROOM ADAPTATIONS COMPLETED IN 2025



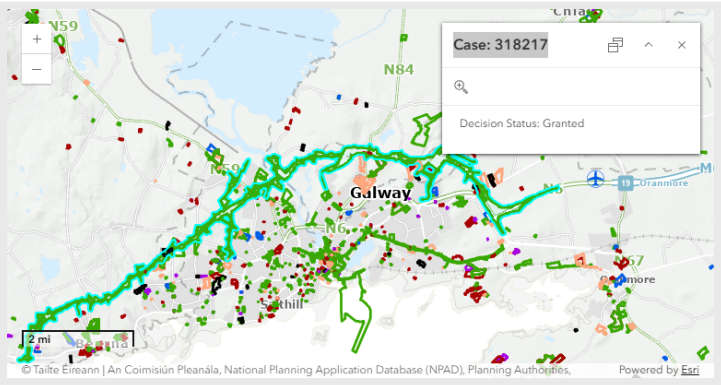


BEFORE & AFTER REFURBISHMENT



PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE, FIRE & EMERGENCY & CLIMATE CHANGE

The N6 Galway City Ring Road (N6 GCRR) was approved by An Coimisiún Pleanála on April 7th, 2026, with the decision formally published in local and national newspapers on April 23rd, 2026. The approval marks a major milestone for the 18 km orbital route, which is a core component of the Galway Transport Strategy and is included in the National Development Plan – Transport Sectoral Plan 2026–2030. The project is now entering its enabling phase, which involves active engagement with landowners. All residential homeowners impacted by the CPO were written to at the end of April, regarding engagement with National Roads Project Office (NRPO). Mid-May, all individuals and parties that had made submissions to An Coimisiún Pleanála, were written to, advising them of the approval decision. The team in the NRPO are currently working on issuing the Notice of Operative Date for the Scheme, to all (>1,550) affected persons/parties who have a property interest on lands which are the subject of the CPO. It is expected that these notices will issue during the week beginning 15th June 2026.



Description	N6 Galway City Ring Road Motorway Scheme 2018 and Protected Road Scheme 2018

Source: *https://www.pleanala.ie/en-ie/case/318217*

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	2
Estates pending Ratification of Minutes	0
Estates for consideration at next MD meeting	0
Bond Release (Estates not Taken in Charge)	0
Total	**2**

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

Applications received	6
Estates – advertised for Taking in Charge	2
Estates – Works Complete	2

Estates – TIC Led Estates – Works in Hand	33
Estates – Developer led Estates	34
Bond Claims	4

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

ACTIVE TRAVEL

ORANMORE TO TRAIN STATION ACTIVE TRAVEL SCHEME

Section 38 Consultation completed. Consultants preparing Section 38 Report.

BALLINASLOE ACTIVE TRAVEL SCHEME

- 13th May in-person project update presentation to Elected Members in Ballinasloe Chamber ahead of completion of Planning Report. Planning Report under review.
- Submitted EU JTF START Funding application for the Construction of the scheme, circa €4.7M value.
- Tender Process for Appointment of designer for Detail Design ongoing. Consultant Tenders received 21st May. Tender Assessment scheduled for early June.

PEDESTRIAN CROSSING IN PORTUMNA

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

ATHENRY ACTIVE TRAVEL SCHEME

Preparing for non-statutory consultation on Emerging Preferred Option approved by the NTA. Presentation to Elected Members will be organised ahead of Public Consultation.

HEADFORD ACTIVE TRAVEL SCHEME

Headford Active travel in phase 6. Award letter issued to contractor.

LOUGHREA ACTIVE TRAVEL SCHEME

Option Selection Report and Emerging Preferred Option, Phase 2 completed by the Designers and under review by Galway County Council.

KINVARA PEDESTRIAN CROSSING



Feasibility and Options Report for Kinvara 1 Crossing submitted to TII for approval. Kinvara 2 Crossing progressing for submission early June.

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

R1 SRTS

SCOIL ÍOSA, ORANMORE

Construction works are progressing on site – works are 95% complete.





CALASANCTIUS COLLEGE & GAELSCOIL DE HIDE

Verbally agreed with the NTA to proceed with both Schools simultaneously. Both have been sent for PRS approval.

SCOIL CHROI NAOFA, ATHENRY

Phase 5 detailed design has commenced.

R2 SRTS

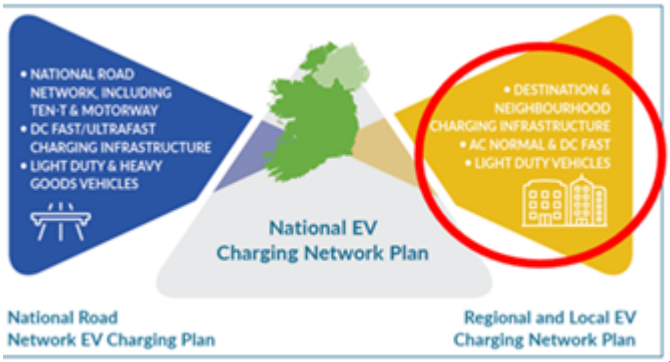
SCOIL NA BHFORBACHA

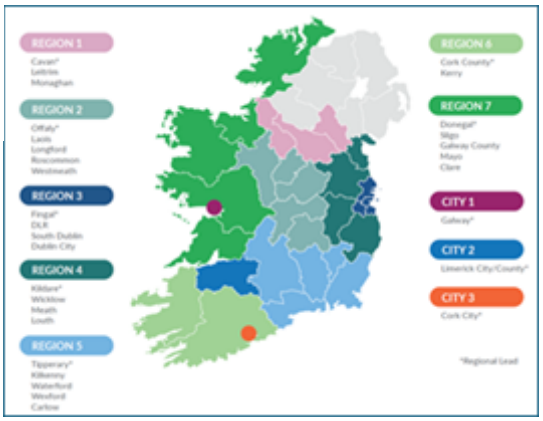
Tender for construction advertised with closing date 12th June 2026.

GORT COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Detailed design has commenced.

EV CHARGING INFRASTRUCTURE (ZEVI)







Zero Emissions Vehicles Ireland (ZEVI) was set up in 2022 to develop and roll out Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure across Ireland. This will include installation of new public EV charging hubs and the upgrading of existing EV charger locations. ZEVI is currently part of the Department of Transport and is now being managed under the umbrella of Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII).

A National Audit of Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure across all Local Authorities areas has now actively started. Each EV Charging Hub/Station in County Galway is being verified on site by LA personnel, photographed and technical details (such as power output, connector type) are being recorded. A Mobile Phone App has been developed by ZEVI to enable Local Authorities to capture this data real-time during a site visit following which the data is then uploaded to a TII Asset Management System (AMS). It is intended that this data collection/audit will be completed mid Jul 2026. This data repository, and its subsequent analysis, will lead and drive all future strategies and plans to enable specific, efficient and timely delivery of EV Charging Infrastructure across the County.

Any Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure queries for County Galway can be emailed to ZEVI@galwaycoco.ie.

A desktop survey to identify suitable sites for installation of EV Charging Infrastructure across Galway County is now currently underway. ZEVI has issued a Site Selection Guidelines document against which potential locations across the 5 MDs will be identified. The locations will be assessed against various criteria such as land availability, power grid capacity, accessibility to amenities, availability to the public, etc and a project plan for EV Charging Infrastructure installations will be developed from this. It is intended that projects will be delivered on a phased basis between now and 2030.

Work continues to progress on a proposed Pilot EV Charging Scheme for Oughterard, Co. Galway. While the scheme has been provisionally approved by ZEVI, work is continuing to get it to the next phase of the project. An application for a power connection and screening assessment has been made to ESB Networks. Procurement is underway to engage the services of a suitable environmental consultant to complete the required environmental assessments and reports (AA/EIA). Additionally, the services of a legal firm is required to develop the contracts necessary for Galway County Council to actively partner with existing EV Charge Point Operators to deliver/maintain/operate an EV Charging hub in the most economically manner possible.

Galway County Council ZEVI staff continue to actively engage regionally and nationally with the other ZEVI Region 7 counties (Donegal, Sligo, Mayo and Clare); the TII national ZEVI team; ZEVI Stakeholder Forum; transportation consultant teams; local elected members; ESB: Failte Ireland, and other relevant stakeholders.

FIRE & EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

OPERATIONS

The new rescue boat for the Salmon Weir is currently undergoing sea trials and is scheduled for delivery in early July. Agreement has been reached with the OPW for permission to moor

the new operationally ready rescue boat at the Salmon Weir (cost to be borne by Galway City Council). Tenders have been received for ancillary equipment and training, both of which will be externally funded. Costs will be presented for agreement at the next City Water Safety Group meeting at City Hall in mid-June 2026.



NEW RESCUE BOAT - SAMON WEIR

NEW HAZARDOUS MATERIALS UNIT

The new hazardous materials (HAZMAT) unit has been completed at Sidhean Teo in An Spidéal. Fitting of our existing HAZMAT equipment is scheduled for mid-June 2026. This includes a review of current equipment.



NEW HAZARDOUS MATERIALS UNIT

ROSENBAUER RM35 ROV



It is expected that new equipment including decontamination fluids will go to tender in early July 2026. The unit will include a remotely operated vehicle (ROV) for remote firefighting at high-hazard acetylene and other gas incidents. Training for the ROV deployment has commenced and will be completed by end of June 2026.

LOUGHREA FIRE STATION

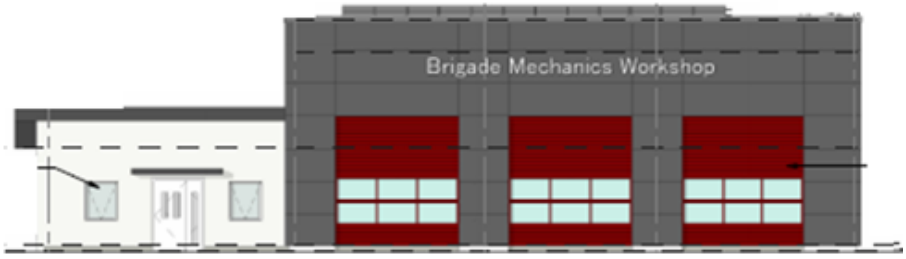
The tender evaluation report for the appointment of the main contractor was delayed due to the requirement for tender submission clarifications. The finalised report is now expected from the design team by mid-June 2026. On receipt, permission to proceed to the construction stage will be sought from the NDFEM. It is hoped to appoint the Main Contractor in early July 2026.



