



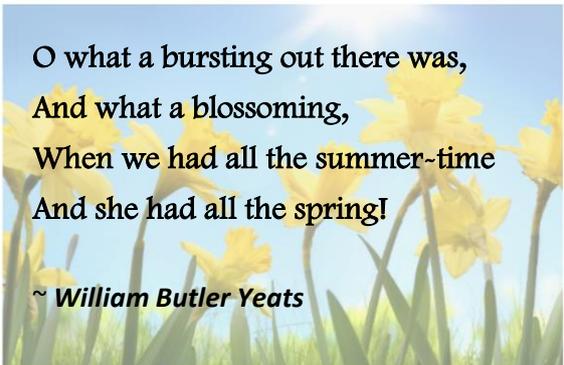
Communities Creating Jobs

Spring Newsletter 2019 ~Issue 24

Spring - A Future of Promise and Possibilities Unfolding

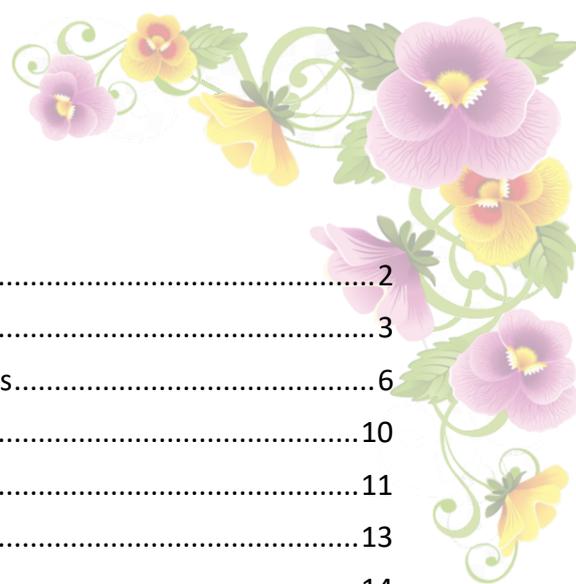
Synonymous with new daffodils, new possibilities and sunnier days ahead; this Spring time in, Ireland despite Brexit, is showing much promise in so many areas in particular for communities and social enterprise!

- ✦ Project Ireland 2040 National Strategy
- ✦ Social Enterprise Policy and Implementation Plan
- ✦ Social Enterprise – a Multi-Billion-Dollar Sector is Recognised
- ✦ New Political Leaders from European and Local Elections May 2019
- ✦ New Future for EU 27
- ✦ Climate Change Initiatives
- ✦ Continuous Economic Growth Predicted



O what a bursting out there was,
And what a blossoming,
When we had all the summer-time
And she had all the spring!

~ *William Butler Yeats*



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Editorial

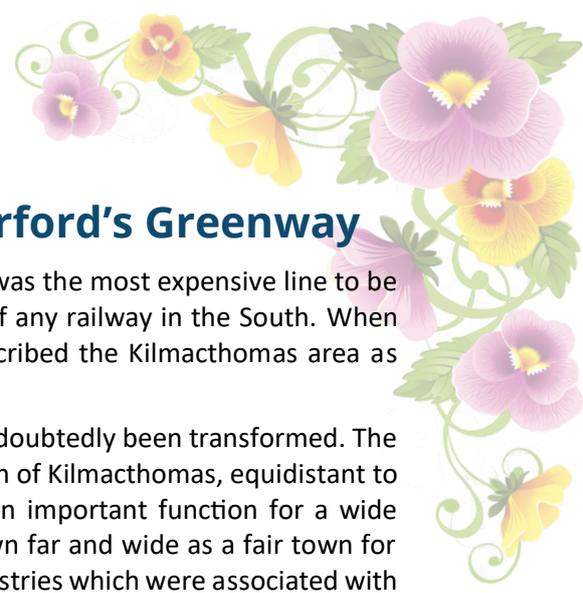
Spring 2019 is an exciting time for social enterprise advocate and stakeholders. The Department of Rural and Community Development is in the process of organising a final public consultation on their new draft policy document which is due for completion by end of April 2019. Taking feedback on board a final draft will be agreed and submitted to cabinet for approval. The launch of policy document will mark an historic moment in the history of social enterprise in Ireland and will be the subject of a major celebration by long time activists. The implementation phase will open up many new opportunities for thousands of social enterprise companies, projects and new start-ups.

Many social enterprises have existed in rural and urban Ireland since the 19th century. Many others started up in late 1980s and throughout the 1990s following the advent of Leader Partnership Companies, County Enterprise Boards and Community Employment Schemes. The recent recession, (2008-2014) saw an increase in social enterprise start-ups. This was in part a response to the closure of age-old services unable to withstand the sharp edges of the austerity programme designed to turn around the economy. While every community and family were hit by cutbacks. In local communities, steps were taken to protect people from the worst effects. The new policy will empower and build capacity on the ground in communities. Barriers and blockages will be removed, and the vast potential of social enterprise will finally be realised for the benefit of the people.

On Monday 13th May the EU Commission through its South East EU Direct team in Waterford Central Library is hosting an “EU Citizens Dialogue” in Dunhill Ecopark, Co. Waterford starting 6.30 p.m. The topic for discussion is “Revitalising Rural Ireland” with social enterprise, agriculture and tourism driving the agenda. Top speakers from Brussels and Dublin will engage in dialogue with the attendance. Given the date is so close to the local and EU elections on 24th May a terrific debate should occur. This is a regional event. We hope many people will attend from around the country and from overseas. See you all in Dunhill on 13th May in the sunny southeast.

For further information on the event contact Sinead O Higgins. Phone 0761-10-2975 Email: <mailto:sohiggins@waterfordcouncil.ie>

Dr Senan Cooke, Chairman CCJ.