PROPOSED NEW FIRE STATION LOUGHREA

BRIGADE MECHANICS WORKSHOP ATHENRY

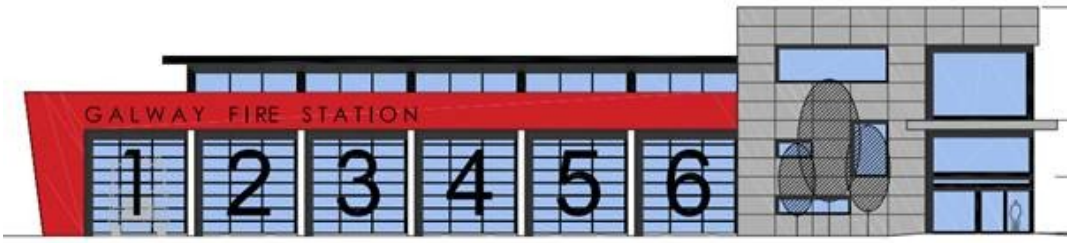
The Part 8 planning application is expected to be submitted in early June 2026.



PROPOSED NEW BRIGADE MECHANICS WORKSHOP ATHENRY

HEADQUARTERS AND GALWAY CITY FIRE STATION

Permission for the appointment of a design team for the development of preliminary design proposals was received from the NDFEM. The strategic flood risk assessment report required for the variation of the City Development Plan has been finalised to the satisfaction of the City Council Planning Section. It is anticipated that this variation will go forward for public consultation in July 2026, with a decision expected by Galway City Council in September 2026. Assuming the variation is successful the design team will be appointed. The process of appointing the design team has commenced.



PROPOSED NEW HEADQUARTERS AND CENTRAL FIRE STATION GALWAY CITY (INDICATIVE ONLY)

CIVIL DEFENCE

ACTIVITIES

Units provided medical/first aid cover at various events across the city and county in support of their communities each weekend. This included seven Darkness into Light walks in aid of Pieta House, Galway Bike Safety Week, Galway City Schools Sports Day, and Galway v Kildare at Pearse Stadium.

Medical/first aid cover was also provided at the Kilconly Wild West Festival over two weekends.

Medical/first aid cover was further provided at the Famine Commemoration held in Portumna by Galway County Council.

A presentation marking 75 years of Civil Defence, along with Long Service Awards for volunteers, was held at the Loughrea Hotel. A number of rank promotions were also made within the county. The awards were presented by the Cathaoirleach Cllr David Collins; Mr Niall O' Muircheartaigh, Assistant Principal Officer, Civil Defence Branch; and Mr. Gerry O'Malley, Chief Fire Officer. Seventy volunteers attended the event.

TRAINING

Three volunteers from Galway County units completed Advanced Powerboat training in Galway. This included night-time navigation exercises and assessments.

An additional three volunteers completed their Level 1 and 2 Powerboat training in Galway.

A CPC night was held for volunteers by one of our unit members, who is also a member of the Galway Diving Club. An insight was given into how to deal with dive incidents and the operation of the hyperbaric chamber at UHG.

FAR (First Aid Response) training has commenced for those requiring certification and for those who recently completed their CFR (Cardiac First Response).

CLIMATE CHANGE

COMMUNITY CLIMATE ACTION

MOUNT LUCAS RETROFITTING RIG

In May, the Climate Unit in conjunction with Mount Lucas Construction Training Campus, Údarás na Gaeltachta, and SEAI brought a fully equipped NZEB (Nearly Zero Energy Building) retrofit rig to Connemara for two weeks. A programme of free training, demonstrations and expert advice was delivered in both An Cheathrú Rua and Clifden. The initiative included accredited NZEB training for construction professionals, school programmes, and one-to-one energy clinics for homeowners and businesses. The aim was to enhance local awareness and capacity around retrofit solutions, supporting the transition to more energy-efficient buildings.



COMMUNITY CLIMATE ACTION FUND

The 1st round of the Community Climate Action Fund recently concluded with a flurry of projects completed including:

COMHAIRLE CEANTAR NA NOILEÁN

- Solar panels
- Bike stand
- Paint reuse project
- WEEE repair centre & tool library

KINVARA – KINVARA TIDY TOWNS

- Bike racks
- Biodiversity planting, composters & water butts
- Tool loan library & water refill station
- Support for keep cup campaign.





MAREE – MAREE COMMUNITY CENTRE

- Bike shelters
- Bike repair station
- Insulation
- Water refill stations



BALLYGAR TOWN - BALLYGAR & DISTRICTS CO.

- Solar panels
- Composters
- Water refill stations
- Biodiversity projects.

Building on the delivery of the 1st round of the fund, the Minister for Climate, Energy and the Environment announced in May that the 56 projects recommended by Galway County Council would be awarded funding with a total allocation of €858,575. This was the highest number of projects in the country. This funding will enable communities to continue delivering practical initiatives that reduce energy costs and emissions, enhance resilience and biodiversity, and promote sustainable practices in their local area.

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

COUNCIL PLANNING DATA

GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL PLANNING DATA

Key Statistics : 1st January – 31st May 2026	
Applications Received/Valid	1000/777 (78%)
Granted	637
Grant Rate	84%
Refused	119
Breakdown of Decisions Granted Outline (3)	
Permission (483)	
Retention (129)	
Permission Consequent (4)	
Extension of Duration (18)	
Percentage of applications received via Portal/Hardcopy	87%
Stage 1LRD	1
Stage 2 LRD	2
Major Meetings	5
SID Meetings	
Red III Applications	9

Key Statistics : 1st January – 31st May 2026	
Exempted Development Applications (under Section 5)	77
Exempt	39
Not Exempt	23
FI	5
Withdrawn	1

Decision Pending	5
Appealed	2

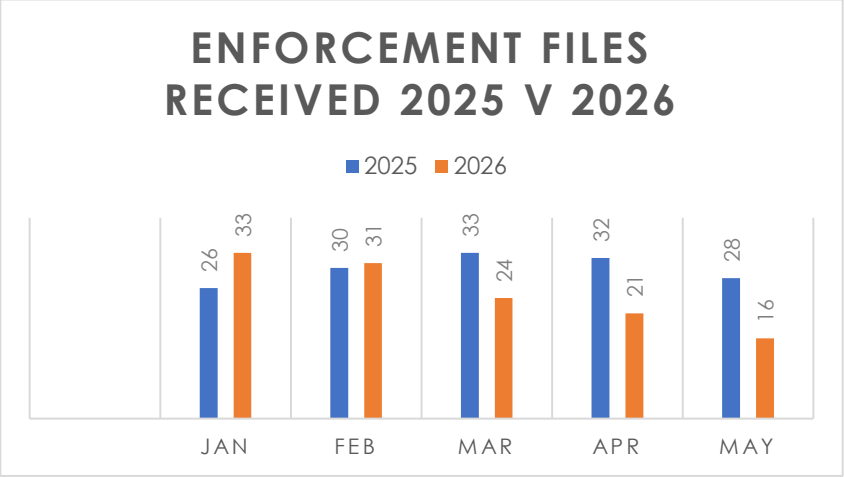
COMMENCEMENTS AND COMPLETIONS 1st JANUARY – 31st May 2026	
Submitted and Validated Commencement Notices	368
Submitted and Validated Certificates of Completion	58

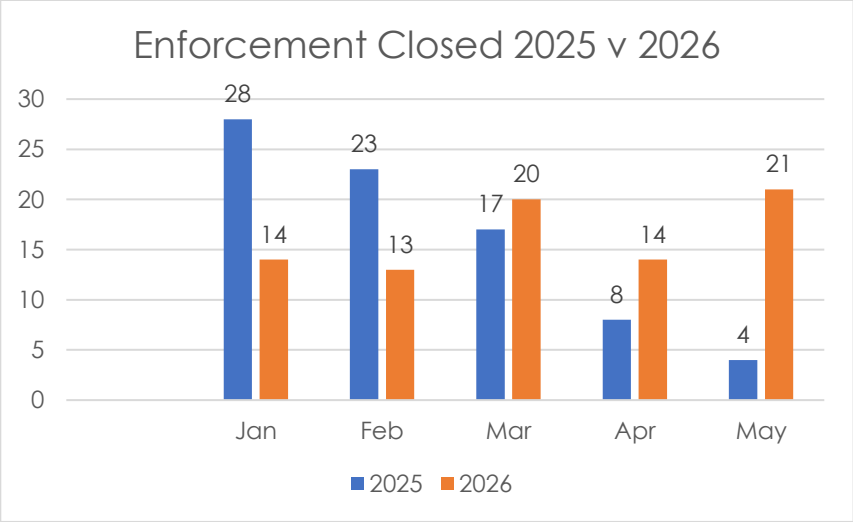
PLANNING MEETINGS BY MONTH 2026

PPM per MD per Month	January	February	March	April	May
Athenry/Oranmore	3	3	3	4	0
Ballinasloe	0	4	1	7	2
Connemara N & S	7	0	8	6	1
Loughrea	5	1	5	9	4
Tuam	2	0	2	7	1
Total per month	17	8	19	33	8

ENFORCEMENT

There are 34 cases listed for court hearing and mention to date in June





KEY PLANNING UPDATES

CDP MONITORING REPORT

Currently being prepared by Forward Planning Team.

MONITORING OF GALWAY COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2022-2028

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

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) have commenced at Oranmore Train Station.

Two funding applications were submitted by Forward Planning under the Town & Cities Regeneration Investment Fund (URDF Call 4) - **Category 1A** Preliminary Vehicular Access Design from R 446 to Garraun Lands & **Category 1B** Ecopark planning and construction. Applications are with Department for consideration, and no decision has been announced yet.

REGIONAL SPATIAL AND ECONOMIC STRATEGY

The review of the RSES commenced in March with the publication of the Pre Draft Consultation. As part of the pre-draft consultation, Forward Planning Policy Unit made a submission to the NWRA in May. The NWRA are currently preparing the Directors' Report on this initial consultation.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Joint SPC with City Council scheduled for 16th June where progress on the preparation of the Joint Economic Development Strategy will be provided. Drop-in session for all Elected Members of Galway City Council and Galway County Council is scheduled for 16th June from 11.30 – 1 pm.

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.

DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTIONS

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

CAHEROYN URBAN FRAMEWORK PLAN (ATHENRY)

Works progressing to deliver draft Caheroyn Urban Framework (Athenry). Discussions ongoing with Irish Rail regarding dis-used level crossing. Completion of Framework Plan expected in Q3.

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 is currently underway.

GREATER GALWAY FORUM

Meeting scheduled to take place in Aras an Chontae Council Chamber in June.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & ENTERPRISE

LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE GALWAY

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

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

TRAINING COURSES & PROGRAMMES

SHORT TRAINING COURSES

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

JUNE SCHEDULE:

2nd June	Intro to TikTok for Business
3rd June	API students visit (Council Chamber)
11th June	Phase 2 The Strategic Growth Program for Founders & Business Leaders 2025/2026
16th June	Implementation 2 (Idea To Impact)





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.

START YOUR OWN BUSINESS PROGRAMME (SYOB)

LEO Galway delivers regular Start Your Own Business (SYOB) programmes, each accommodating up to 16 participants. The current SYOB course consists of eight three-hour evening sessions, delivered via the Zoom platform, and is scheduled to conclude on 4th June. The topics covered are as follows:

- Business & Self Appraisal, Goal Setting, The Business Plan
- Legal Structures, Registration, Responsibilities, Records

- Record Keeping & Taxation continued, VAT & Cash Flow
- Marketing & the Business Plan, Research
- Market Research, Product and Promotion
- Market Research, Competition, Costing & Pricing,
- Networking, Marketing review, Leo Galway Guest, Funding and Supports.
- Personal Management, Going forward with your business plan

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.

IDEA TO IMPACT

This is A 'hands-on' immersive entrepreneurial program designed for entrepreneurs serious about starting their business, starting on May 12th. 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

NATIONAL ENTERPRISE AWARDS 2026



The National Enterprise Awards continue to celebrate excellence and innovation across Ireland's enterprise sector, providing a national platform to recognise outstanding local businesses. The black-tie gala event will take place in the Mansion House, Dublin on 18 June 2026, offering an important opportunity to showcase success stories and engage with senior stakeholders from across the country.

Galway will be represented by Celtic Dynamics Engineering Ltd, an energy and technical engineering consultancy. The company delivers comprehensive energy audits, sustainability services and specialist engineering support to commercial and industrial clients. Operating across more than 34 countries and supporting over 1,900 clients internationally, Celtic Dynamics helps organisations reduce energy consumption, lower operating costs and meet regulatory and ESG requirements through tailored, data-driven strategies.



The company continues to demonstrate strong growth and an expanding international footprint, highlighting the strength and potential of enterprise within Galway

WORKSHOP: OBJECTIVE SENSORY FOOD EVALUATION FOR SMES SUPPORTED BY LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE GALWAY

BIA Innovator Campus is delighted to host Objective Sensory Food Evaluation for SMEs, delivered by Oltmer Food Academy in partnership with Local Enterprise Office, Galway



Taking place onsite at BIA Innovator Campus, Athenry, Co. Galway, this introductory workshop will help food and drink businesses understand how to approach sensory food evaluation in a structured, objective, and repeatable way.

The session will cover:

- Foundations of Sensory Food Evaluation

- How to conduct objective evaluations
- Pathways to replicable results
- Evaluation methods and the benefits of digital recording

Monday, 22nd June 2026
BIA Innovator Campus, Athenry, Co. Galway
Free workshop — registration is essential

PAST EVENTS

API STUDENT VISIT



SHARON MCNELIS AND ARIANNA MCDONAGH, LEO GALWAY WITH STUDENTS FROM CLEMSON UNIVERSITY IN THE USA

On June 3rd, Sharon McNelis and Arianna McDonagh, LEO Galway, delivered a presentation to a group of students from Clemson University in the US who were visiting Ireland as part of a two-week programme themed “Management in Ireland.” During the session, the students were introduced to the role of the Local Enterprise Office and the wide range of support available to entrepreneurs and small businesses in Galway.

The presentation provided valuable insights into the local business landscape, including information on start-up assistance, mentoring, training programmes, and financial supports, giving the students a practical understanding of how enterprise development is fostered at a local level.

ITAG ATLANTEC AI CHALLENGE 2026 CONFERENCE

Mairéad Herlihy represented LEO at the itag AtlanTec AI Challenge 2026 conference, themed *Intelligence Augmented: The Frontier of Human Judgement*, at the University of Galway on 14 May 2026. The flagship event attracted over 400 delegates and featured contributions from leading figures across technology, innovation and academia.



The conference examined the role of human judgement in an increasingly AI-enabled business environment and reinforced the continued importance of people, organisational culture and trust in successful digital transformation. Key themes included responsible AI adoption, governance and cybersecurity, the pace of enterprise technology change and the need for sustained investment in skills, internal capability and regional innovation ecosystems.

CREATIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP & ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME



Participants in the LEO-supported CEED (Creative Entrepreneurship & Enterprise Development) programme delivered their final elevator pitches, showcasing their businesses as the programme concluded.

Eoin Connaire of LEO Galway met with the group and presented on the supports available through the Local Enterprise Office Galway

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

LEO Galway were one of the sponsors for the inaugrual EDGE26 summit - Ireland's national gathering for the creative industries. Its aim was : **Where Creative Industries, Technology, and Enterprise Converge highlighting:** Film, animation, games, immersive, design, creative tech and music tech. On 21 May 2026, founders, studio leaders, investors, policymakers, and researchers gathered in Galway for a national summit exploring the future of the creative economy. EDGE26 brought together the people building and supporting globally competitive creative businesses, examining how innovation, intellectual property, and emerging technologies are transforming the digital creative industries.

KENNETH DEERY, EOIN CONNAIRE, MAIREAD HERLIHY AND CAROLINE MCDONAGH, LEO GALWAY, WITH MEMBERS OF ÚDARÁS NA GAELTACHTA





On the day, Caroline McDonagh (Head of Enterprise) moderated the Panel for the: Inside Ireland's IP-generating sectors: Real companies, IP, exports, and growth. Panellists included: Trevor Ó Clochartaigh (TG4), Paul Conway (Spooky Doorway), Moe Honan (Moetion Films), Adam Barry (Studio Saol), David Stevens (The Bothy).

REGIONAL ENTERPRISE PLAN WEST

EDGE 26 – IRELAND'S FIRST CREATIVE ECONOMY SUMMIT

This event was held in Dexcom Stadium Galway on Thursday May 23rd, bringing together over 400 leaders, policy makers, creative technologists, founders, enablers, chaos engineers and collaborators. It really became a collision space for conversation and ideation with a particular focus on the future.

The creative economy sits firmly as one key theme within the Regional Enterprise Plan for the West, Kenny Deery as Manager has been on the Edge26 steering committee from its concept and was delighted to welcome Minister Alan Dillon at the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment to provide closing remarks summit along with Gillian Buckley, Head of Investment at the WDC Investment Fund and Niamh Costello, CEO of CREW.

Both Galway County Council, Galway City Council and the Galway Local Enterprise Office had a strong supportive presence at the summit.





PLUG INTO THE WEST AT THE LONDON IRISH CENTRE

The Western Development Commission led on an inward investment initiative with



stakeholders from across the region on May 13th at the London Irish Centre. The theme of the event was 'where opportunity, innovation and place connect' and the event focused on the Irish diaspora in the greater London area who may consider relocating to the West or investing in the West. A strong delegation of hub managers, leaders, agency representatives and collaborators travelled to London for the event. Hubs were represented by Marie Donnelan CEO of Platform 94, Niamh Costello CEO of CREW and Mary Rodgers, CEO of Portershed; Local Enterprise Offices were represented by Head of LEO Mayo John Magee; Enterprise Ireland was represented by Meabh Conaghan, Regional Director West and Kenny Deery travelled as West Regional Enterprise Plan Programme Manager. Willie Ruane CEO of Connacht Rugby delivered a provocative and thoughtful keynote speech.

SOME MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION TRAVELING TO LONDON STANSTED PICTURED WITH DOMINICK HEALY OF IRELAND WEST AIRPORT KNOCK.



TOWN REGENERATION OFFICERS NETWORK



Galway County Council's Town regeneration Officer, Hazel Fox, attended the TRO network meeting in New Ross. Wexford County Council hosted the event and provided information sessions and tours of regeneration projects within the town centre. The event was well attended by the 26 local Authorities who have Town regeneration officers and participate in the network.



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.

BALLINASLOE

The Ballinasloe Town Centre First Plan has now completed the statutory environmental screening. The finalized plan will be presented to the Municipal District meeting on the 10th June for endorsement. The plan identifies projects for the future development of the Town Centre which will be brought forward under various funding opportunities, including RRDF, URDF and ERDF.

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 was publishing at the end of May, with submissions welcome until the 22nd of June.

GORT

The Regeneration team in partnership with NPWS And the Gort Area Office were delighted to attend the formal launch of the Yeats Gregory shuttle Bus, formally opened by Minister Sean Canney on the 2nd June. A new free hop-on hop-off shuttle bus service connecting some of south Galway's most important literary, cultural and natural heritage sites.

Funded and operated by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), the new Yeats-Gregory Explorer shuttle bus service will run daily until August 31, linking Gort town centre with Coole Park Nature Reserve, Kiltartan Gregory Museum, Thoor Ballylee, Kilmacduagh Monastery and Garryland Nature Reserve.

The initiative aims to support sustainable tourism by encouraging visitors to leave their cars in Gort and explore the wider Coole Park and south Galway heritage landscape at their own pace. The service also improves access for visitors arriving in Gort by rail and regional bus services.

The service was developed in close consultation with Galway County Council and Fáilte Ireland.



DIRECTOR OF SERVICES LIAM HANRAHAN, WITH REGIONAL STAFF FROM NPWS, CLLR. PAUL KILLILEA MD CATHAOIRLEACH, CLLR GERALDINE DONOHUE, TD LOUIS O'HARA AND MINISTER SEAN CANNEY AT THE LAUNCH OF THE YEATS GREGORY SHUTTLE IN COOLE PARK.



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

REGENERATION SCHEMES

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.

We await the announcement from the Minister on the successful applications under the funding stream. Galway County Council submitted 6 applications, two in each of the eligible towns.

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

May was an active month in the Courthouse, with several events open to the community in addition to regular programmes. On 14 & 15 May, in collaboration with the Heritage Office, the Courthouse hosted 2 public events as part of the Community Famine Commemoration programming.