Kilmacthomas: At the heart of Waterford's Greenway

Opened in 1878, the stretch of railway from Waterford to Lismore was the most expensive line to be built in Ireland at the time, as it followed the most difficult route of any railway in the South. When passing through the area in December 1649, Oliver Cromwell described the Kilmacthomas area as being 'a craggy and desolate place'.

Fast forward to 2018 and the village and surrounding areas have undoubtedly been transformed. The population is 834(2016 CSO) up from 717 in (2002 CSO). The location of Kilmacthomas, equidistant to Waterford City and Dungarvan, has meant it has always served an important function for a wide catchment area of Mid County Waterford. Kilmacthomas was known far and wide as a fair town for many years and was also notable for a number of strong anchor industries which were associated with the village. While the strength of some gradually declined over the years, others continued to enjoy success such as the famous Flahavan's.

The railway is the key to the history of Kilmacthomas and is also crucial to how the village has been transformed in recent years. It was considered the most scenic route in Ireland with the Kilmacthomas section offering stunning panoramic views of the Comeragh Mountains from the village's impressive viaduct.



C.I.E. operated the line until March 27th, 1967 when the line between Mallow and Waterford City was closed to passenger traffic. This had a significant impact on the village. Two years later, another momentous occasion occurred in Kilmacthomas, but this event was hugely positive.

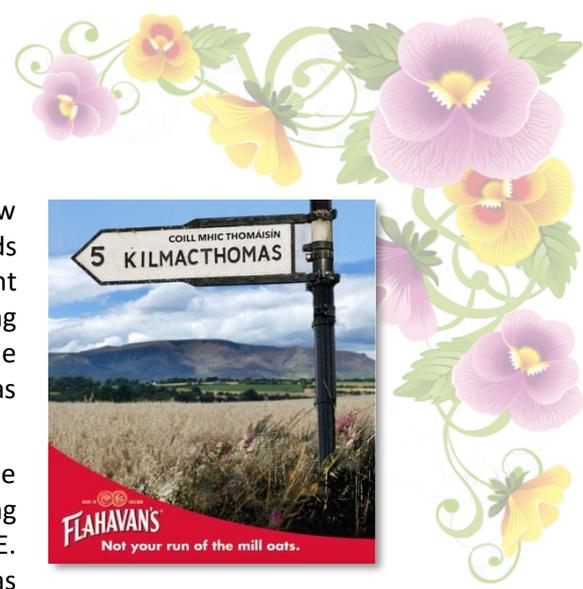
In addition to the Convent of Mercy and Currabaha Boys National School which were already open, St Declan's Community College opened as a technical college in 1969. The huge secondary school is preparing to mark its Golden Jubilee in 2019 and will celebrate the fact that a group of people had the vision and determination to establish such a school in a County Waterford village.

Unfortunately, the recession of the 1980s brought about a period of stagnation to Kilmacthomas. Mass emigration from the village and the surrounding areas resulted in a declining population. This period also saw the loss of some independent shops and businesses from the village's Main Street.

However, the village did manage to survive. St. Declan's Community College continued to grow and increased social housing was constructed in the village.

A number of anchor businesses continued to trade. The village sustained two banks, a post office, its schools etc. while Flahavan's continued to thrive. During the nineties and noughties, there wasn't any exceptional growth in Kilmacthomas. However, there were a number of key developments in terms of social enterprise. Different community groups were established, action was taken to tackle vandalism and anti-social behaviour in the area, and the Rainbow Community Hall opened in 1996 and filled a need for such a community-based venue. The Kilmacthomas Day Care Centre was opened in 1998 while Our Lady of Mercy Church was also opened around this time. Developments took place at the village's park and river walk.

However, the period of austerity which began in 2008 hit the village very hard and resulted in the closure of a number of local stores. Around this time, the offices of Waterford City & County Council also closed as did the village's AIB branch. The closure of the latter, in particular, had significant knock-on effects on surrounding businesses as there was a noticeable drop in footfall in the village. Instead, customers went to Waterford, Dungarvan or Carrick-on-Suir for their banking needs. The An Post sorting office also closed. Kilmacthomas was shrinking with no sustainable avenues for further development. However, a positive 'can do' attitude remained.



Flahavan's began to flex its muscles once again, stretching in a new direction, adapting to a growing cultural change in lifestyle towards health and nutrition. This success brought much needed employment to the village. The company continues its proud tradition of providing employment to local people and to different generations of the same families. However, undoubtedly, the game changer for Kilmacthomas was the opening of the Waterford Greenway.

Although the rail line had closed to passenger traffic in 1967, the Dungarvan - Waterford section remained in use for transporting magnesite to a factory in Ballinacourty until the early 1980s. C.I.E. then continued to maintain the line until 1987 when the last train was seen on the Waterford Dungarvan line. As the line lay idle, ideas began to form in the heads of some proactive, forward thinking local people.

The development of a Greenway project had been discussed for many years and was a regular topic of conversation at meetings of Waterford City & County Council. A number of local people were instrumental in keeping the issue on the agenda and driving its development including former Labour Councillor Ger Barron. The establishment of the voluntary Déise Greenway Group, comprised of many people from the local area, was also an integral factor in ensuring the Greenway was kept under the spotlight. Although the project was delayed for some years due to legal issues, the old rail line was eventually transformed into a 48km walk/cycleway stretching from Waterford City to Dungarvan.

Due to its midway location, Kilmacthomas was ideally placed to capitalise on the success of the project. Since the amenity was officially opened in March 2017, on the fiftieth anniversary of the passing of the last commercial train through the village, the community has taken ownership of the Greenway in a very positive way. Kilmacthomas has now become a tourist haven and features which were previously solely known to locals have been opened up to a much wider audience.



The viaduct, which is a hugely impressive feat of engineering, has now become an instantly recognisable symbol for Kilmacthomas. What was once a hidden gem is now an integral part of the Greenway and offers stunning panoramic views of the Comeragh Mountains and showcases the village's impressive park.

Photos of the viaduct can be found on all social media sites, many of which have posted by visitors keen to share the beauty of the area with their family and friends. The Kilmacthomas Social Enterprise Group was formed in 2016 and has been instrumental in ensuring

the village capitalises on the success of the Greenway. It aims to secure relevant funding, promote the village, and establish and maintain initiatives such as the community text alert system. The group supports other groups in the area such as Kilmacthomas Tidy Towns and partners with Waterford City & County Council.

There has been a noticeable increase in community involvement and commercial activity throughout Kilmacthomas as people continue to bask in the glow of the Greenway's success. **By Kieran Foley (Munster Express)**



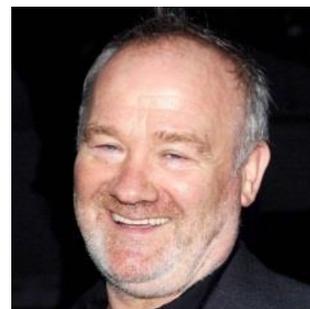
The village has become central to the successful Comeraghs Wild Festival which is staged each summer. Meanwhile, the Kilmacthomas Union Workhouse area has become a hub of activity and is now home to a number of new enterprises such as the hugely popular Coach House Coffee. Its current usage is a stark but very welcome contrast to its past purpose when it housed families that could no longer support themselves.



During the famine years, food prices increased dramatically as the potato crop was inedible due to blight. People had to choose between starvation, emigration and the workhouse. Now, food is playing a key role in the transformation of this site as Greenway users stop off at Coach House Coffee for some welcome replenishment. The popular eatery was opened by locals as a direct result of the Greenway. There is now an unmistakable air of positivity throughout the area and new businesses are visible on the village’s Main Street and in The Square e.g. [Maggie’s Café](#), [Mark’s Greenway Café](#).

Meanwhile, more established businesses are enjoying a welcome boost e.g. [Kiersey’s Bar & Tearooms](#) which recently featured on RTÉ’s ‘At Your Service’. Numerous bed and breakfasts are now operating. Iconic buildings such as the village’s former post office have been transformed into guest accommodation.

Kilmacthomas is proud of its history and heritage as well as the achievements of current and former residents.



Some well-known people to have come from the area include (l-r) **Tyrone Power**, actor, comedian, author and theatrical manager; Olympian **Percy Kirwan** (after whom the N25 bridge at Kilmacthomas is named); and **Vince Power** music promoter.



Dancer and model **Gillian Norris**, best known for her work in Lord of the Dance and Feet of Flames, operates a beauty salon on the village’s Main Street. (left) The success of professional boxer **Dylan Moran** continues as does the success of St Declan’s Community College’s sports teams. (right)



Kilmacthomas GAA Club enjoyed a hugely positive year in 2018, with the footballers making a welcome return to the senior ranks.



In another positive development, funding has been secured under the Town & Village Renewal Scheme to transform the old railway station. Plans are also progressing in relation to a new whiskey distillery which is set to be located in the premises which was formerly the old mill.

The old adage of ‘build it and they will come’ is certainly appropriate in relation to Kilmacthomas which has been transformed as a direct result of the wonderful Waterford Greenway and is certainly a far cry from Cromwell’s ‘craggy and desolate place’.



EQUAL Ireland – Provide Second Chance Education Opportunities

In [EQUAL Ireland](#) we believe strongly, as do our collaborative partners in Athlone and Letterkenny Institutes of Technology, that everyone deserves a second chance! Moreover, with the hands-on experience we have of designing, developing and delivering accredited programmes, in collaboration with learners, communities and enterprises, we can speak with real authority when we say that well-grounded education programmes, intelligently delivered, can be crucial for rural regeneration and especially by using these education programmes to encourage social enterprise development initiatives.

Our model of community engagement neither happened over night nor by accident. It has come about through testing, often failing and constant refining and revising the way in which we deliver supports and learning to our participants. Typically, we will get to know Community Leaders and discuss with them the needs, of their area and of their people, while at the same time letting them know what we already have to offer e.g. 3rd Level Qualifications mainly focused on such areas as Business, Social Enterprise, Leadership, Management and Community Development.

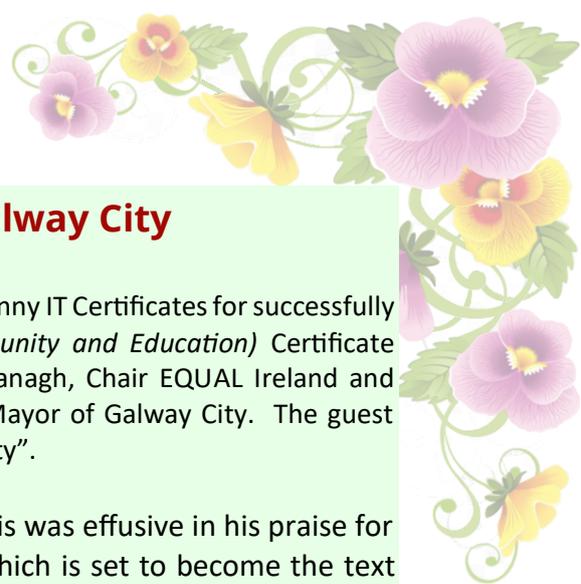
We pay close attention to the actual circumstances of our Learners, many of whom lead reasonably busy lives. So, we limit the amount of time they have to physically turn up at a Local Centre (now usually 2 days per month) we reduce the amount of travel by delivering locally and we keep our costs to the absolute minimum that will allow us to break even.

We think it is really important that Programme Assignments (there are no exams), which are the key measurement of the participant’s learning, are, in so far as is possible, grounded in the local community and having the genuine prospect of either improving the existing quality of life opportunities or increasing employment levels in the area.



The [PEIL Project](#) is a Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning.