On 14th May, Bernie Doherty talked about the role of Community Archaeologists in the County and how this relates to Famine era findings locally and in the region. On 15th May, with an audience of 90 guests, Chief Superintendent Gerard Roach presented about his great-grandfather, John Roach MP's role in advocating for tenant's rights and changes to land ownership laws in Ireland after the Famine.

PORTUMNA PUBLIC REALM

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

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.



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

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, the planning approval was signed on the 19/05/2026. The planning approval was subject to a number of conditions which will require amendments to the project design. These will be interrogated in the coming weeks and the architects instructed to proceed with the required amendments. Once the scheme redesign is complete, the Regeneration team will identify appropriate funding opportunities to put the project forward for capital funding.

ATHENRY

RRDF PROJECT – PUBLIC REALM ENHANCEMENT SCHEME

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 Usice 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

Fire Safety and Disability Access Certificates have been granted with tender documents currently under review. Approval has been sought from the DRCDG to proceed to tender and the team await the decision.



PROPOSED SHOPFRONT



PROPOSED MULTI-PURPOSE MEETING / SEMINAR ROOM

CAR PARK SITE

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

TUAM

TUAM TOWN HALL

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



PROPOSED MULTI-FUNCTION SPACE

PROPOSED CO-WORKING / OFFICE SPACE



TUAM STATION BUILDING: REPURPOSING, RENOVATION AND EXTENSION

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.

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.

GORT

GORT PUBLIC REALM

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

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

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 conveyancing process and is anticipated to be completed later 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.

ORANMORE

RINVILLE PARK SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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

HERITAGE OFFICE



MEMBERS OF GALWAY COUNTY ICAN NETWORK AT THE NATIONAL IRISH COMMUNITY ARCHIVE NETWORK WITH VIRGINIA TEEHAN, CEO, THE HERITAGE COUNCIL, LORNA ELMS, NATIONAL MUSEUM OF IRELAND AND JOHN CREEDON, BROADCASTER. PHOTO CREDIT: CAITRIONA KENNY

IRISH COMMUNITY ARCHIVE NETWORK (ICAN) NATIONAL MEETING – 22 MAY 2026, TIPPERARY

The Irish Community Archive Network (iCAN) National Meeting was held on 22 May 2026 at Ballykisteen Hotel, Co. Tipperary, with attendance of over 100 members from across the

network. The event was co-hosted by Tipperary Heritage Officer Róisín O'Grady in collaboration with local heritage groups in Tipperary.

There are currently 56 iCAN Groups spanning 9 counties of which 9 Groups are from County Galway. Members of Abbey Heritage, Woodlawn Heritage, Skehana Heritage, Moylough Heritage, Killererin Heritage, Milltown Heritage, Claregalway Heritage, Moycullen Heritage and Oughterard Heritage attended the event as well as Marie Mannion, Heritage Officer and Bernie Doherty, Galway Community Archaeologist.

The programme included contributions from participating Tipperary organisations, highlighting local heritage initiatives and community-led projects. Updates on iCAN activity were provided by the national team, outlining new resources, ongoing programmes, and network development.

Guest contributions were delivered by the Heritage Council and the National Museum of Ireland, recognising the impact and growth of the iCAN network.

The meeting also facilitated networking and collaboration through structured and informal engagement, including a cross-county team activity. Visual documentation of the event was commissioned.

The meeting supported knowledge-sharing, strengthened inter-county collaboration, and reinforced the role of community archives in preserving and promoting local heritage at national level.

HERITAGE COUNCIL COMMUNITY GRANTS SCHEME 2026

The Heritage Council received 375 applications nationally, seeking in excess of €6 million, against an available budget of approximately €2 million. A total of 127 projects were funded, including 14 in County Galway, with grants awarded totalling €264,421.
The Heritage Office, Galway County Council, provided significant guidance and support to the majority of the successful applicants listed below, as well as to a number of other groups whose applications were unsuccessful on this occasion.

SUPPORTED PROJECTS (COUNTY GALWAY)

- Milltown Community Council – Phase 4 implementation of Collections Audit recommendations at Milltown Heritage Centre (conservation works) – €19,684
- Baile Chláir Church Pastoral Council – Ongoing conservation of Old Abbey (ruin) – €25,000
- Southeast Galway Integrated Rural Development CLG – Conservation Management Plan for Portumna Workhouse – €25,000
- Abbeyknockmoy – Digital mapping of local graveyards – €6,253
- Select Vestry of the Aughrim & Creagh Parish Union – Repair and stabilisation of medieval church (Ardrahan graveyard) – €25,000
- Kylemore Trust – Conservation Plan for Kylemore Abbey Model Farm – €25,000

- Mill Museum Trust Tuam – Drone and landscape survey of mill building (storm damage assessment) – €6,700
- Kilchreest Castledaly Community Development Group – Ongoing graveyard conservation works – €25,000
- Dry Stone Wall Association of Ireland – "Sharing our European Dry Stone Heritage" – €6,470
- Ballinderreen Community Centre – Heritage Audit Phase II – €13,960
- Comhlacht Forbartha Inis Meáin – Siúlóid Oidhreachta (Audio Heritage Trail) – €17,607
- Ballymacward Gurteen Parish Council – Bell tower repair and damp investigation – €25,000
- Kilshanvey Community Group – Phase 1 conservation works (stabilisation and fabric repair) – €25,000
- Oranmore Tidy Towns – Conservation Management Plan for medieval graveyard – €25,000

NATIONAL FAMINE COMMEMORATION 2026 – COMMUNITY PROGRAMME, PORTUMNA

A wide-ranging programme of cultural, educational and heritage events was delivered in Portumna and east Galway from 9–24 May 2026 as part of the Community Programme for the National Famine Commemoration. Hosted primarily at the Irish Workhouse Centre, the programme brought together scholars, artists, schools and community organisations to explore the legacy of An Gorta Mór through a diverse and accessible series of initiatives. Strong public engagement was recorded throughout, with participation from across County Galway and beyond.



SOME MEMBERS OF THE AUDIENCE AT THE LAUNCH OF ÁR SCÉALTA GHORTA – OUR FAMINE STORIES. PHOTO CREDIT: JACINTA FAHY

REFLECTING ON THE GREAT FAMINE: A COMMEMORATION CONFERENCE

The *Reflecting on the Great Famine: A Commemoration Conference*, held at the Irish Workhouse Centre, Portumna, formed a key part of the National Famine Commemoration 2026 programme and attracted a strong public response locally, nationally and internationally. The full day conference took place on Saturday, 9 May 2026, bringing together leading academics, heritage professionals and community members to reflect on one of the most significant events in Irish history.

Over 150 people attended the conference in person. In addition, the online recording of the event has, to date, been viewed more than 800 times, demonstrating the wide public interest in famine history and commemoration. The conference can still be viewed on this link: https://youtube.com/live/SiZ1FwiR1nU?si=5S8XI2JExfSDfoGV

Opening the conference, Cllr David Collins, Cathaoirleach of Galway County Council, reflected on the enduring legacy of the Great Famine:

“The Great Famine shaped every parish, family and townland in County Galway, leaving a legacy of loss, resilience and migration that still resonates today. Conferences such as this allow us to remember those who suffered and died, while deepening our understanding of how this history continues to inform who we are.”

The conference programme featured a wide-ranging series of lectures and a panel discussion examining remembrance, culture, philanthropy, the Poor Law system and the lived experience of famine-era Ireland, all explored within the powerful setting of the former Portumna workhouse.

SCÉALTA AN GHORTA/ FAMINE STORIES EXHIBITION

As part of the wider commemorative programme saw the launch of the *Scéalta an Ghorta/ Famine Stories* Exhibition and accompanying digital e-book, officially launched by Cllr David Collins. The exhibition presents famine narratives rooted in local, national and international experience and highlights the importance of community-led remembrance and storytelling.



JOHN BABA JEAIC O'CONGHAILE, LEITIR MEALLÁIN, EILÍN PERKINS, COMHAR CHUIGEAL TEO, PADRAIG KILDUFF, BALLINASLOE AND DISTRICT HERITAGE, CLLR MICHAEL 'MOEGIE' MAHER, CLLR DAVID COLLINS, CATHAOIRLEACH, GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL, MARIAN CONNOLLY, KINVARA HERITAGE, BERNADETTE FORDE, KILLERERIN HERITAGE AND MARY COTTER, KILLERERIN HERITAGE AT THE LAUNCH OF ÁR SCÉALTA GHORTA – OUR FAMINE STORIES. PHOTO CREDIT: JACINTA FAHY



MARY O'SHEA, MAIGH CUILLINN HERITAGE, PAULINE CONNOLLY, MILLTOWN HERITAGE AND ANNE TIERNEY, OLD TUAM SOCIETY AT THE LAUNCH OF ÁR SCÉALTA GHORTA – OUR FAMINE STORIES. PHOTO CREDIT: JACINTA FAHY



EILÍN PERKINS, COMHAR CHUIGEAL TEO, JOHN BABA JEAIC O' CONGHAILE, IONAD OIDHREACHTA LEITIR MEALLÁIN & GHARUMNA, BARBARA SEOIGE, STIOFÁN Ó CUALÁIN, TUATHLAITH DE BÚRCA AT THE LAUNCH OF ÁR SCÉALTA GHORTA – OUR FAMINE STORIES. PHOTO CREDIT: JACINTA FAHY



PADRAIG KILDUFF, BALLINASLOE AND DISTRICT HERITAGE, MARIE MANNION, HERITAGE OFFICER, EVELYN DONNELLAN, BALLINASLOE AND DISTRICT HERITAGE, OLIVER DONNELLAN, BALLINASLOE AND DISTRICT HERITAGE AND CLLR MICHAEL CONNOLLY AT THE LAUNCH OF ÁR SCÉALTA GHORTA – OUR FAMINE STORIES. PHOTO CREDIT: JACINTA FAHY

"This exhibition featuring 20 parishes across the county of Galway and Minnesota gives voice to famine stories grounded in place, memory and community. It reflects the

extraordinary contribution of local and diaspora groups who have ensured that the human experience of the Great Famine continues to be remembered, shared and understood."



MARICHU WHYTE, BRIDIE CONNOLLY, CLLR MICHAEL CONNOLLY, MARIE MANNION, HERITAGE OFFICER, JOHN WHYTE, MOYLOUGH HERITAGE AND MARY MULLINS, MOYLOUGH HERITAGE AT THE LAUNCH OF ÁR SCÉALTA GHORTA – OUR FAMINE STORIES. PHOTO CREDIT: JACINTA FAHY

BOOK LAUNCH: HUNGER, HARDSHIP AND RELIEF: THE GREAT FAMINE IN KILLIMOR, CO. GALWAY



ANGELA GEOGHEGAN, KILLIMOR, AUTHOR WITH CLLR DAVID COLLINS, CATHAOIRLEACH, GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL AND NUALA MCGANN, TYPOGRAPHER AT THE LAUNCH OF HUNGER, HARDSHIP AND RELIEF: THE GREAT FAMINE IN KILLIMOR, CO. GALWAY IN THE IRISH WORKHOUSE CENTRE, PORTUMNA. PHOTO CREDIT: JACINTA FAHY.

Also launched on the day was *Hunger, Hardship and Relief: The Great Famine in Killimor, Co. Galway*, written by Angela Geoghegan, with typography by Nuala McGann, and officially launched by Dr Geard Moran. The publication provides a detailed and accessible account of famine experiences in Killimor, offering important insight into how hardship, relief and survival were experienced at community level.

"This book is an excellent example of how local history can illuminate broader famine narratives. It is carefully researched and makes a valuable contribution to our understanding of how the Great Famine was experienced, endured and remembered in communities across the west of Ireland."

The exhibition and book launch attracted over 140 people. Particular tribute was paid to Angela Geoghegan, Nuala McGann and the community groups from across County Galway and Minnesota who contributed to the Famine Stories Exhibition and e-book, highlighting enduring transatlantic connections forged through famine history and emigration.

LAUNCH OF BILINGUAL CHILDREN'S WORKBOOK



ATTENDING THE LAUNCH OF THE BILINGUAL CHILDREN'S WORKBOOK, *CHILDREN IN THE WORKHOUSE: FOLLOW THE FOOTSTEPS OF MARY FIELDING* WERE CHILDREN AND TEACHERS FROM PORTUMNA NATIONAL SCHOOL WITH BERNIE DOHERTY, GALWAY COMMUNITY ARCHAEOLOGIST, DR GERARD MORAN, CLLR DAVID COLLINS, CATHAOIRLEACH, GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL, MARIE MANNION, HERITAGE OFFICER AND DR CHRISTY CUNNIFFE, IRISH WORKHOUSE CENTRE, PORTUMNA. PHOTO CREDIT: JACINTA FAHY.

A key highlight of the programme was the launch of the bilingual children's workbook, *Children in the Workhouse: Follow the Footsteps of Mary Fielding*. This event attracted over 150 schoolchildren and teachers, demonstrating strong engagement with primary-level heritage education. Developed by Galway County Council in partnership with the Irish Workhouse Centre, the workbook introduces young audiences to the lived experience of children during the Famine through an accessible and educational format. The launch also supported wider outreach to schools and reinforced the value of bilingual resources in heritage interpretation.



CHILDREN AT THE LAUNCH OF THE BILINGUAL CHILDREN'S WORKBOOK, *CHILDREN IN THE WORKHOUSE: FOLLOW THE FOOTSTEPS OF MARY FIELDING*. PHOTO CREDIT: JACINTA FAHY.

UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY STORYMAP AND PUBLICATIONS

Innovative academic and creative outputs formed a central component of the programme, strengthening the link between research, education and public engagement. A University of Galway student StoryMap and associated publication, ***Beyond the Gates: Stories from Seven Galway Workhouses***, was launched, highlighting research-led engagement with local sites and histories.



FRONT ROW: UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY STUDENTS -FIONN O'CONNOR, BEARNA, GAVIN O' TOOLE, WILLIAMSTOWN, SÍLE NÍ THUAIRISG, AN SPIDÉAL, SIMONE LEONARD, GALWAY AND MAEVE HUKILL, GALWAY. BACK ROW: DR CHRISTY CUNNIFFE, IRISH WORKHOUSE CENTRE, PORTUMNA, HAZEL MORRISON, MAIGH CUILLINN HERITAGE, MARY O'SHEA, MAIGH CUILLINN HERITAGE, DR BREANDÁN MAC SUIBHNE, UNIVERSITY COLLEGE GALWAY, ANTOINETTE LYDON, OUGHTERARD HERITAGE, MARIE MANNION, HERITAGE OFFICER, GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL AND EMMA MARRON, UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY. PHOTO CREDIT: JACINTA FAHY.

The StoryMap initiative brought together digital storytelling and place-based research, enabling students to explore and present the histories of multiple workhouse sites across County Galway in an accessible, interactive format. Developed through collaboration between Galway County Council, University of Galway and local heritage groups, the project supported the integration of archival research, local knowledge and digital mapping technologies.

The StoryMap, *Beyond the Gates: Insights from Galway Workhouses*, is available online and provides an interactive, place-based exploration of workhouse histories across County Galway, extending the reach of the programme to wider public audiences and supporting ongoing engagement beyond the event itself: 👉 View StoryMap

The accompanying publication, *Beyond the Gates*, further developed this work by presenting a series of individual research studies examining the history and lived experience of seven workhouses—Oughterard, Galway City, Loughrea, Mountbellew, Glenamaddy, Portumna and the Moycullen Auxiliary Workhouse. Each chapter reflects student-led research based on archival material and documentary sources, demonstrating the value of placement-based learning and collaborative heritage research.

SILENCE OF STONE

In parallel, *Silence of Stone*, a publication of new writing emerging from workshops facilitated by Noelle Lynskey, showcased contemporary creative responses to the legacy of the Famine. These initiatives supported both scholarly interpretation and creative reflection.



FRONT ROW: PAULA LYDON, MAZEL MORRISON, AND MARY O'SHEA, MAIGH CUILLINN HERITAGE. FRONT ROW: MARIE ACTON, MAIGH CUILLINN, THERESA ACTON(HON SECRETARY, MAIGH CUILLINN HERITAGE), PAT MCDONAGH, OUGHTERARD, FRANCES HOLOHAN, ABBEY HERITAGE, JOE LOUGHNANE, MAIGH CUILLINN HERITAGE, EMMA LAFFEY, SKEHANA & DISTRICT HERIAGE, ANGELA MCDONAGH, MAIGH CUILLINN AT THE REPRINT LAUNCH OF *AN GORTA MÓR I MAIGH CUILINN 1845–1850* IN THE IRISH WORKHOUSE CENTRE, PORTUMNA. PHOTO CREDIT: JACINTA FAHY

PUBLICATIONS, LECTURES AND GUIDED TOURS

The programme also featured a strong series of lectures, reprints and guided experiences:

- The reprint launch of *An Gorta Mór i Maigh Cuilinn 1845–1850* included a lecture by Kathleen Villiers-Tuthill, contributing to the dissemination of locally focused historical research. Kathleen's contribution brought a strong local Conamara dimension to the programme, complementing the broader national and international perspectives presented elsewhere. Her lecture highlighted the importance of place-based research and the continued relevance of carefully documented local studies in informing contemporary understanding of the Famine.
- A guided historical walk at Portumna Castle, led by Noel Larkin, provided place-based interpretation of Famine history within the local landscape.
- A guided walking trail led by David Broderick explored the story of Mary Fielding, offering a poignant insight into childhood during the Famine.

These events ensured a balance between academic content and public-facing heritage engagement.



A GUIDED HISTORICAL WALK AND TALK AT PORTUMNA CASTLE, LED BY NOEL LARKIN. PHOTO CREDIT: JACINTA FAHY

THEATRE PERFORMANCE AND REFLECTIVE DISCUSSION, VISUAL ARTS EXHIBITION AND MUSICAL PERFORMANCES

A site-specific performance of ***Bishop Maginn: The Famine and the Fugitive***, written by Turlough McConnell and directed by Marian Frawley, brought a dramatic and interpretive dimension to the programme. The performance was complemented by reflections from Professor Christine Kinealy and Dr Gerard Moran, adding academic context and encouraging deeper reflection on the themes explored. This combination of performance and discussion provided a powerful and immersive audience experience.

The **Curlew Theatre Company** presented a specially programmed performance that explored Famine themes through dramatic storytelling, adding a contemporary interpretive layer to the programme.

Musical contributions from the OMNA singers added a further emotive dimension, with performances that enhanced the commemorative atmosphere and created a shared cultural experience for attendees. Their concert formed part of the ***Evening Rise*** programme at the Irish Workhouse Centre, which was a sell-out event attracting an audience of over 250 people, reflecting very strong public engagement.

The performance also demonstrated strong collaboration with other local groups, as OMNA singers performed alongside the Scrum Notes from Loughrea and guest soloist Pascal Kennedy, highlighting the important contribution of the wider Loughrea musical community to the programme.



SOME MEMBERS OF THE AUDIENCE AT THE OMNA SINGERS WHO PERFORMED ALONGSIDE THE SCRUM NOTES FROM LOUGHREA. PHOTO CREDIT: DR CHRISTY CUNNIFFE

The inclusion of music supported a multi-sensory engagement with the programme, contributing to reflection, connection and collective remembrance, while also showcasing the depth of local artistic talent involved in the National Famine Commemoration Community Programme.

Joyce Little's exhibition ***Threadbear*** provided a powerful and contemplative artistic response to themes of loss, memory and endurance associated with the Famine. Through textile and mixed-media work, the exhibition created an intimate space for reflection, complementing the historical and educational elements of the programme. Its installation within the Irish Workhouse Centre added further depth, connecting artistic interpretation with place and lived history.



JOYCE LITTLE SPEAKING AT THE OPENING OF HER EXHIBITION *THREADBEAR PHOTO CREDIT: IRISH WORKHOUSE CENTRE.*



CONOR JOHNSTONE, BALLINASLOE AND DISTRICT HERITAGE, CLLR DR EVELYN PARSONS, AND EVELYN DONNELLAN, BALLINASLOE AND DISTRICT HERITAGE AT THE LAUNCH OF THREADBARE. PHOTO CREDIT: IRISH WORKHOUSE CENTRE, PORTUMNA



BERNIE DOHERTY, GALWAY COMMUNITY ARCHAEOLOGIST AT HER LECTURE IN PORTUMNA COURT HOUSE AS PART OF THE NATIONAL FAMINE COMMEMORATION COMMUNITY PROGRAMME. PHOTO CREDIT: JACINTA FAHY

Public lectures formed a key element of the programme, attracting strong attendances:

- Bernie Doherty, Galway Community Archaeologist, delivered lectures on the archaeology of the Famine, expanding understanding of material heritage and landscape evidence.
- Dr Breandán MacSuibhne, University of Galway, delivered a well-attended *Lunch & Learn* lecture titled *House Thrown Down by Neighbours: Entering the Grey Zone of the Great Famine*, exploring more complex and less examined aspects of Famine history, particularly the relationships and actions within affected communities.