EQUAL Ireland 'PEIL' WOMEN



Presentation of Certificates in Ballybane Galway City

On December 10th in Galway City 60+ Women received their Letterkenny IT Certificates for successfully completing the EQUAL Ireland Essential Skills (*Workplace, Community and Education*) Certificate programme. The Certificates were presented by Mr Dermot Cavanagh, Chair EQUAL Ireland and former head of school, Letterkenny IT. An Address was given by Mayor of Galway City. The guest speaker was Dr. Senan Cooke author of “The Enterprising Community”.

His Worship, the Mayor of Galway City, Councillor Niall McNeilis was effusive in his praise for the efforts of the students. “The ***Enterprising Community***” which is set to become the text book for our Higher Cert, BA and BA (Hons) programmes in Social Enterprise and Community Development. Even better news for our current and future participants is that the author has agreed to be a Guest Speaker on our programmes in 2019 – 2021.



Councillor Niall McNeilis,
Mayor of Galway City



Dr. Senan Cooke: Social
Enterprise Champion &
Practitioner

At the ceremony Dr Senan spoke about the vital importance of Social enterprise in the regeneration of urban and rural communities and its capacity to create new job opportunities that will play a part in the rebalancing of the economy and population which is the primary objective of Project Ireland 2040. Social Enterprise will be very instrumental in the future once a new policy and implementation plan is launched in the first quarter of 2019 by the Department of Rural and Community Development.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)



If over the years there had been an award for the concept or ambition that had attracted the greatest level of lip service and the least amount of practical implementation, the recognition of prior learning (RPL) would have won hands down. Thankfully we see signs at last that this may be about to change.

In EQUAL Ireland we took the view that RPL was so vital for people, who over a lifetime had gained incredible work life experience, especially in enterprise and community, that we could not wait for a National Framework or Agency to emerge, so we went about developing our own academically robust and learner friendly system. There was simply too much talent and community resources being lost because of the absence of those ever so important pieces of paper - 3rd Level Qualifications. As one of our people said recently *“Over the last thirty years I have worked with many wise and gifted people in community and voluntary work who had great skill and experience but who had no qualifications. It was very frustrating to see their talent and experience passed over in favour of people who might have qualifications but without the experience or commitment. I think RPL addresses this unfairness and will help some great people.”*

Our RPL system has seen hundreds of learners gain advanced entry to our programmes saving them time and money but most importantly ensure their timely and beneficial arrival into community and social enterprises so that they can apply their newly certified skills and knowledge.



EU Supporting EQUAL Ireland and RPL

By way of a different type of recognition the EU Erasmus Plus Programme is part funding EQUAL Ireland to lead a consortium of Universities in Italy, Romania, Greece and Spain in the development of a QQI Level 7 Programme. It is to provide the necessary skills and knowledge to people in a wide range of organisation including Universities, Institutes of Technology Education and Training Boards (ETBs), Community Organisations, Social Enterprises and Social Partner Organisations, enabling them to more professionally support people seeking recognition of their prior work life learning and experience.

Social Enterprise and Community Development - The Next Stage

The next stage of our development will represent a milestone on our general direction of travel with three new programmes being announced for commencement in early 2019.

These will have their main focus on Social Enterprise Development and Management, Supporting Applicants for Recognition of Prior Learning and Campaigning, Media and Leadership for the Community Sector.

These new departures will greatly complement our current main offering of a Higher Certificate and BA in Business, Social Enterprise and Community Development and the BA (Hons) in Business, Social Enterprise Leadership and Management.

**Ireland Graduates pictured with Prof. Ciaran O'Cathain
President of Athlone Institute of Technology**



FOR MORE INFORMATION			
Visit: www.equalireland.ie	Email: info@equalireland.ie	Call: 091778682	Text: 0872237231

Around the Country with EQUAL Ireland

TUAM



Martin Ward (top) and Damien Quinn (below)

Our very good friends and supporters in Tuam, ably represented by Martin Ward (Former Mayor of Tuam) Damien Quinn and Teresa Kelly of the Western Traveller and Intercultural Agency worked very closely with EQUAL Ireland to ensure that the full range of our Programmes from QQI Level 6 to QQI level 8 were delivered in the Traveller Centre in Tuam, which apart from being of great benefit to participants and communities alike puts EQUAL Ireland to the fore in providing 3rd level opportunities to members of the Travelling Community.

ROSCOMMON



At the beginning we were told that Roscommon would not support the delivery of our 3rd Level programmes mostly because of the proximity of AIT and IT Sligo but having successfully delivered the Essential Skills Programme with the great help of Roscommon Leader we pushed on and are now very pleased to report that there are over 40 EQUAL Ireland AIT graduates in Roscommon and 2019 will see new deliveries in Ballaghaderreen and Roscommon Town! **Up the Rossies!**

KILKENNY TIPPERARY



Ms Avril Wilson, Co-ordinator Tipperary PPN speaking on behalf of all Graduates at the Celebration following the 2018 AIT Graduation Ceremony.

2017/18 saw a unique collaboration between Public Participation Networks (PPNs) in Kilkenny and Tipperary and EQUAL Ireland which has seen 28 community activists graduate with a BA in Business, Social Enterprise and Community Development while a further 15 are currently engaged in studying for a BA (Hons) in Business, Social Enterprise, Leadership and Management

LETTERFRACK CONNEMARA



Dr Kevin Heanue Chair Connemara West having presented first prize to Sophia Hume and Kevin Gavin Most Implementable Community Enterprise Project

Having started in Letterfrack with our Essential Skills Certificate Programme some years back and with great local support from GR-ETB and Forum Connemara we recently saw the Graduation of some 20 locals with BA (Hons) in Business, Social Enterprise and Community Development. As we mentioned elsewhere, we strive to encourage our participants to ground their Projects/Assignments in their local area and on this occasion given the fantastic involvement of Connemara West and especially Dr. Kevin Heanue a Prize Fund of €1,000 was established for the most implementable community enterprise project. The winners of first prize had envisaged the establishment of a Community Incubation Kitchen that would service the many Craft Food producers in the area helping to develop a local brand and provide new employment opportunities.

GALWAY CITY



Nuala Keher, EQUAL Ireland Academic Director sharing a story with Sabina Mary Coyne an Irish actress, political activist and the wife of the current President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins at the PEIL Project Launch

Part Funded by the EU and Government of Ireland the EQUAL Ireland PEIL Project is set to see 165 women reengaged with their own self development through 3rd Level Education. These women had to meet specific criteria laid down by the funding agencies which meant that they had to be unemployed but not in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance. Already some 80 women have gained a QQI Level 6 Award, over 40 are currently studying for a QQI Level 6 Higher Certificate and 26 women are at QQI Level 7. With a focus on increasing the number of women entrepreneurs this project will see the majority gaining a BA in Business Social Enterprise and Community Development and we are working towards encouraging these women to consider Social Enterprise as a way to use their newly acquired skills and knowledge and so increase employment in their localities.

EMYVALE, MONAGHAN



EQUAL Ireland and Father Sean Nolan, a well-known cross border & cross community activist and leader, and his colleagues helped bring the Higher Certificate in Business, Enterprise and Community Development to the communities surrounding Emyvale in North Monaghan. This was successfully followed by deliveries of the BA in Business, Enterprise and Community Development and the BA (Hons) in Business, Social Enterprise, Leadership and Management. After an absence of some years EQUAL Ireland are planning a return to Emyvale in 2019 to make new friends and rekindle old community relationships.



Social Farming Ireland



What is Social Farming?

Social Farming is the practice of offering activity on family farms as a form of social support. In Social Farming the farm remains a working farm at its core but invites people to participate in its day to day activities. Social Farming provides people who use health and social services with the opportunity for inclusion, to increase self-esteem and to improve health and well-being. The farm is not a specialised treatment farm; rather it remains a typical working farm where people in need of support can benefit from relationship building through farm activities in a non-clinical environment. Social Farming also benefits farm families by enhancing social inclusion and connecting farmers and participants with their communities.

Social Farming Ireland is the national office which is funded by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) and the CEDRA Fund. It supports the development of a national Social Farming network in collaboration with other Local Development Companies, namely West Limerick Resources, Waterford Leader Partnership and South West Mayo Development Company where regional Social Farming development officers are based. Follow Social Farming Ireland on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#), or via E-mail: admin@socialfarmingireland.ie Tel; 071 9641772

What participants are saying about social farming:

"I think that there's something very homely about the support... It's very casual and there are no airs and graces and people feel like they fit right in..." - OT, Mental Health Service



Fun, enjoyment and happiness from spending time with the farmer and the other participants

"I probably do more laughing here than I would in a week away from here.... [the farmer] is very funny and he has a lot of funny stories.... I felt more encouraged to try and get that part of me across."





Social Farming Ireland is engaging across Europe

On the 31st August 2018, we participated in the European Regional Science Association Congress held in University College Cork. At a Special Session on social Agriculture, Dr Aisling Moroney, Policy Officer at Social Farming Ireland presented a paper 'Growing Connections, Changing Lives: Innovation and Cooperation in the Development of Social Farming in the North-west of Ireland', co-authored by Prof. Jim Kinsella of University College Dublin and Brian Smyth of Social Farming Ireland. The Conference ran for two days and was attended by hundreds of delegates from across Europe.



In November we hosted [Prof. Sarah Skerritt](#) SRUC Scotland who visited the Social Farming Ireland offices and toured several social farms accompanied by our colleague Dr Jim Kinsella UCD. Having been involved with us prior to the SoFAB project, she enjoyed discovering the growth and development in Social Farming over the past few years.



Speedpak Makes a Difference on Dublin's Northside

How collaboration has seen the Speedpak Groups work experience and training model evolve with the development of a new National Traineeship.

ABOUT US

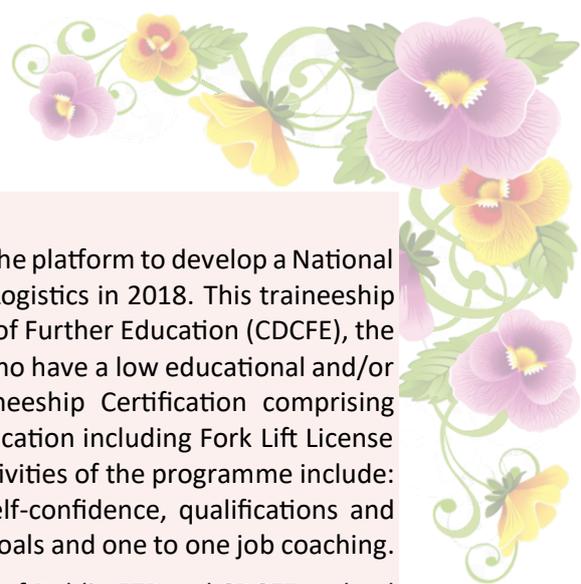
Speedpak Group is an award-winning, Dublin-based social enterprise. We were originally founded by a local development company Northside Partnership and the business community with the purpose then, as now, to address the issue of high long-term unemployment in the city's most disadvantaged areas on Dublin's Northside. Over the past 24 years, the company built two commercial businesses, Speedpak Contract Services and Shamrock Rosettes, to support long term unemployed people get back to work by providing real work experience, accredited industry training, mentoring and tailored supports. We know that the combination of trading and training transforms lives. Transformative in that the trainees secure greater financial independence through employment and job resilience through education and training. Since our foundation we have employed and trained over 1100 people, making a significant social impact to individuals and families in these communities.