- Chief Superintendent Gerard Roche delivered a well-attended talk, drawing an audience of over 100 people, on his great-grandfather John Roche MP and the struggle for tenants' rights.

These talks highlighted both local and national narratives, connecting personal history with wider socio-political themes.



CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT GERARD ROCHE WITH MEMBERS OF HIS FAMILY INCLUDING HIS 99-YEAR-OLD AUNT AT HIS LECTURE IN PORTUMNA COURT HOUSE AS PART OF THE NATIONAL FAMINE COMMEMORATION COMMUNITY PROGRAMME. PHOTO CREDIT: JACINTA FAHY

Cllr David Collins, Cathaoirleach of Galway County Council, said:

"This programme represents a collective effort by communities across the county and in Minnesota to remember the Great Famine in a way that is inclusive, thoughtful and grounded in historical understanding. It highlights the importance of reflecting on our shared past and ensuring that the experiences of those who suffered during the Famine are not forgotten. It is heartening to see such a strong level of public engagement, with communities coming together to support and participate in this important programme."

Liam Conneally, Chief Executive of Galway County Council, added:

"The scale of participation and engagement, together with the wide variety of events delivered, reflects a strong public appreciation of the importance of understanding and remembering our shared history, particularly the experience and legacy of the Famine. The programme highlights how vital it is that we continue to engage with this defining period in a meaningful and informed way. I would like to acknowledge the significant contribution of heritage groups from across County Galway, whose involvement has been central to the success of this programme. I also extend my thanks to staff across Galway County Council's directorates, who have worked in partnership with the Department of Culture, Communications and Sport, other government departments, and the Irish Workhouse Centre, Portumna, to deliver this important National Famine Commemoration programme."

Marie Mannion, Heritage Officer with Galway County Council, said:

"The response to all events has been exceptional. It is particularly encouraging to see

engagement from schools, community groups and local audiences, ensuring that the stories of the Famine continue to be explored and shared in meaningful ways."
Dr Christy Cunniffe of the Irish Workhouse Centre, Portumna, noted:
"The Irish Workhouse Centre provides a powerful setting for these events, and the strong attendance highlights the continuing importance of this history. The programme has created opportunities for reflection, learning a nd connection across generations."

FUNDING AND DELIVERY

The Community Programme forms a key element of the National Famine Commemoration 2026 and was delivered through collaboration between Galway County Council, the Irish Workhouse Centre, the local community and businesses in Portumna as well as heritage groups from all corners of the county from Leitir Meallain to Oughterard and Maigh Cuillinn to Baile Chláir, Milltown, Tuam, Ballinasloe, Killererin, Abbey, Skehana, Ballinakill, Annaghdown, Lackagh, Fohenagh, Woodlawn, Moylough, Mountbellew, Killimor and our diaspora in Minnesota. Funding was provided by Galway County Council, the Minister for Culture, Communications and Sport and Creative Ireland.

NATIONAL FAMINE COMMEMORATION 2026 – 17TH MAY IN PORTUMNA

The National Famine Commemoration 2026 took place on Sunday, 17 May at the Irish Workhouse Centre, Portumna, Co. Galway, bringing together national and local representatives, community groups and members of the public to mark this significant State occasion. The ceremony was attended by the Taoiseach, members of Government, the Diplomatic Corps, and Former Uachtarán na hÉireann, Michael D. Higgins, reflecting the national and international importance of the commemoration.



STATE CEREMONIAL NATIONAL FAMINE COMMEMORATION PHOTO CREDIT: IRISH WORKHOUSE CENTRE

The event programme included a formal State ceremony, incorporating the unveiling of a newly commissioned commemorative plaque by the Taoiseach, assisted by pupils from St Brendan's National School. The plaque sculpted by Cormac O'Reilly presents a powerful narrative of the lived experience of the Great Famine, depicting themes of blight, eviction, the workhouse and emigration, and serves as a lasting legacy of remembrance.



PLAQUE UNVEILED AT THE STATE CEREMONIAL NATIONAL FAMINE COMMEMORATION PHOTO CREDIT: IRISH WORKHOUSE CENTRE

The ceremony also featured a rich cultural and community programme, coordinated by Jo Vahey, which brought together music, poetry and reflection. Highlights included the world premiere of The Workhouse Lament, composed and performed by Ger Fahy, whose work gave a poignant musical expression to the suffering and resilience associated with the workhouse experience.



GER FAHY. PHOTO CREDIT: MURT FAHY

The cultural programme also included readings of historic texts, traditional and contemporary musical performances, and contributions from a range of performers including Áine Sheridan, Cathal Sweeney, Róisín Mannion, Tómas Mannion and Ger Fahy, creating a deeply reflective and shared commemorative experience.



ÁINE SHERIDAN, CATHAL SWEENEY, RÓISÍN MANNION, TÓMAS MANNION, JO VAHEY AND GER FAHY. PHOTO CREDIT: MURT FAHY



LIAM CONNEALLY, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL, MINISTER FOR CULTURE, COMMUNICATIONS AND SPORT AND CHAIR OF THE NATIONAL FAMINE COMMEMORATION COMMITTEE, PATRICK O'DONOVAN, TAOISEACH MICHAEL MARTIN AND CATHAOIRLEACH CLLR DAVID COLLINS ON THE OCCASION OF THE PRESENTATION OF A DAVID ROONEY LIMITED EDITION PRINT AT THE IRISH WORKHOUSE CENTRE. PHOTO CREDIT: MURT FAHY

The Minister for Culture, Communications and Sport and Chair of the National Famine Commemoration Committee, Patrick O'Donovan, formally welcomed attendees, noting the significance of the location and the ongoing importance of remembrance.

The ceremony concluded with wreath-laying by the Taoiseach, the Minister and the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, alongside a minute of silence and military honours, underscoring the solemn and reflective nature of the occasion.



STATE CEREMONIAL NATIONAL FAMINE COMMEMORATION PHOTO CREDIT: IRISH WORKHOUSE CENTRE

STATE CEREMONIAL NATIONAL FAMINE COMMEMORATION PHOTO CREDIT: IRISH WORKHOUSE CENTRE



The success of the National Famine Commemoration was underpinned by the extensive preparatory work of the Irish Workhouse Centre, the National Famine Commemoration Committee, Galway County Council, and local heritage groups from around the county, as well as the strong support and engagement of the Portumna community. Their collective efforts ensured a dignified, inclusive and impactful event of national significance.



GER FAHY, TÓMAS MANNION ÁINE SHERIDAN, RÓISÍN MANNION AND JO VAHEY . PHOTO CREDIT: MURT FAHY

BIODIVERSITY

NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY WEEK 2026 – PROGRAMME DELIVERY

The Biodiversity Office delivered and supported 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.

COASTWATCH SEAGRASS CITIZEN SCIENCE WORKSHOP (KINVARA)

The Biodiversity Office supported a Coastwatch-led seagrass citizen science workshop in Kinvara, focused on coastal biodiversity recording and monitoring. 30 participants from across Ireland attended and included scientists, NPWS staff, third level students, community group members and local authority staff. Seagrass beds along the Galway coastline remain under-recorded, and this workshop aimed to address this gap by training participants in survey and recording techniques.

Speakers at the event included Karin Dubsky from Coastwatch, Rosina Joyce, ecologist Cilian Roden and Juan Lugilde Yáñez from the University of Galway. The event highlighted the ecological importance of seagrass habitats for biodiversity, water quality and climate resilience, while actively contributing to increased data collection. The outputs from this workshop will support the mapping of seagrass beds around Ireland and help inform future measures to protect and manage these important coastal habitats.



ECOLOGIST CILIAN RODEN SPEAKING AT THE FIELD TRIP DURING A SEAGRASS TRAINING EVENT IN KINVARA



SEAGRASS *ZOSTERA MARINA*



ROSINA JOYCE, BIODIVERSITY OFFICER, PRESENTING AT THE WORKSHOP IN KINVARA

FARM WALK

A biodiversity farm walk was held in Oranmore in partnership with Karina Finn, Galway IFA Environment Representative and member of the Galway County Heritage and Biodiversity Forum, alongside Nicky Byrne (Teagasc) and Janet Laffey (Local Authority Waters Programme).

The event showcased nature-friendly farming in practice, with a focus on red clover silage systems and their role in supporting pollinators, improving soil health and maintaining productive agriculture. Contributions from project partners highlighted the strong links between farm management, biodiversity enhancement and water quality outcomes, demonstrating practical measures that can be implemented on working farms. Pat Fitzmaurice, Farmland Pollinator Officer with the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan at the National Biodiversity Data Centre also spoke at the event. Henry Walsh wrote about the event in Irish Independent, Farming Supplement.

Small changes, big impact: what one farm taught me about biodiversity

DAIRY

HENRY WALSH

Last week I attended a farm walk that was different to our normal grass-based one, hosted by Karina and Eavan Finn, members of our dairy discussion group.

The purpose of the walk no doubt influenced my thought process as I arrived, allowing me to pause to look around and fully appreciate that Ireland's native whitethorn hedgerows were flowering and in full bloom - truly a sight to behold.

Rosina Joyce, the Galway County Council Biodiversity Officer, advised us of some simple yet practical actions. For example, allowing the whitethorn to grow on a three-year cycle provides a primary source of berries for birds, as well as pollinators such as wild bees.

Hundreds of species of moths live in our hedgerows, which are also a key habitat for bats such as the soprano pipistrelles, which can feed on up to 3,000 insects in a night. Beneath the whitethorn, a field margin populated with nettles provides food for seven native species of butterfly to thrive.



Ireland's native whitethorn hedgerows, flowering and in full bloom, are a sight to behold Photo: Henry Walsh

These few simple actions can allow biodiversity to co-exist with productive agriculture.

The event focused on many of the actions taking place on the Finn farm and the benefits they are delivering for biodiversity, water and air quality.

We saw the red clover fields that were planted for silage production on an outfarm. They get very little bag nitrogen but do receive two good coats of slurry with the trailing shoe.

Nicky Byrne from Teagasc detailed the benefits of red clover and multi-species swards to us by reducing our nitrogen usage – which reduces our carbon footprint and improves soil structure.