THE EVOLUTION OF OUR WORK EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING MODEL

In the early days, we had a basic offering to new trainee employees - the opportunity to get back into the routine of work, update workplace skills, access some formal training and acquire a recent work reference. An important by-product was improved confidence and self-esteem. Resources at the time prevented consistent delivery, but it provided a foundation for what was to follow. Our strategy in recent years has been to focus on improving quality across our commercial business and training offering. Our capacity to deliver on this strategy is through the collaborations we forged, and resources leveraged with Industry, Philanthropy, State and Community.

By way of example, in 2016 we developed an industry led 16-week training Programme, called the Enhanced Skills Programme, with the objective of matching local unemployed talent with available jobs in warehousing and the logistics sector. The skills gap in this sector had been identified by a number of sources, including the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs, which were used as evidence of need for the programme. Grant supported by JP Morgan Chase Foundation (introduced to us by Social Entrepreneurs Ireland), this initiative was part of their global New Skills at Work programme. Using our commercial and CSR relationships with industry partners - Allergan, IKEA, Bewleys, Butlers Chocolates amongst others – we harnessed their support to work with us to shape the curriculum and provide work experience placements. The programme, delivered four times over a two-year period, had very positive outcomes for the thirty-two participants with 60% progressing to employment in host and other companies.



NATIONAL TRAINEESHIP

Building on this success, we used the Enhanced Skills Programme as the platform to develop a National Traineeship in Manufacturing, Supply Chain and Customer Service Logistics in 2018. This traineeship was co-produced by programme partners C olaiste Dh ulaigh College of Further Education (CDCFE), the City of Dublin ETB, Speedpak and industry. It provides individuals, who have a low educational and/or commercial experience base, with a nationally recognised Traineeship Certification comprising accredited training QQI level 4 and 5, and industry level skills certification including Fork Lift License to be able to target job opportunities available in the sector. Key activities of the programme include: work experience, work on personal development - motivation, self-confidence, qualifications and preparing for employment, individual learning and career plan and goals and one to one job coaching.

While the State provided the training resources through SOLAS, City of Dublin ETB and CDCFE, as lead industry partner we were the programmes primary recruiter; we housed the formal training in our Learning Centre; provided Job Coaching; support programme co-ordination and industry placements. The first programme just finished in January, with progression to employment already running at 60%. The second programme began in February. The resources we required to support our engagement in this Traineeship was only possible with the funding we secured from both The Ireland Funds and Social Innovation Fund Ireland.

While we continue to deliver labour market programmes (Community Employment), wage subsidy schemes (Community Service Programme) and T US which are core offerings, the Traineeship is another great learning opportunity for unemployed local talent to access. Our capacity to deliver these programmes is dependent on a blend of income streams. These include - core Government and Agency contracts; B2B and B2C commercial sales and activity and finally Philanthropic and Corporate Social Responsibility grant support that uniquely allows us to develop and innovate our work experience and training model. Undoubtedly, collaboration can be more time consuming and harder work. But when we work together, better qualifications and employment outcomes for long term unemployed people can be achieved. We don't need any more incentive than that!

If you would like find out more about our Company, please visit www.speedpakgroup.com www.speedpak.ie and www.shamrockrosettes.com

Social Enterprise Expo and Forum Reflections.



“Senan Cooke a veteran of Social Enterprise from Dunhill took to the stage. What really is important about his message is the role that volunteers are playing in their community. He discussed the impact the recession had on small towns around Ireland. I couldn't help but feel if Senan was giving me a half time speech at Croke Park that could go out of and single handedly bring Sam Maguire back to Mayo. Motivators like him are required everywhere. Just to remind us that it is us, the people who are coming up with financially sustainable models to create social changes in Ireland. The last section of the day was a panel discussion chaired by Dr. Briga Hynes from Kemmy Business School in UL. It was obvious that huge frustrations exist within the sector for Community Enterprises in terms of accessing funding, overcoming bureaucracy and keeping voluntary boards engaged and motivated. However, the good news is once we have a policy in place there will be more funding, a strategy and guidelines and support. The showcase of successful projects throughout the country mean we are on our way. The future looks bright. I'm already looking forward to next year's event.” Read **Ailish Irvine's** full article on [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com). **The full speaker presentations are available on PAUL Partnership website.**



Speakers at the above event; Dr Senan Cooke, Lorraine Corcoran (Afinite Ltd), Sarah Miller (Rediscovery Centre), Helen Fitzgerald (PAUL Partnership) and Kenny Deery (Achill Experience)



Donal Traynor Director CCJ and CFI, Dr Senan Cooke Chairman CCJ and author of **"The Enterprising Community"** and Linda Ledger manager of St. Munchins Community Enterprise Centre, Kileely



Two New Grant Funding Programmes

The next deadline to apply to the [DM Thomas Foundation Central Grants Programme](#) is 7th May 2019. Grants of up to £30,000 are available to registered charities for projects that improve education and health for young people in three key areas; Children and young people with disabilities; Children and young people who are sick in hospital; Children and young people who are life limited (requiring palliative care). The Foundation is a small charity and generally will not make awards of over £30,000 (per year) for up to two years. Funding can be requested for one-off projects or for up to 2 years work. Applications from schools and hospitals are welcomed as long as they are made through an appropriate registered charity. Grant applications for up to £5,000 can be approved by the Director, up to £10,000 can be approved by the Grants Committee, and applications for more than £10,000 are recommended to the Trustees for final approval.

The [Mná na hÉireann, Women of Ireland Fund](#) is a €1.8 million fund over three years created by Social Innovation Fund Ireland in partnership with Bank of America and the Department of Rural and Community Development. The Department of Rural and Community Development provides match funding for all philanthropic funds raised by Social Innovation Fund Ireland, via the Dormant Accounts Fund.