During the walk through the clover fields the conversation focused on how the combination of grass, clover and herbs in the pasture contribute to nature friendly farming, while boosting soil health and creating high-value habitats for wildlife and pollinators.

The elements that really caught my attention were the added actions being taken on the farm.

For some time now Karina has been monitoring and recording the many different species that inhabit the farm at different times of the year, including the visits of our native Hooper swan over the winter and spring.

She showed us her moth monitoring bucket, which she places beside a thriving hedgerow. With the help of infra-red light, the moths are attracted to the bucket, trapping them in a non-lethal system until morning, when she records the activity of the night before on a national database before releasing them.

I walked away from the event asking myself, "How is our scorecard looking?"

We are making efforts to improve the volume of hedgerow and margins on our farm, particularly our silage ground, and we have the red clover and multi-species swards.

The key take-home messages from the walk were that small actions we take can make a difference - such as allowing our hedgerows to grow and reducing pesticide usage, particularly near field margins.

Henry and Patricia Walsh farm in Oranmore, Co Galway along with their son Enda





FARM BIODIVERSITY WALK WAS HELD DURING BIODIVERSITY WEEK AND WAS A COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE IFA, GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL, TEAGASC, LOCAL AUTHORITY WATER PROGRAMME AND ALL-IRELAND POLLINATOR PLAN.

BUTTERFLY MONITORING WORKSHOP – BRIGIT'S GARDEN

A hands-on butterfly monitoring workshop took place at Brigit's Garden, Rosscahill, delivered by Kay Synott. The workshop provided participants with training in butterfly identification, habitat recognition and recording methods, supporting engagement with national citizen science initiatives such as the Butterfly Monitoring Scheme.

There has been a noted increase in butterfly recording efforts locally, which has been reflected in updates from the National Biodiversity Data Centre, highlighting the growing level of participation and the value of these community-led recording initiatives. The workshop contributed to building local capacity for ongoing biodiversity monitoring and data submission.





BUTTERFLY MONITORING WORKSHOP DELIVERED BY KAY SYNOTT AS PART OF BIODIVERSITY WEEK 2026.

LOUGHREA BIOBLITZ AND BIODIVERSITY FESTIVAL 2026.

The Loughrea Biodiversity Festival and 24-hour BioBlitz took place on 21–22 May as part of National Biodiversity Week, delivered by Galway County Council and MKO in partnership with the Galway Bay Southeast Catchment Community Forum, Loughrea Tidy Towns and Loughrea Angling Club. The event was officially opened by the Cathaoirleach, Cllr David Collins, and centred on Loughrea Lake, with a public hub at the Fairgreen hosting a programme of guided walks, talks and demonstrations.



PAT ROBERTS (MKO) CATHAOIRLEACH CLLR DAVID COLLINS, AISHA PHILIPS (GALWAY SOUTH-EAST COMMUNITY CATCHMENT FORUM) AND ROSINA JOYCE, GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL AT THE STRIKE OF THE GONG MARKING THE START OF THE 24 BIOBLITZ IN LOUGHREA.

Events delivered included ecological surveys across lake, woodland, farmland and bog habitats, guided walks and talks, aerial and underwater drone demonstrations, hedgerow walks at Mad Yolk Farm, and a range of hands-on citizen science activities.

Over the 24-hour period, ecologists, 4 local schools and members of the public recorded over 500 species, highlighting the rich biodiversity of the area. The event combined citizen science with public engagement and saw strong participation from local schools and community groups.

The scale of collaboration across organisations, including Coillte, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and University of Galway, was a key strength, alongside the involvement of a wide network of volunteers. The Biodiversity Office also acknowledges the support of the Loughrea MD Office in facilitating the successful delivery of the event.

There was significant media coverage for the event with live interviews on Galway Bay FM and Loughrea Community Radio and good print media coverage before and after the event.



70 News Friday, May 29, 2026 Connacht Tribune

Loughrea Biodiversity Festival and Bioblitz

PHOTOS: JACINTA FAHY

Loughrea goes wild for festival – right around the clock!

LOUGHREA came alive with wildlife discovery and community spirit last week as the town hosted its Biodiversity Festival and 24-hour Bioblitz on the shores of Loughrea Lake.

The festival – organised by MKO and Galway County Council, in partnership with the Galway Bay South East Catchment Community Forum, Loughrea Tidy Towns and Loughrea Angling Club – brought together expert ecologists, local schools and members of the public in a collective effort to record biodiversity across the area.

Activity centred on Loughrea Lake by the Fairgreen where a vibrant public event hub hosted a full programme of guided walks, talks and interactive demonstrations.

Across the 24-hour period, participants explored habitats on land and water, recording over 500 species, highlighting the rich biodiversity of Loughrea and its surroundings; 53 different species of birds were noted including white-tailed eagles observed on the lake and swifts flying over the town.

Demonstrations of aerial and underwater drones throughout the event provided a fascinating insight into how technology is supporting ecological survey work, while conservation detection dogs drew strong interest from the public.

Building on the success of previous Bioblitz events in Renville Park, Portumna and Mountbellew, the Loughrea event has further strengthened community involvement in citizen science and highlighted the importance of local action in understanding and protecting biodiversity.

Pat Roberts, Principal Ecologist MKO, Cathaoirleach of County Galway Cllr David Collins, Aisha Phillips, Chairperson of Galway Bay South East Catchment Community Forum and Galway County Council Biodiversity Officer Rosina Joyce.

Archie and Ollie Ryan, Oranmore, learning how to set a small animal trap to study the animal life of the area from Malena Thren, MKO.

Mikaela Devaney, Jodie O'Regan and Caelan Feely, University of Galway.

Jordan Waltz, Terryland, Michelle Corcoran, Loughrea and Mary Walsh, Newbridge.

John Cronin, Loughrea, Kieran Fahy, President of Loughrea Gun Club, Pat Roberts, Principal Ecologist MKO and Daniel Cronin, Loughrea.

Helen Rose, Loughrea Tidy Towns and MKO, Michelle Bateman, Vice Chairperson Loughrea Tidy Towns, Aisha Phillips, Chairperson of Galway Bay South East Catchment Community Forum, Sean Howard, Breda McGuinness, Savannah Smith, Isabelle Ni Dhuinn, Chairperson Loughrea Tidy Towns, Siún Ni Dhuinn and Cathriona McLoughlin, Loughrea Tidy Towns at the launch of fourth annual Biodiversity Festival and Bioblitz in Loughrea.

Galway County Council Biodiversity Officer Rosina Joyce at the launch of fourth annual Biodiversity Festival and Bioblitz.

Ecology Director MKO John Hynes; James Quinn, Loughrea, and John Carrig of the Barn Owl Project.

Cathaoirleach of County Galway Cllr David Collins and Galway County Council Biodiversity Officer Rosina Joyce.

LOCAL BIODIVERSITY ACTION FUND (LBAF) 2026

The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), through the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, has announced the 2026 Local Biodiversity Action Fund (LBAF), with Galway County Council awarded €96,700 to deliver a range of biodiversity projects across the county.

The LBAF is a key national funding stream supporting local authorities in implementing actions under the National Biodiversity Action Plan. It focuses on biodiversity conservation, restoration, monitoring and community engagement, with a strong emphasis on generating high-quality data and measurable outcomes to inform national biodiversity policy and management.

The 2026 programme includes the following projects:

MONITORING AND REMOVAL OF ALPINE NEWT

Continued targeted work to control and remove populations of Alpine Newt, an invasive species which poses a significant threat to native amphibians. This project builds on

previous years' work and is considered a priority for preventing further spread and progressing towards eradication.

GALWAY RAISED BOGS BIRD BASELINE SURVEY

A survey of bird populations associated with raised bog habitats to establish baseline ecological data. This will support peatland restoration initiatives and address a recognised knowledge gap in understanding bird species' dependence on these habitats.

COUNTY GALWAY WETLANDS SURVEY (2026–2028)

A major multi-annual project to collate, map and analyse wetland habitats across the county. The project will develop a comprehensive database and GIS layer of wetland sites, strengthening the evidence base for planning, conservation and future monitoring and supporting identification of priority areas for protection and restoration.

WEST CONNACHT ISLANDS INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

A programme of survey and control measures targeting invasive species on offshore islands. The project aims to protect sensitive island habitats and prevent further spread of invasive species that threaten native biodiversity.

PRELIMINARY LAGOON SURVEY – CAMUS BAY, CONNEMARA

A targeted survey of lagoon habitat, which is currently in unfavourable conservation status nationally. The project will provide valuable new data on this under-recorded habitat type and support future conservation and management measures.

SURVEY OF INVASIVE AQUATIC SPECIES (DIKEROGAMMARUS HAEMOBAPHES)

A focused survey to determine the distribution of this invasive aquatic species, supporting early detection and informing management responses at both local and national level.

Delivery of these projects will involve collaboration with a range of partners including research institutions, NGOs and local stakeholders, and will contribute to strengthening the evidence base, informing conservation action and supporting biodiversity policy implementation at county level.

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

    - Works started this week
- 13 Restoration Maintenance (RM) projects, with a total allocation of €550,598
    - Micros surfacing Completed – Surface dressing Ongoing
- 5 Discretionary Grant projects, with a total allocation of €83,467
    - Works ongoing

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.

Surfacing works ongoing in Tonegurraun

Surface dressing ongoing in Killoughter

Crews have also remained focused on network maintenance; Drainage works ongoing in Corrundulla and direct labour roadworks in Crumlin

Sample photos of ongoing works:

CALTRABEADAGH RESURFACING





DRAINAGE WORKS @ CALTRAGH

DRAINAGE WORKS @ MULLAGHRUTTERY





RESURFACING WORKS @ CARROWTOBER

RESURFACING WORKS AT MACE





TRAFFIC LIGHTS REPAIR AT ORANMORE

BALLINASLOE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT UPDATE

Ballinasloe Town was deemed to be Cleaner Than European Norms and ranked Joint 5th out of 40 towns / cities surveyed in the latest 2026 litter survey by business group Irish Business Against Litter (IBAL). An excellent result for Ballinasloe on its return to the league, with all sites scoring either a Grade A or B, with no heavily littered sites. Top ranking sites included Ballinasloe Harbour / Marina, where all elements were in very good order; Ballinasloe Horse Fair Monument & Environs and the residential area of Willow Park.