The Mná na hÉireann, Women of Ireland Fund is the first fund in Ireland to support charities and social enterprises that seek to enhance the economic mobility of women and is designed specifically to equip these organisations to expand their business acumen, drive growth and deepen their impact across Ireland.

We are calling for applications from organisations that support and empower women to progress their education or progress into new or more sustainable employment.



Waterford Institute of Technology students visit Dunhill

Dr. Nabla Kennedy, a microbiology lecturer at WIT brought her 3rd year science students to visit Dunhill Integrated Constructed Wetlands (ICW) in January.

They were greeted by Dr. Rory Harrington, [VESI](#) Senior Scientist and creator Dunhill (ICW).



Dr. Rory Harrington, VESI Senior Scientist and creator of Dunhill Integrated Constructed Wetlands (ICW) with Dr. Nabla Kennedy and WIT students.



Lecturer Rosie Donnelly and WIT students

Lecturer Rosie Donnelly visited the Anne Valley with WIT's Health Promotion and Exercise & Health Studies students with students recently.

They were given a presentation on DBFA (Dunhill, Fenor, Boatstrand and Annestown) Social Enterprise Network by [Dr. Senan Cooke](#) of the Dunhill Education Centre.

Carraig Dúlra: A Permaculture Research and Education Social Enterprise



In this article, Suzie Cahn (from Carraig Dúlra, a permaculture research and education social enterprise (based on a small-holding in Co Wicklow) will give a brief introduction to some of the ideas from permaculture that Suzie and a diverse team of teachers, learners and volunteers have been working with for 10-15 years.

Permaculture isn't new and there are many linked solution focused bottom up local movements in food energy, gardens, co-operatives, natural building, arts, tiny homes, and other simple living initiatives like co-housing and many more.

Permaculture is an ecological design toolkit but also movement in its own right. It began in the 1970's when an Australian forest ecologist, Bill Mollison and his student, David Holgrem. Mollison who were inspired by nature's own ecological design posed questions like "Why are humans behaving as we are and living so unsustainably and why do humans want to improve upon nature's design, why not learn from her?"



These questions resulted in the creation of the permaculture principals and the 72-hour permaculture design certificate. In creating it Mollison and Holgrem took a radically different approach of learning from and mimicking design principals found in natural systems. The principals they created are very simple and even might be considered common sense to some. For example, *use and value diversity, produce no waste and increase or decrease different niches, work with patterns.*



Another way of thinking of permaculture is applied ecology or systems thinking design. For example, we understand that physics is a description and understanding of natural laws and that engineering is the taking of these laws and using them to design human constructions. The “ah ha” that Mollison had as an ecologist was why not use these natural principals for human designed systems.

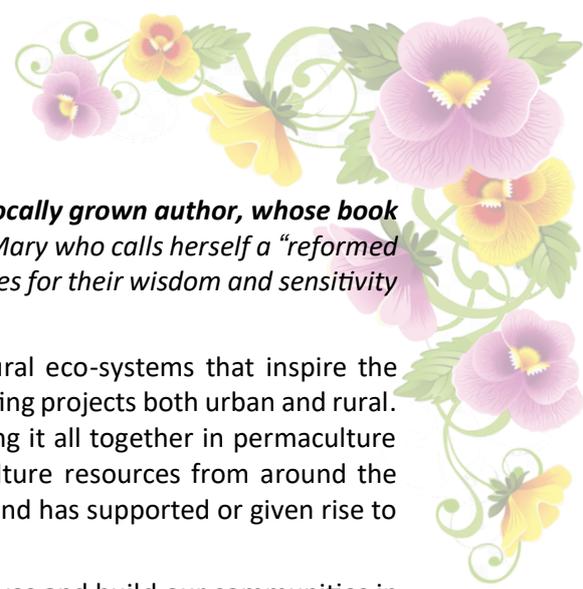
When Mollison also decided to include an ethical umbrella in all his courses to help guide the use of the 16 or so principals, these ethics were simply People Care, Earth Care and Fair Shares. This meant that the learners on Permaculture courses were exploring those ethics in what today might be called Global Citizen Education and transformational education and so the movement grew from there.

The Permaculture Design Certificate, otherwise known as a PDC has been delivered since the 1970s all over the world and the projects that resulted are as diverse as the people and places they are held. If you Google permaculture and a location or subject, you are likely to find projects that will give you a feel for the scope of the application of the simple principles taught on PDC courses. Most people start with learning them in a garden, but they can be applied to buildings, education, organisations, community projects and much more.

Geoff Laughton another student of Mollison’s said

"You can fix all the world's problems in a garden. You can solve all your pollution problems, and all your supply line needs, in a garden. And most people today don't know that, and it makes them very insecure."





Permaculture has some well-known promoters internationally **one locally grown author, whose book is resonating with many is Mary Reynold's "Garden Awakening."** Mary who calls herself a "reformed landscape designer" is a strong advocate for permaculture approaches for their wisdom and sensitivity to nature.

Permaculture education focuses on understanding the many natural eco-systems that inspire the permaculture principals, and then gives many examples of the resulting projects both urban and rural. At the same time most courses teach practical skills, before bringing it all together in permaculture design methodology. There are many books, and online permaculture resources from around the world. In its 40 years of development, permaculture is truly global and has supported or given rise to sister movements such as Transition Towns.

Permaculture gives us the tools and skills to be able to design our lives and build our communities in ways that are truly sustainable and healthy for both planet and people.