During May 2026, MD crews were focused on maintenance of public roads in terms of Drainage and pothole repair, and preparation of roads for overlays and surface dressing.

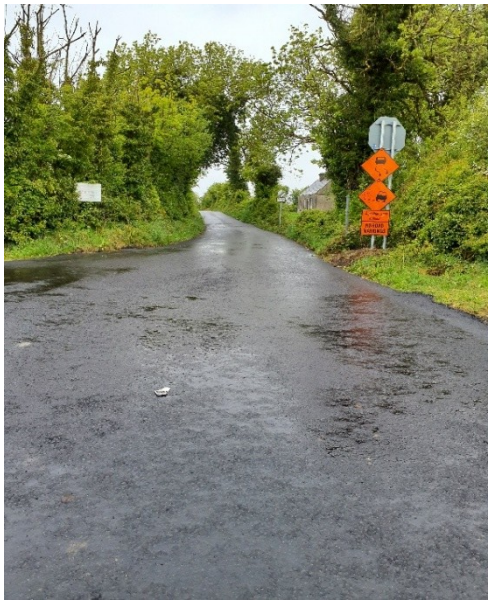
Flower towers and boxes have been installed around Ballinasloe Town Centre.

A high-level overview on progress on delivery of the Roads Programme is as follows:

- 36 No. Restoration Improvement Grant projects - 12 overlays Complete (33%)
- 38 No. Restoration Maintenance Grant (RMG) projects – 19 Complete (50%)
- 1 No. Former National Road – Yet to commence
- 5 No. Local Tertiary Roads – 2 overlays Complete (40%).
- 3 No. Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Schemes – Yet to commence
- 3 No. Low-Cost Safety Improvement Works – Yet to commence
- 2 No. LIS and 5No. CIS Schemes – Yet to commence

An application was submitted for START Just Transition Funding for the Poolboy Footpath to Cuil na Canalacht.

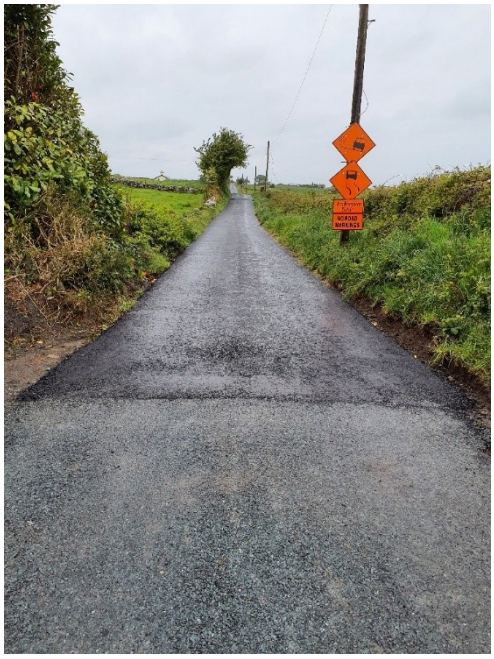
Below are a brief set of examples of the works undertaken throughout Ballinasloe MD in May 2026.



RI WORKS – OVERLAY AT BN-26-14 – BEAGH

RI WORKS – OVERLAY AT BN-26-27 – ISLANDS





RI WORKS – OVERLAY AT BN-26-30 – KILMORE

RM WORKS – SURFACE DRESSING AT BS-26-50

NORTHBROOK





RM WORKS – SURFACE DRESSING AT BS-26-52 - CARTRON LISKELLY



RM WORKS – SURFACE DRESSING AT BS-26-55 - PERSEPARK



RM WORKS – SURFACE DRESSING AT BS-26-56 – KILNABORRIS

ROADS PROGRAMME IN FULL SWING ACROSS THE MD

The 2026 Roads Programme is progressing very well. By 10th June, 22 of the 40 contracted Bound Overlay/Inlay projects have been completed across the MD. In the Conamara North Engineering Area, Direct Labour crews have completed 4 of their 10 Surface Dressing projects, and in Conamara South, Colas Contracting Ltd have completed 6 of their 8 projects. Direct Labour crews in Conamara South have completed 9 overlay projects to date.

Sample photos of works to date are below;



CN-RM-04 SKY ROAD – 2.5KM SURFACE DRESSING BY DIRECT LABOUR STAFF IN CONAMARA NORTH



CN-RI-22 TULLYVOHEEN OVERLAY PROJECT OUTSIDE CLIFDEN TOWN



CS-RI-09 6000SQM OF R340 REGIONAL ROAD IN THE VILLAGE OF CARNA RECENTLY UNDERWENT ROAD PAVEMENT INLAY WORKS BY MCGRATHS LIMESTONE CONG LTD. CURRENTLY AWAITING SURFACE DRESSING AND LINING



STAFF CS-RM-09 DOIRE IORRAIS – R340 REGIONAL ROAD RECENTLY SURFACE DRESSED AND LINED BY COLAS CONTRACTING LTD

ANTI-SKID SURFACING ON WESTBOUND LANE APPROACHING NEW RAISED TABLE PEDESTRIAN CROSSING



SUMMER READY

As part of the Summer Ready Programme, Portaloos have been installed at 9# beaches across the MD. Additional Bins and Recycling facilities have been provided. Lifeguards have commenced their duties at the designated bathing areas listed on the Summer Ready programme since the June Bank Holiday weekend, just as the weather broke.





CUAN NA LOINGE, CEANTAR NA NOILEÁN - SPECIFIC IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROJECT UPDATE

Great news was received on the 2nd June when word came that An Coimisiún Pleanála had approved the application submitted by Oifig Ceantair na Ceathrún Rua for a Road Improvement and Flood Mitigation project of the L-52214 local road in Ceantar na nOileán,

Conamara Theas. This has been a long-running issue for residents and users of this road, and this is a significant step forward for the project.

There is an 8-week period in place now for any challenges to this decision. We are engaging with the Department of Transport to secure the funding for the Construction stage of this project and will continue to push to deliver this much needed scheme as soon as possible.



CUAN NA LOINGE

LOUGHREA MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

PRIMARY FOCUS OF ACTIVITY

Work on the 2026 Roads Programme is progressing well. Surface dressing, in particular, was significantly aided by the unseasonally good weather in late May. The last two weeks have seen a return to a more typical “Irish Summer” and unfortunately this has impacted on our planned progress.

The 2026 Programme includes 53 Restoration Improvement Grant (RIG) projects, 23 Restoration Maintenance Grant (RMG) projects, 9 Discretionary Grant (DG) projects, 4 Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience projects, 6 Community Involvement Scheme (CIS) projects, 3 Local Improvement Scheme (LIS) projects and 4 Low-Cost Safety Improvement (LCSI) scheme projects.

Operationally, we have commenced hedge cutting at specific junctions to address road safety concerns. We continue to address NOM and LPT 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 - 19 Complete (36%)
- 23 No. Restoration Maintenance Grant (RMG) projects – 4 Complete (17%)
- 9 No. Local Tertiary Roads – 2 Complete (22%).
- 4 No. Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Schemes – Yet to commence
- 4 No. Low-Cost Safety Improvement Works – Tenders issued on two projects but construction yet to commence.
- LIS and CIS Schemes – Yet to commence

A sample of works on-going is as follows:



LAYING OF BASECOURSE ON L-4302 - FAHY, EYRECOURT

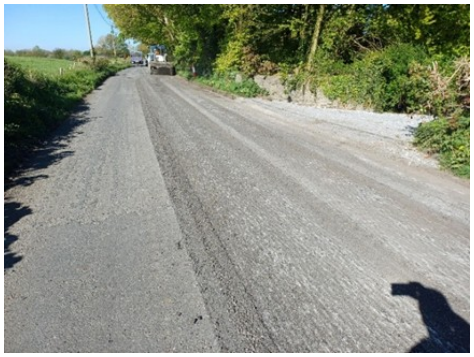






PAVEMENT OVERLAY ON THE L-4502 - POLLNAGARRAGH WEST – CAHERPEAK MANIN

PAVEMENT OVERLAY ON THE R356 - EYRECOURT TO BANAGHER







SURFACE DRESSING OPERATIONS AT WASTELANDS CROSS, LOUGH ATTORICK

SURFACE DRESSING WORKS AT OXGROVE, KILLIMOR



NON-SLIP MATTING AT AN ACCESS POINT TO LOUGHREA LAKE.



ROADS PROGRAMME

During May 2026, significant progress was achieved in the Tuam Municipal District as part of the Roads Programme, which commenced in May. The direct labour teams have performed exceptionally well, propelling the district ahead of schedule in both surface dressing and unbound road reconstruction activities. At present, approximately 30% of direct labour roads projects have been completed. These developments demonstrate the team's commitment to efficiency and quality, ensuring the programme remains firmly on track.



TUAM TO ABBEY AT TOGHER (L2114) RESURFACING

CARTRON & CORTOON ROAD RECYCLING BEFORE & AFTER - SURFACE DRESSING COMPLETED









TUAM TOWN WORKS – DUBLIN ROAD

Works have progressed well on the provision of new footpaths and a pedestrian crossing on the Dublin Road, improving access and connectivity to Tuam Rugby Club facilities. The scheme is now approximately 80% complete and, on completion, will provide a safer and more accessible route for pedestrians in the area, supporting active travel and local amenity use.





DUBLIN ROAD PATHS AND PEDESTRIAN CROSSING

KILCLOGHANS WORKS

Drainage improvement works were carried out at Kilcloghans, together with localised boundary setbacks to facilitate the construction of a new infill footpath section. These works have successfully linked previously disconnected footpath sections, completing a key segment of the Kilcloghans walking route. The scheme enhances pedestrian connectivity and supports the wider objective of delivering continuous walking routes around Tuam Town.



KILCLOGHANS ROAD RESURFACING

KILBANNON SCHEME

During the reporting period, good progress has been achieved on the R332 Kilbannon Road Realignment Scheme, with key elements of earthworks, drainage, ducting and site clearance substantially advanced across Phases 1 and 3. Works between Chainage 150 – 920 are largely complete, while activity in Phase 3 continues to progress with culvert installation and subgrade preparation underway. Overall project completion stands at approximately 28%, with progress slightly behind programme due to adverse weather conditions and the incorporation of additional works. Notwithstanding these challenges, site operations have been undertaken safely with no reported incidents, and temporary traffic management measures continue to operate effectively without disruption to the public.





Mise, le meas,

Chief Executive
Galway County Council

17th June 2026