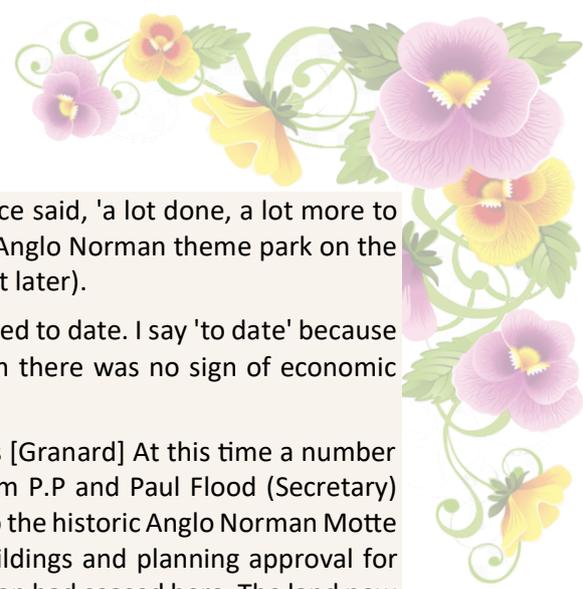
Knights & Conquests – by GMCE in Co. Longford



[The Knights & Conquests Heritage and Visitor Centre](#) opened in September 2018 and is run by [Granard Motte Community Enterprise](#) (GMCE) Clg, a local group of volunteers set up to acquire and run this site. It is located in the picturesque town of Granard, Co. Longford in Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, with a history dating back thousands of years, beside Ireland's Tallest Norman Motte at 544 feet high and built in 1199 by Richard de Tuite.

Mission statement:

'To deliver a world-class and immersive visitor experience whilst conserving and promoting Ireland's Highest Norman Motte. To inspire public involvement in and appreciation of our heritage through an innovative blend of living history and modern technology supported by educational programming and community outreach. And to offer a memorable, authentic and warm local welcome to the beating heart of Ireland's Hidden Heartlands'.



Have we achieved these goals? Well as that old Political tag line once said, 'a lot done, a lot more to do'. Today we look to the future with pride to develop our 17-acre Anglo Norman theme park on the edge of Granard town over the coming 18 months (but more on that later).

At this point we as a committee stand proud of what we have achieved to date. I say 'to date' because this is a process which started back in the dark days of 2011 when there was no sign of economic recovery in rural Ireland.

The feeling was that we couldn't sit and wait for others like to fix us [Granard] At this time a number of people from the town including our present Chairman Fr. Cadam P.P and Paul Flood (Secretary) viewed the present site where we are today. This site was adjacent to the historic Anglo Norman Motte and Bailey. It was a partially developed site with 3 commercial buildings and planning approval for approximately 180 houses. Due to the economic situation construction had ceased here. The land now belonged to NAMA and they wanted to get the best price for it at auction. We needed to get it for the town, the parish the surrounding communities and parishes. All of these are so indelibly linked across the generations to Granard through familial, historical, financial, social, educational and working lives. This was a once off opportunity for our town. A chance to lift us out of the doldrums, to restore pride, to create employment but how? Public meetings were held and well attended by people from near and far who had an interest in our town.

It was decided to create a committee (later GMCE CLG) from within the community. To this end we set about negotiations with NAMA to purchase the 17 acres. At this point I need to point out what the power of and the 'can do' attitude of a community getting together means. 10 people from the area provided deposits of €1,000 each to secure a deposit for the land. Upon purchase and securing a mortgage of €265,000 the community en masse backed our €500 monthly draw in order to service this mortgage. So much so that we expect to have this paid at least 2 years ahead of schedule. This 500 draw is still ongoing and will be for the next couple of years. You may wonder why we did not get a grant to buy the buildings. Very simply who would give a grant this size to an untried, barely up and running group? This was something we had to face up to and overcome ourselves.



Norman House

8 years later where are we now? We employed an Interpretive exhibition and design company Mirador Media (whose tagline is '*next level visitor experiences*' well is all I can say seeing is believing) to fit out our centre in the most modern way possible. The result! We opened our Heritage Centre '[Knights and Conquest](#)' in September 2018 by Minister Kevin (Boxer) Moran to wide critical acclaim. Importantly we are providing everything we stated in our mission statement. Still that does not stop us from thinking 'bigger and better and learning from our experiences to present.



A key element to our success was the assistance/advice we received from Key Stakeholders such as Longford County Council, Failte Ireland. In addition to the aforementioned along with community support the need to be aware of funding and a professional attitude to application of these has been a vital part of our success at this early stage (remember we only opened last September 2018 - 7 years later).

Our plans for the future are enormous. County Longford is on the rise. Centre Parcs is about to open soon in Ballymahon. In Granard our Knights and Conquest centre is situated on the key N55 primary route which incidentally runs towards Ballymahon. Recently applied to the Rural Development Regeneration Fund (RGDF), we are provisionally earmarked for a substantial funding. Once secured, we intend to launch our next phase of development for our Norman themed heritage park. We are shovel ready and expect to begin immediately on the development of this living history Norman village in the shadow of the original Motte built circa 1200 which can be seen for miles around on all sides as you enter the town.



The new development will consist of a Norman village of about 14 houses, some with multiple use applications for academic as well as other means of revenue generation, walkways, depictions of Norman life, recreations of Anglo-Norman weaponry like Trebuchets etc., outdoor amphitheatre, children's play areas, camping and more to be decided upon as construction begins. In other words, lots of learning by doing for all ages.

At present we employ a centre manager and two Tús employees supported by 25 volunteer guides. It is hoped when we open our new Norman village to employ 15 people or more.

We were not afraid to think big to realise our Mission statement goals. Community support and buy in from other stakeholders is the key to getting off the ground. While it will not provide all of your funding, their support is vital for the bread and butter issues. Ultimately the community will benefit as a whole from such a development so don't be afraid to consult with yours. [Contact us through our website.](#)

Professional HGV Training Programme Dates

- Waterford: 25.03.2019**
- Wexford: 15.04.2019**
- Waterford: 02.09.2019**
- Wexford: 09.09.2019**

Interested parties must be in possession of a Full B Licence and a Learner Permit C Licence. If clients have passed their Theory for the C Licence and can prove evidence of same, they too can register.

Download the complete programme from [WWETB](#)